

Those of us who came to know and enjoy this spunky woman during her 23+ years of service with Mass. Defenders and CPCS have hundreds of valued memories of Maura.

Two events which occurred just last week will always stay with me as I remember Maura. On Martin Luther King Day, I was sitting with Maura and Paula in the Medford funeral home where Rita Caso's brother was being remembered. We talked about the extra dimension of tragedy when a person dies too soon, and compared it to the example of Maura's parents who, before they died, had the satisfaction of seeing their children grow into successful adults. Unconsciously, I think, we each assumed that we would emulate the elder Mellens and live long into the future. That conversation, so soon before Maura's own sudden passing, surpasses every prior lesson I had thought I'd learned of life's frailty and precious value.

My second remembrance is of Friday, January 22, Maura's last day of work. She came down with an armload of contracts which required the chief counsel's signature. We bantered back and forth as I shuffled the papers. When I finished, Maura gave me that appraising look which all who enjoyed her know so well, and said, "OK, you [no name, no title] can take the rest of the day off." It was 9:45 a.m. This final conversation will endure in my memory as so typical of Maura's zest and irreverence and joy for life. It is typical that on what turned out to be her final day here, she left scores of such anecdotes and happy recollections among so many who were privileged to be her friends.

Our hearts and our support are extended to Michael, to Susan, and to all the other members of the proud and accomplished Mellen family. We want them to be assured that Maura will always be remembered with warmth and smiles by her work family.

In Maura's honor, several present and former members of staff have inquired about the possibility of establishing a scholarship fund in her name. We will report to you further at a future date.

William J. Leahy
January 24, 1999