

KC Counselor Distinguished Counselor Award Article
Honoring Aubrey Redmon
by Antonette DuPree, Esq.

It was only within the past year that I have had the pleasure of working with Aubrey, but even just weeks into our new venture, I could tell that I was truly embarking on a journey with someone who had a unique vision for the practice of law. You see, I have known Aubrey my whole life and so writing this tribute is an honor for me. She became my friend in Kindergarten and even then, my little friend was a visionary. She was a brilliant kind of smart, the kind of smart you recognize at even that very early age, but this is not what children remember about their friends most. No, what I remember most is her smile, her one of a kind laugh, and her kindness toward everyone. We did not go to an affluent school. In fact, we went to school with some of the poorest children in Independence and yet that didn't matter to her. She was a ray of sunshine and she left my life after our third grade school year when her parents relocated their family to Raymore, Missouri. I thought I would never see her again, even though I thought of her often.

Last May I was able to reunite with her through our other Partner, Jasmine Abou-Kassem and it has been one of the great blessings of my life, for it was what predicated the start of our firm, Spark! Legal Solutions, LLLP. Aubrey had worked and toiled for ten (10) years to build up what was a thriving probate litigation practice. What I brought to the table in terms of tangible business was scant to none. I was a third year lawyer, who practiced employment discrimination as an Associate in a small firm. I had nothing to offer this new firm but my talents – and that was alright with Aubrey, she made me her Partner. She did not flinch. She brought me in, saw me for who I was and what I had to offer at the time and shared her clients and her business with me – willingly, happily. This was because it was more important to her to create an environment in which her Partners viewed themselves as being on equal footing, than it was for her to maintain “ownership” alone of what she herself had built. This is the exemplification of all the qualities you should want in your nominee for Distinguished Counselor. There is however more; although that alone would qualify her for this award in my book, as I have never witnessed such a selfless act of sacrifice for the betterment of others.

Her creative way of thinking helps her come up with unique solutions that help solve problems that routinely arise in litigation. I have witnessed this creative energy more than once, whether it was a simple re-framing of an issue to provide a unique and individualized perspective to get a deal done or a more complex strategy, she regularly provides that guidance when needed. She has managed to maintain friendly and collegial relationships with opposing counsel in even the tensest of situations. She is not a “game player”. She would rather win because of masterful litigation. Anyone who has ever litigated with a master at gamesmanship understands the two are not the same.

Aubrey is effervescent, a breath of fresh air to work with. For those of us who have the pleasure of knowing her well, she is often very thoughtful. She is mindful of your likes and dislikes and tries to be respectful of the ways in which you optimally work, and she will do her best to oblige where she can. Aubrey also has an incredible sense of humor, and often keeps us rolling, like

when she presented Jasmine with a candle which read, "Meetings - smells like this could have been an email." She wanted us to create a firm which bucked all the traditional notions of law firm life and that is the epitome of who we are, and it makes me so proud! Aubrey has put time and effort into creating a masterful balance between her stellar work ethic and her responsibilities at home, and even though she makes it look seamless, she will admit finding that balance has been the most difficult part of her career.

Most importantly, she gives her time to others less fortunate, and many times she does it without compensation. She was recognized in the fall for her outstanding pro-bono work, which has been numerous. When we started in the field of cannabis law, we were asked to speak about the pro-bono work we were doing for the Canna Convicts Project, she explained that we had a duty as litigators who will ultimately profit from legalization, to help those who are still in jail for doing the exact same thing that millions of people in legalized states are now doing "legally" every day. I could not agree more! It is our great honor to work with you every day and call you Partner. Congratulations to our Distinguished Counselor!

With Much Love,

Antonette DuPree,
Jasmine Abou-Kassem, and
Sheila Watzlawick