

EDWIN TRAIN CALDWELL

1932 - 2015

Edwin Train Caldwell A distinguished trial attorney, passed away peacefully, on November 1, 2015, with his children Mike, Tracy and Karen Caldwell at his side. He was 83. Born on April 19, 1932 in Webster Grove, Missouri, Ed and his family migrated to SF in the 40's, where he attended grammar school, and later graduated from Washington High School. He served in the Air Force during the Korean War, and thanks to the GI bill, later went to Law School and started his practice at the Hotel Whitcomb in 1965. Ed was a fierce competitor and staunch supporter of the rights of others. He built his practice fighting for injured victims, people accused of heinous crimes, and the downtrodden. He grew to be known for his never-say-never spirit, intelligence, quick wit and tireless work ethic. He found success in both the criminal and civil arenas in a time of turmoil and change in San Francisco, the civil rights movement, and the California State Bar. His courage and belief that everyone deserved fair and competent representation found him representing the likes of Hugo Pinnel of the San Quentin Six, and Pricilla Philips, the notorious Marin mother accused of killing two of her children. As his career path rose he focused his prodigious courtroom talents on injured plaintiffs, becoming one of the very best trial lawyers of his era. His victories were many and varied, and his client list is littered with stories of lives changed through his efforts. Some of his legal accolades included president of the San Francisco Trial Lawyers Association, Member of the American Board of Trial Advocates, and SFTLA Lifetime Achievement Award recipient. Passionate about social justice, Ed supported many of the day's top politicians and social activists, including John Burton, Willie Brown, George Moscone, Jerry Brown, and Diane Feinstein, to name just a few. He also supported all sorts of humanitarian efforts to better the world, including Doctors Without Borders, the ACLU, Greenpeace and justice programs in various states. Ed was not without difficulty--as the product of an alcoholic family, he found himself following the footsteps of his deceased mother into alcohol addiction. With the help of Alcoholics Anonymous, he got sober in 1976 and remained so until the date of his passing, almost 40 years later. He applied his tireless work ethic, attitude and aptitude in passing the message of recovery on to others who were similarly afflicted. He started The Other Bar in 1977 to help legal professionals get and stay sober, and he has helped hundreds of men and woman find and maintain sobriety, in the process literally changing the lives of countless others. As one lawyer said: "Ed Caldwell saved my life, my marriage and my practice". He was renowned for never giving up on anyone suffering from the disease of alcoholism. There wasn't a day in his sober life that he didn't give of his time, energy, finances, or connections to help others, or to help others help others. The web of his efforts continues to grow to this day, as others pass on the message of love, support, and service he demonstrated for decades. As one man said when contacted about Ed's passing, "He was truly a great one...never ever forget that...a great one." Ed's family would like to thank the many superb caregivers, who helped during this leg of his life journey, including those at Vintage Golden Gate and the excellent medical staff at the VA Hospital. In lieu of flowers, his family requests donations be directed to the wonderful Alzheimer's team at the VA in San Francisco . Ed is survived by his children and five grandchildren, Zoe and Hatkey Goldstein, Lauren Caldwell-Hollybee and Grace and Jack Caldwell. He was pre-deceased by two women he adored, his first wife, Carlene, and his sister Robin. Services for Edwin Train Caldwell will be held at St. Sebastian's Church, Greenbrae on December 5, 2015 at 11:00 am, with a lunch reception to follow.

Published in Marin Independent Journal from Nov. 10 to Nov. 15, 2015