

Memorial: Beverly Ann Lipton (1949–2002)

¶1 Beverly Ann Lipton died on July 4, 2002, in Mountain View, California, a few months shy of her fifty-third birthday after a courageous and prolonged battle with breast cancer. To those who knew her, it seems that Bev picked July 4 to declare her independence from the cancer as if to mock what she referred to as the “monster.”

¶2 Bev was born Beverly Ann Blackman on October 15, 1949, in San Diego, California. She graduated in 1967 from Crawford High School in San Diego and then began her undergraduate work at San Diego State University. Before completing her degree, Bev married Barry Lipton and moved to Los Angeles, California, where she enrolled at Cal State Northridge. She received her B.A. in 1972. After graduating, she began work at the Los Angeles Public Library which sparked her interest in the library profession, and the idea of becoming a librarian took firm root. By 1982, Bev, Barry, and their three-year-old son Scott moved to northern California where Bev made the transition from the public library environment to begin her career as a law librarian at Brobeck, Phleger & Harrison in San Francisco.

¶3 Bev’s years at Brobeck in San Francisco held a special place in her heart. She always recalled that time with the same awe and excitement many have experienced on the first day of college. Bev’s confidence in her professional abilities quickly grew as she worked with the library staff and received their mentoring. This experience helped Bev evolve into an excellent mentor herself, almost a surrogate mother, guiding the careers of many young law librarians she worked and interacted with in later years. Her trademark greeting was “Hey Kiddo!” as she went about explaining or answering questions in some area of legal research that had stumped the inquirer. Bev loved to share her knowledge and was always willing to teach librarians, attorneys, and anyone interested in research. She would take on any project that needed tackling no matter how heavy her workload and was never too busy to help. She could be counted on for personal support as well, always making people feel comfortable.

¶4 By 1985, Brobeck’s three-year-old Palo Alto, California, office was large enough to require the services of a full-time resident librarian. Bev was relocated from the San Francisco office to fill this position. Apart from being one of the early solo private law librarians in the Bay Area, she was also a founding member of the Peninsula Law Librarians Brown Bag Lunch Group, which met to discuss the challenges they faced and to exchange information. Beginning with only three private law librarians, this group today boasts a membership of more than fifty and is still growing. Bev firmly believed in the value of the community, saying that “Law firm libraries are like their own little Switzerlands. Even if the firms may be opposing counsel, the libraries continue to help one another.”

¶5 Bev was a friendly, enthusiastic woman with a large heart, a generous spirit,

and a warm smile who knew everyone. She always had time for her friends and colleagues and enjoyed introducing them to each other. She threw herself into her work both at the office and with the local law library community. She was also a member of AALL and NOCALL. At NOCALL, for whom she was an active volunteer from 1983 to 1996, she contributed her energies to several different committees at various times, including Education, Membership, and Local Arrangements (responsible for organizing NOCALL workshops). In addition she served as the chair of the Grants and Public Relations committees, and was the assistant newsletter editor. Bev played a significant role in the 1994 NOCALL Institute, "Issues in Intellectual Property," particularly beneficial to attendees as it provided practical tips from local patent experts. The timing of the institute was almost perfect since it was held just as the Silicon Valley was accelerating into high gear, triggered by changes in patent law that were to take effect on June 8, 1995.

¶6 In 1986, Bev completed her graduate work in library science, earning her MLIS degree from San Jose State University. Bev loved law librarianship, often working late into the night to stay abreast of new products and Internet sites. New technology excited her, both with its current abilities and its future possibilities. In the early 1990s Bev played a pivotal role in pushing West Publishing to improve its technology and devise a way to use one stand-alone printer for both Westlaw and LexisNexis. Following this accomplishment, she wrote an article, "The Cold War Is Over, or Using Lexis/Nexis & Westlaw on A Single Printer," that was published in a number of places. This change was especially significant, first because it eliminated a printer, thereby reducing operating costs, and second and more important, because it helped save physical space, absolutely essential irrespective of the size or success of a law firm. Bev's extraordinary commitment to technology and its benefit to the legal community and law librarianship also made her part of a small, but integral group of experts that Global Securities Information, Inc., consulted with on product enhancements to LIVEDGAR. GSI considered Bev's contributions and feedback invaluable to making LIVEDGAR the service it is today.

¶7 Bev remained a child at heart throughout her life. Her favorite vacations were going to Disneyland with her family. She was an avid fan of the San Diego Padres and followed them with a passion. Her collections ranged from Hiro Yamagata prints to baseball cards, Beanie Babies, and Disney characters. With the advent of eBay, she was a regular customer, both buying and selling, and later displaying the booty proudly like a museum curator. Her childlike spirit would take on an added exuberance during the Halloween and Christmas seasons when she would spend hours meticulously decorating the library.

¶8 In addition to her contributions to law librarianship, Bev was very loyal and committed to Brobeck, Phleger & Harrison. As the Palo Alto office grew to more than 150 attorneys, Bev voluntarily took on the responsibility of the docket/calendar and the conflicts department in addition to the library. She made it a point to

participate in all aspects of the Brobeck community as well as playing an active role in the firm's United Way campaign and the San Francisco AIDS Walk. She was instrumental in bringing the Community Breast Health Project and the American Cancer Society's Cattle Baron's Ball to the attention of the Brobeck Charitable Foundation. In early 2002, Bev was able to visit the nearly complete centralized high tech library she had always envisioned in Brobeck's new East Palo Alto office. Just before her death, Brobeck East Palo Alto appropriately dedicated the library to the woman who had designed, built, and nurtured it. The plaque located at the entrance of the library, understated yet tasteful, simply reads, "The Lipton Library in Honor of Beverly Lipton for Her Years of Dedication and Service."—*Aruna B. Marathe*¹

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