

## Memorial: Lydia H. Freeman (1942–2003)



¶1 Lydia Freeman, law librarian at Hanson, Bridgett, Marcus, Vlahos & Rudy, LLP in San Francisco for more than twenty-four years, died on March 19, 2003, after a two-year battle with cancer of the stomach lining. In October 1978, Hanson Bridgett was a firm of twenty attorneys when Lydia was hired as its first librarian. In February 2003, the firm had 117 attorneys and three offices but still only one librarian—the remarkable Lydia H. Freeman.

¶2 She was born Lydia Hernandez in Manila, the Philippines, on July 3, 1942, and grew up with one sister and two brothers. Lydia attended the University of the East in Manila with her best friend, Elisa Deang. They both received B.S. degrees in library science and shortly thereafter moved to New York City. While working for Coopers & Lybrand in Manhattan, Lydia went on to earn her M.L.S. from the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn.

¶3 In 1978, with Elisa married and now living in San Francisco, Lydia decided to come to California also. She met her husband, Bob Freeman, and started her law library career that same year.

¶4 Both Bob and Lydia are quiet, shy, and reserved. Bob claims that if it wasn't for the elephant, Big Bertha, the two would never have met. Bob occasionally drove to Reno for the weekend. However, one time he decided to take the bus. Elisa and her mother wanted the California newcomer, Lydia, to visit Reno, so they also took the bus that same weekend. When Bob boarded the bus for the return trip, there were only a few empty seats. As he sat down next to Lydia, Bob noticed casino owner John Asuaga's elephant being led past the bus. Bob pointed Big Bertha out to Lydia, and they became acquainted on the four-hour bus ride back to the Bay Area. They were married at St. Paul Catholic Church in San Francisco.

¶5 Lydia had a beautiful singing voice, loved to play the piano and sew. She and Bob started a doll collection. Lydia made her wedding dress, children's clothes for nieces, nephews, and godchildren, and doll dresses for the doll collection. She continued taking piano lessons all her life.

¶6 Because Lydia was a solo librarian and a very modest person, few librarians knew what an outstanding professional she was. Lydia handled every aspect of her position with precision and skill. One had only to step into her library and this became evident. The collection was thoughtfully arranged for law firm lawyer use. Everything was neat and organized—books, audiovisual material, newspapers and periodicals, library financial records, subscription and filing material. Lydia could put her hand on the most obscure piece of paper at a moment's notice.

¶7 Lydia handled change with style and aplomb—the firm growth's, more demands on the library's resources, the advent of technology, reduction of the print collection, library budget considerations were all managed so well by Lydia that the firm didn't think they needed an additional professional librarian. In March 2003, shortly before her death, Hanson Bridgett named their library the Lydia H. Freeman Library in her honor. Lydia may have been small in stature but it will be impossible to fill her shoes with one person.

¶8 Lydia, a sweet, gentle person, was loved and admired by all who knew her. She is survived by her beloved husband, Bob, her mother, two brothers, one sister, numerous nieces and nephews of whom she was so proud, and her lovely cat, Helga.

¶9 Lydia was a member of AALL, the Northern California Association of Law Libraries (NOCALL), and one of the founding members of the San Francisco Mid-Size Librarians Group. She always attended local educational programs and institutes to keep abreast of the changes in our profession. Her firm, Hanson Bridgett, and NOCALL will miss her terribly.—*Lille Koski*<sup>1</sup>

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