



HON. EVELYN MAROSE

On Aug. 23, 2004, my business partner, Walter Lucas, Esq. passed away after suffering complications from a surgery performed on Dec. 1, 2003. While Walter was released just days after the surgery, he was readmitted on Jan. 2, 2004 and with the exception of a 24-hour period at Kessler Rehabilitation Institute, he remained hospitalized from Jan. 2, 2004 to Aug. 23, 2004.

Walter had one son in college, one daughter in high school, one son in grammar school and a professional working spouse. During the months of his hospitalization, Walter and his family needed substantial love, care and assistance. I either began or ended every day with a visit to the hospital to see Walter and spend the rest of the day caring for our business. There was much to do to survive. Members of the legal community, in particular the Essex County Bar Association and its individual members, offered their unconditional support.

I would like to see a mechanism in place to assist colleagues who might not have partner(s), or whose partner(s) might need assistance to keep their firm healthy, while the incapacitated attorney is able to devote his energies to recovery. Thanks to the vision of NJSBA President Keefe and the work of the Lawyers Helping Lawyers Task Force, a proposed means of assistance is formulating that will include, among other things, a proposed rule change, an emergency plan checklist and a designation of an attorney or firm willing to help a colleague, especially a sole practitioner, in need.