



TRIBUTE TO NORM ROBBINS

BY JOSEPH W. CUNNINGHAM, JD, CPA

Norm Robbins died in late January at age 99. He was a pioneering luminary in Michigan family law.

Norm and a handful of other prestigious family law attorneys founded the Family Law Section of the State Bar in the 1970s. I believe Norm served as the first chairperson of the Section and was instrumental in its successful launch. From that initial small core of attorneys, the Section grew to 3,000 and became active on many fronts.

Norm was also the first to be honored with the Section's Lifetime Achievement Award—a recognition of his many high-level contributions to the practice of family law in Michigan.

To wit, he was largely responsible for establishing the *Michigan Family Law Journal* as one of the state's best section periodicals. Norm was the initial editor of the MFLJ and served in that capacity for over forty years. Doing so was a labor of love for Norm. He was extremely dedicated to maintaining and improving its high quality.

Norm maintained two columns for many years – his insightful “Commentary” and his delightful “Quid Pro Quo” – “Did You Know” column.

In 1981, Norm asked me to begin my Tax Trends and Developments column. As the first regular MFLJ columnist other than Norm, I was deeply honored.

This also gave me an opportunity to deepen my friendship with Norm, which I have cherished these many years.

Norm was more than an exceptional, pioneering family law attorney. He was kind and considerate. He brought civility and moderation to fractious situations. He was an “old school” lawyer in the best sense of the term.

Norm was a gentleman and a gentle man. He was exemplary of the many virtues of the Greatest Generation to which he belonged

While Norm will be dearly missed, his prodigious legacy – as one of the founders of the Family Law Section and longtime editor of the highly regarded *Michigan Family Law Journal* – will survive him well into the future.

All of us in the Michigan family law arena are better off because of Norm. It was an honor to know him.