

In Memoriam

MATTHEW B. MORELAND

Robyn J. Spalter Past President of the Federal Bar Association

ROBYN J. SPALTER WAS a driven motivator who worked tirelessly for the FBA. Sadly, Robyn departed this world on May 28, 2012, well before her 50th birthday.

Robyn began her FBA career in the New Orleans Chapter and rose through the ranks from being an active younger lawyer all the way to FBA national president. She continued her FBA membership after her presidency as a member of the Broward County Chapter and was active in the Bankruptcy Law, Federal Litigation, and Health Law Sections. Because she loved the study and practice of law so much, she returned to school after her FBA presidency to obtain her LLM in healthcare law from Seton Hall Law School. Robyn worked tirelessly as a not only a leader but also as a hard working FBA member offering to do anything from grunt work to testifying in front of a Senate subcommittee on the need for additional judges. She was unanimously elected to the FBA national leadership ladder in 2000, while still in her 30s. Prior to this leadership step, Robyn had served as national chair of the FBA Younger Lawyers Division, vice president for the Fifth Circuit, and served in several leadership roles in the New Orleans Chapter. As she climbed the national FBA leadership ladder, Robyn always focused on the importance of our new and younger lawyers and the role they would play in the future growth of the FBA. However, there was one issue Robyn always felt the FBA would have to tackle before the association could grow and properly serve our members ... technology. In 2005, Robyn became the FBA's 78th president and immediately became known as the "technology president." That year, the FBA signed contracts for new database and accounting software, which was just the beginning of escaping the dark ages. Robyn's early initiatives would lead to a new, interactive website and the FBA's presence in social media.

Robyn had no fear of taking the bull by the horns. During her year as president, she had the opportunity to testify before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee on new federal judgeships. While this opportunity was presented as a courtesy to her in her position as the president, many would have opted

to let the FBA's government relations counsel or the chair of the FBA Government Relations Committee handle the issue. Robyn, however, took the duty to heart. Upon completion of her testimony, it was evident that she had brought greater awareness to the issue on behalf of the FBA and the judiciary. Additionally, prior to becoming FBA president, Robyn worked tirelessly for the passage of a new bankruptcy bill in Congress. She was also a principal player in the change of the FBA governance structure and was the last president

to preside over the former Executive Committee. She often joked about the new structure being something she must really support, since she was essentially voting herself out of the officer position of immediate past president.

Her great love of family—specifically her niece and nephew, Skylar and Spencer—was exuded in her return to Florida to watch them grow up and work avidly for Autism Speaks, a foundation in which she believed greatly. Her diverse interests included making pottery, making jewelry, and scuba diving. To know that Robyn passed while scuba diving, a sport she traveled the world to do, lets us know we lost her in her favorite place. She was a loving, caring person who only wanted happiness and joy for everyone and everything she touched. We are honored to have been touched by her through the Federal Bar Association, and proud to watch as her legacy of technological advancement continues to grow. **TFL**



Matthew B. Moreland is a member of the FBA Board of Directors and the New Orleans Chapter of the FBA.