

What's Happening at ABI

In Memoriam: Bonnie Glantz Fatell

Bonnie Glantz Fatell of Blank Rome LLP passed away on Aug. 23. She began her remarkable legal career in 1981 and retired from Blank Rome in 2016. For nearly 35 years, Bonnie had been both a pillar and a force of nature in the legal community at large. She conducted herself with the highest level of professionalism and grace. Along the way, she learned how to be a lawyer from some of the best and brightest legal minds, worked with colleagues who were and are at the pinnacle of the profession, and was a willing mentor to a next generation.



Bonnie Glantz Fatell

Bonnie had been an ABI member for more than 20 years. In addition, a donation to the ABI Endowment Fund was made by the Bankruptcy Department of Richards, Layton & Finger, PA in her memory.

Bonnie's funeral was Aug. 26 at Temple Adath Israel in Merion Station, Pa. Donations can be made in her memory to the American Cancer Society or a charity of your choice. Rather than a formal obituary, what follows are thoughts and fond remembrances of Bonnie, the professional, the role model and, most importantly, the friend.

Hon. Kevin J. Carey (ret.): I knew Bonnie and her husband, Howard, long before I took the bench, when we were both practicing lawyers in Philadelphia. Serendipity reunited us in Delaware, where we had a wonderful partnership working together for *Collier*. I don't think we ever missed a submission deadline, largely, I cheerfully admit, due to Bonnie's creativity, thoughtfulness and diligence. Her indefatigable energy and pleasant demeanor were gifts I truly enjoyed and appreciated, but they were gifts she generously shared with anyone whose life she touched. It was hard not to love Bonnie.

Hon. Diane Sigmund (ret.): Way before Bonnie became one of the first female lawyers to chair a firm's national bankruptcy practice and long, long before I left private bankruptcy practice to become a bankruptcy judge, we were two young, hardworking associates at Wexler, Weisman, Forman & Shapiro/Blank Rome. Although our professional paths took us to different venues, our friendship, born of the insecurities we shared in those early days, endured for 38 wonderful years.

The qualities that underpinned Bonnie's enormous personal and professional success — her intelligence, strength and positivity — inspired the many with whom she associated as they always did me. The gift of her friendship is one of the most valued treasures of my life.

Harvey I. Forman: A comfort level developed with Bonnie from day one: our initial interview with her. At the conclusion of that meeting, Ray Shapiro and I looked at each other and almost simultaneously said, "This was the best interview we ever had." That shared sentiment in 1981 would undoubtedly still be true after all these years. While not having a background in finance or business, Bonnie

demonstrated a genuineness and sense of confidence and composure that easily convinced us she could overcome any odds and hurdles to success. She flourished with the mantle of leadership, yet always welcomed and accepted the input of others. Working with her was always a true partnership. Those and many other admirable traits were an integral part of who she was and why she had such a strong influence on others. She never sought honors and recognition, but was held in the highest professional and personal esteem by all who met and worked with her. We miss her.

Thomas Biron: Bonnie was a trailblazer in so many ways. The year was 1982, and Bonnie and I were walking east on Market Street headed to the federal courthouse, when she pulled me aside to tell me with a big smile and a twinkle in her eye that she and Howard were having a baby. This many years later, I can only imagine the look on my face, and laugh at myself and my reaction back on that day so many years ago, as Bonnie, with a chuckle, told me not to worry, the court hearing would go forward.

Bonnie had it under control; she always had it under control — there were no surprises, and Danny, followed a few years later by Sarah, thankfully were born in a hospital, thereby not fulfilling my most irrational fear — that Bonnie's children would be born in our conference room! There is humor in this story and a happy ending. Over the years, Bonnie and I had our chuckles, our successes and even our failures, but we grew together and came to know the understanding and respect that can flourish among people who care for one another.

The path a trailblazer takes is never easy, but Bonnie did it, and others have benefited by being able to follow in her footsteps. I may have been Bonnie's teacher, but more than anything, I learned more from Bonnie about life, relationships and even the law than she could have ever learned from me. Thank you, Bonnie, for so many things, and I miss you so.

Root, Judge Trust Visit ABI Studios for "Eye on Bankruptcy" Episode



Melissa M. Root (Jenner & Block LLP; Chicago) (c) and Hon. Alan S. Trust (U.S. Bankruptcy Court (E.D.N.Y.); Central Islip) (r) joined host Charles J. Tabb (University of Illinois College of Law; Champaign, Ill.) to record the August episode of "Eye on Bankruptcy." The episode is available at eyeonbankruptcy.com.

