

Obituary

William G. Welzenbach 1942-2006

Attorney Had High Standards

By Kenneth Davis
Daily Journal Staff Writer

Services are pending for William G. Welzenbach, a longtime Southern California insurance and real estate litigator.

Welzenbach, a retired partner in the Bakersfield office of Borton, Petrini & Conron, died Feb. 22 of heart disease. He was 63.

"He was an excellent attorney, very well-versed on the law," said John F. Petrini, a name partner with Borton Petrini. "He was hardworking and cared about his clients."

Welzenbach was born in Peoria, Ill., Nov. 2, 1942. When he was a young boy, he moved with his family to Arizona and then to California.

He served in the Navy from 1963 to 1964. After his discharge, he completed his bachelor's degree at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles and graduated with honors from Loyola Law School in 1970.

Welzenbach began his legal career as a prosecutor with the Los Angeles city attorney's office. He also worked in the office's civil division, defending lawsuits against the city.

In 1972, he joined Wyman, Bautzer, Rothman & Kuchel in Beverly Hills. He left the firm a year later and joined Beverly Hills-based Yusim, Cassidy,

Stein, Hanger & Olson, where he stayed for a year.

Welzenbach helped establish the Century City firm King, Williams & Welzenbach in 1975. He specialized in civil litigation and insurance defense work at the firm.

"He was one of the most ethical and responsible attorneys I could ever hope to meet," said Michael P. King, one of the co-founders of King Williams, which is now the Brentwood firm King & Hanagami.

King said he met Welzenbach when they were associates at Wyman Bautzer more than 30 years ago.

"He was extraordinarily loyal and had an extremely high sense of morality," King said. "He was a partner and a friend."

Welzenbach left King Williams in 1981 to work a two-year stint as general counsel for Fred Sands Realtors in Brentwood. In 1983, he joined Wilson, Elser, Moskowitz, Edelman & Dicker's Los Angeles office, where he remained for 10 years.

In 1993, he joined Home Insurance Co. in Los Angeles, where he worked as a staff attorney in the company's litigation department. In 1995, he spent a year at the Walnut Creek firm of Archer, McComas, Breslin, McMahon & Chritton. In 1997, he moved to Borton Petrini, where he remained until his retirement in

2004.

Welzenbach also served as a judge pro tem. In addition, he was an expert horseman and won many awards for his horsemanship, according to Petrini.

"Bill was a wonderful guy," King said. "Bill was a rare gem, a perfect gentleman and somebody who was always loyal."

"We should all go out having a reputation like Bill did."

King said that when Welzenbach was a young man, he was diagnosed with stomach cancer, and a priest administered last rites.

That experience greatly strengthened Welzenbach's faith, King said.

"Bill was a wonderful friend," said Ralph O. Williams III, a Los Angeles mediator.

Williams, a co-founder of King Williams, met Welzenbach when they joined Wyman Bautzer as associates.

"Michael [King] and I would muse that if we were stuck somewhere at two-thirty in the morning, all we had to do was call Bill, and he would be there, no questions asked," Williams said.

Welzenbach is survived by his wife, Ginny Welzenbach of Tulare; son, Matthew Welzenbach; brother, Jack Welzenbach; sister, Barbara Becker; stepchildren, Michael Lopes, Christine Lopes and Gabriel Lopes; and two grandchildren.



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Patriot Act Shortens Death Appeals

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Defense attorneys claim the plan will deter private attorneys from taking death penalty cases in federal court, leading to even more delays. They even worry that some inmates will end up deprived of counsel altogether.



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Lynn
As Bill was very proud to be part of cowboy lawyers*