



Jo Ann Brighton, ESQ

May 11, 1964 - March 5, 2020

On Thursday, March 5, 2020 Jo Ann Brighton passed into the arms of her Lord and Savior.

It is God who arms me with strength, And makes my way perfect. Psalm 18:32

Jo Ann was born on May 11, 1964 to John and Dolores (Andrisani) Jawidzik. They gave her the gifts of a caring heart, strong will and love of family. Her siblings Linda Tar, Karen Zinn and John Jr were in awe of her and aspired to follow her lead in life, but she wasn't perfect. She did the best she could.

Jo graduated from University of Delaware in 1986 with a BS in Economics and graduated from New York Law School, JD magna cum laude in 1989.

She met her husband, Joel T. Brighton at Duane, Morris & Heckscher in Philadelphia, PA—he was devoted to her and loved her unconditionally. They married on June 6, 1992 and began their adventure by moving to a farm in New Hampshire where they started their family. The greatest gifts in her life were her four children, Casey (Starkey), Carl John (CJ), Micah and Zachary Brighton. She is also survived by her son-in-law, Stetson Starkey, her soon to be daughter-in-law, Sydney Merck, her close and dear friend, Caroline Hadley and a large extended family—too many to list here.

Joel, Jo Ann and her children moved to Charlotte, NC in 2004. She knew the demands of the legal profession and was prepared to “give it all up” in order to give her family her attention full time. But she was convinced to take on the role of Special Counsel at Kennedy Covington Lobdell & Hickman—a unique offer which made it possible to practice law and take care of her family.

Jo Ann practiced law for more than 25 years and loved every minute of it. She was a leader in the area of Bankruptcy and spoke on the topic at conferences in 47 cities in the US, Dubai and London. She was the author or co-author of over 60 articles, and was affiliated with the

American Bankruptcy Institute where she served as co-chair of the Business Reorganization Committee (2006-2008) and the Editorial Board (2008). She was inducted into the American College of Bankruptcy in 2008 (class of XIX)—one of the highest honors one can receive in her industry. Among some of the awards she received were: Women in Business Achievement Award (2008); 50 most influential women in Charlotte (2009); 2015 Edition of Best Lawyers in America.

Jo Ann was not just a leader in her professional life, she gave her whole heart to everyone she met. There was always a hot meal and warm bed in her home for anyone who needed it. When she met Mark and Dianne Zimmer at Bible Baptist church, she was inspired to take her family to the island of Yap to teach God's love at Yap Baptist Church. And, instead of just taking her family to the Disney parks, she made arrangements for them to start their vacation by volunteering at Give Kids the World, a non-profit resort in Central Florida providing children with critical illness a vacation of a lifetime.

In her spare time she loved the beach, reading, cooking, entertaining, fresh flowers and dogs.

Before she passed she talked about her struggles and how she wanted to be remembered. "I made mistakes. I tried my best to be the kind of person God wanted me to be and sometimes, I fell short. Please don't define me by how I was in the end, remember my whole life." She also added "To those of you who thought they could've prevented this, there is nothing you could have done. This was all on me."

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in her honor to one of the following organizations:

- Give Kids the World Village <http://support.gktw.org/goto/JoAnnBrighton>
- Companions for Heroes

<https://companionsforheroes.z2systems.com/np/clients/companionsforheroes/donation.jsp>

On Thursday, March 12, 2020 friends are invited to visit with the family and celebrate her life at 11:30 followed by a memorial service at 1PM at Northside Baptist Church, 333 Jeremiah Boulevard in Charlotte, NC.

Condolences to jbrightonmemorial@gmail.com