Regina Stango Kelbon: When I think of Bonnie, I think of a smiling face, a glass always full and a can-do anything attitude. She left a ceiling of broken glass for the women at Blank Rome. She:

- was the first woman to chair the Bankruptcy Practice;
- was the first to chair the Diversity Committee;
- started the Women’s Group at the firm;
- was the first woman to head the Delaware office;
- was one of the first women to go on AWA (alternative work arrangement) 20 years ago;
- was one of a handful of women to sit on the firm’s Distribution Committee; and
- was the second attorney in Delaware to be inducted as a Fellow in the American College of Bankruptcy.

Bonnie was a teacher, mentor, sponsor and role model, but most importantly my dearest friend and confidante, who I will miss forever.

Claudia Z. Springer: Bonnie was a friendly competitor of mine who became my friend. We grew up together in our professional lives. She was at the Wexler firm and thereafter at Blank Rome, with me at Duane Morris and then Reed Smith. Over the years, our paths crossed many times — at conferences and on cases. You couldn’t not like her. She was smart, funny and genuinely nice, courteous to a fault, and never took herself too seriously. We found that we had similar interests: family, travel, books, museums and gardens.

When we got together socially, we never talked shop. There were too many other interesting things to discuss. What always struck me about her is that she was a great and effective advocate for her clients, but never ever was she nasty or patronizing. She was always polite and courteous. A great listener.

Bonnie loved flowers and gardens. Her passion for gardening was evident from her lovely home. My husband and I would visit with Bonnie and Howard occasionally over the years and I would love to look at her beautiful garden and her lovely pottery. Did I mention that she was a potter? Another one of her many talents.

The thing about her was she never flaunted her many accomplishments and achievements. That was not her style. She was comfortable in her own skin. During those visits, after one of Bonnie’s wonderful meals, Jay and Howard would do “[model] train work” and Bonnie and I would sit and gab — about all the great things we loved doing and all the things we still wanted to do. With Bonnie, the glass was always full. I will miss her very much.

Victoria A. Guilfoyle: I met Bonnie as a summer associate in 2007 and we clicked from the start, being two of only a few female attorneys in the Wilmington office. When I joined the firm in the fall of 2008, she immediately began her campaign to persuade me and the firm to make me a full-time bankruptcy attorney instead of splitting my time between the litigation and bankruptcy groups. I am so thankful she took such an interest in my career from an early point and was lucky to have her as my practice group leader and mentor for so many years.

One story I remember about Bonnie that embodies her approach to the legal profession involved a client who suddenly started to change its stated goals as more facts were

revealed in discovery. Bonnie felt that the client was perhaps trying to take improper advantage. Instead of compromising her integrity and the firm’s reputation, she professionally told the client we could no longer represent it.

She taught me how to practice law with fortitude, grace and passion. She was never unprofessional and was the most caring individual in the law industry I have met to this day. And I will miss her forever.

Bryan Hall: I had the privilege to work with and represent Bonnie, as a trustee, for nearly three years while associated with a fine New York law firm. Bonnie was an important part of my decision to relocate from New York City to Delaware and to take the Delaware bar in 2016. Her grace, pragmatism, and fairness toward colleagues and adversaries alike were well known to all who had the privilege of knowing her. Even though she was in the last year of private practice and looking forward to retirement when I joined Blank Rome, Bonnie readily agreed to serve as my preceptor, and I am proud that she stood to recommend my admission to the Delaware bar. I greatly value the opportunity I had to work with and learn from Bonnie, and I sorely miss her in so many ways.

Ira L. Herman: Bonnie and I did battle as young lawyers going back to the mid-1980s. In reality, and unlike the others who have been gracious enough to share their fond memories of Bonnie, we knew each other from a distance. So, when she walked into a Philadelphia conference room a little more than three years ago to interview me for Blank Rome, I didn’t know what to expect. It turned out that my interview with Bonnie was a warm embrace and a smile that lit up the room (maybe we spoke a little, I really don’t remember that part). Thank you, Bonnie, for sharing your gifts with us all. You are sorely missed.

September Episode of “Eye



“Eye on Bankruptcy” Host Charles J. Tabb (University of Illinois College of Law; Champaign, Ill.) (l) with Bankruptcy Judge Elizabeth S. Stong (c) and Paul R. Hage (r) in ABI’s studio.

Bankruptcy Judge **Elizabeth S. Stong** (E.D.N.Y.; Brooklyn) and **Paul R. Hage** (Jaffe Raitt Heuer & Weiss; Southfield, Mich.) were the guests for the latest episode of “Eye on Bankruptcy,” which aired on Sept. 26. They discussed four topics and six cases, including an issue on which the courts are divided: Does an individual debtor in a chapter 11 case violate the absolute priority rule if he/she retains exempt property without paying for it in full under the plan?