

## **INTRODUCTION: A TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE MARY F. WALRATH**

Each year, the *Emory Bankruptcy Developments Journal* honors an individual who has significantly affected the field of insolvency and restructuring law with the Distinguished Service Award for Lifetime Achievement. Past recipients of the Distinguished Service Award include: The Honorable William L. Norton, Jr. (1999); Kenneth N. Klee (2000); Frank R. Kennedy (2001); Harvey R. Miller (2002); The Honorable David H. Coar (2003); Gerald K. Smith (2004); The Honorable Conrad B. Duberstein (2005); Senator Dennis W. DeConcini (2006); The Honorable W. Homer Drake, Jr. (2007); Professor Douglas G. Baird (2008); Senator Elizabeth Warren (2009); Barry W. Ridings (2010); Tony Alvarez II and Bryan Marsal (2011); The Honorable Justice Geoffrey B. Morawetz (2012); Richard Levin (2013); Professor David Epstein (2014); Professor Marjorie Girth (2015); Professor Grant W. Newton (2016); and Keith J. Shapiro (2017). On March 29, 2018, we presented The Honorable Mary F. Walrath with the Twentieth Annual Distinguished Service Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Judge Walrath received her Bachelor's degree from Princeton University in 1976, and she earned her J.D., cum laude, from Villanova University in 1979. After graduating from Villanova, Judge Walrath clerked for U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Emil F. Goldhaber. Judge Walrath subsequently spent years building her legal practice at the Philadelphia law firm Clark, Ladner, Fortenbaugh & Young. In 1998, Judge Walrath was appointed to the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware; where she served as Chief Bankruptcy Judge from 2003 to 2008.

She is a co-President and founding member of the Delaware Bankruptcy American Inn of Court, and a member of the Delaware Chapter of the International Women's Insolvency & Restructuring Confederation. In 2016 Judge Walrath served as the President of the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges, and from 2009 to 2015 she served as an associate editor of the American Bankruptcy Law Journal.

It is difficult to overstate the significance of Judge Walrath's contributions to bankruptcy law. In *In re Universal Building Products*, Judge Walrath reshaped the bankruptcy landscape by concretely establishing what constitutes an attorney's unethical solicitation of potential clients. In *In re Washington Mutual, Inc.*, she published a widely cited decision analyzing third party releases in the bankruptcy context. If there exists a contested, unique, or otherwise complicated

area of bankruptcy law, chances are that Judge Walrath has spoken on the issue, and chances are she got it right.

To mark the occasion, Judge Walrath was introduced by former law clerk David Wender. After her introduction, Judge Walrath addressed all those in attendance at the *Journal's* Annual Banquet. The *Emory Bankruptcy Developments Journal* is delighted to present a revised version of David Wender's introduction, and of Judge Walrath's acceptance speech from when we presented her with the Distinguished Service Award for Lifetime Achievement. Please join us in celebrating the accomplishments of the Honorable Mary F. Walrath.

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