

I have a daunting task this evening – to present an award that means so much and reflects such accomplishment, to a friend whose absence leaves a hole in all our lives. Barbara McDowell would have loved this event – she loved legal aid, she reveled in appellate litigation and was deeply enmeshed in the Washington legal scene, and most of all she loved using the law to work justice. Literally, she was made for this.

But then, she was made for many things that she did so superbly. I met her first in law school, where she was indispensable to many of us from the get-go. Others here have known her even longer, including her great friend Marcia, and we treasure memories that include midnight runs in high heels after way too many long island ice teas, or even prepping Barb for the potential that she might have to cook breakfast for a man she was pursuing. But I digress...

Barbara had an absolutely golden resume. Yale Law School, three federal clerkships including at the Supreme Court, a partner in a big law firm, an assistant solicitor general. She knew appellate litigation as few other lawyers can ever claim to. And I remember talking with her about a potential move to Legal Aid. There is no doubt that the new post was a shift, but Barb found herself loving the work. Her colleagues meant so much to her – I can only imagine what it would mean to her to see you all here tonight.

Legal Aid and Barb's cases here made a real difference to her and to the world around us. Her formidable skills as a writer and oral advocate were challenged from the get go, as she stepped in to ongoing cases. As her friend and colleague David Reizer put it, when Barb took a deposition in a case early on, it may have been the first she ever took. But if necessary she would do everything from trial work to Xeroxing, to win her case and serve her clients. Barb also

found herself immersed in a case that had not been well organized, cleaned it up, and helped the client prune the case to issues that could succeed. She handled cases for clients with mental disabilities, domestic abuse, and more. None of these were easy as legal matters or with picture perfect clients, but Barb had the magic that all lawyers want – she could humanize her cases, and at the same time explain doctrine with a clarity and precision that showcased her talent as a wordsmith, sure. But her briefs and arguments persuaded because the argument was based firmly in law, and unquestionably in the interests of justice.

I will close just by saying that we are holding up Barbara as an example to all lawyers today. This is fitting, because that is who she was. She had great capacity for justice, and also for joy in life. I now turn the podium over to the one person who brought her the most joy – they went to Nats games, took bicycle trips, swam distance, watched all the political talk shows on Sunday morning, and cared deeply about helping those in need. Barb's beloved husband Jerry Hartman has continued the good work that he and Barb began. I am proud to know him, and to see the great work of the McDowell Hartman Foundation. You are here tonight because Legal Aid is so vital to justice – our country needs more like you, and especially more just like Barb – but she is irreplaceable.