



**A Tribute to the Honorable Ronald R. Donatucci, Sr.**

by John Mattioni

Ron Donatucci has been a friend for many years. Ron's father was the Democratic Ward Leader for the 26<sup>th</sup> Ward and sponsored Dante Mattioni when he ran for State Representative. When Ron's father passed unexpectedly, Dante's bid floundered, but the family connection remained steadfast.

Ron was a loyal graduate of Central High School and Temple University. He was always a Philly fan. When I was in the City Solicitor's Office my professional connection with Ron began when he served as a member of a class of Law Clerks assigned to our Claims Section in our Litigation Division. This class was memorable in that many of its members achieved great success in the law. Little did we know that Ron would himself become such a high achiever. His lifetime of public service is remarkable in its scope and diversity. Inquirer Staff Writer Chris Brennan captured Ron's essence when he said: "Gregoriously

oversize in style while small in stature, Mr. Donatucci was always seeking connections that solved problems.”<sup>1</sup> Ron always believed he could help anyone and everyone who needed help no matter who you were.

It’s obligatory to mention at least some of the milestones and highlights of his life along the way. He was chief of Enforcement in the Licenses and Inspections Department, counsel to the Philadelphia Parking Authority, he was elected to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, and then as long term Register of Wills. He served as a Democratic Ward Leader, and as a Super-Delegate to the 2008 Democratic National Convention. In addition, he served as President of the Board of City Trusts, Chairman of the Board of Wills Eye Hospital Health System, Trustee and Board Member of Temple University Health System, and member of the Board of the Fox Chase Cancer Center. Ron used these positions and achievements in his endeavor to help others.

He was the recipient of so many honors, awards and commendations by important civic, charitable, and philanthropic organizations which are too numerous to mention here. Important to us, he was admitted to the Pennsylvania and federal bars as a highly rated civil practice attorney. He has been a valued friend throughout our years together. That friendship was strengthened when he

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<sup>1</sup> Philadelphia Inquirer, Friday, 11-6-2020, B1.

joined the Mattioni firm as of counsel. His passing is a loss which cannot be replaced; his shoes are too large for any other person to fill.

Ron's life was not without tragedy. His life was turned upside down with the death of his son Michael in July 2016. Michael was young, charismatic and intelligent, with a highly successful career in public finance ahead of him. To cope with this loss Ron and his family started Michael's Giving Hand, a foundation dedicated to coping with mental illness. Although his recent years have been fraught with turmoil, Ron maintained his zest for life, and his strong of love of family. He continued to be generous with all those in need of his help. Michael's Giving Hand gave Ron purpose and helped he and his family turn a devastating loss into a meaning for continuing with his new life's work: aiding those in distress from anxiety and depression. Michael's Giving Hand will continue its good work, affirming Ron's new purpose in life. The immediate Donatucci family will continue pursuit of Michael's Giving Hand's goals as a fulfillment of Ron's dream of finding meaning in helping others who suffer from anxiety and depression. Ron's purpose is to turn this tragic loss into a positive path to ultimate victory over this debilitating illness.

We will remember Ron with love, respect and affection. Ron's good deeds will ensure his legacy, for he has far exceeded by word and deed, this mentor's fondest hopes for successfully imparting in him a strong desire for worthy

achievement. Ron Donatucci gave us full measure. He was for us a good and faithful servant; and for him, his was a life well lived.