

We regret to inform you of the March 1 , 2003, death of Imelda LaMountain, who served as a public defender in our Berkshire County trial office from 1987 until her retirement in March, 2002. Mel was one of the few Massachusetts lawyers whose career encompassed not only prosecution and criminal defense, but also significant professional service in both the eastern and far western portions of the state. During her career, Mel earned a reputation as a top-notch trial attorney who possessed formidable litigation skills.

Mel was very active in public life and broke several gender barriers, as the attached obituary from today's Berkshire Eagle explains. In 1989, Mel was commended by Chief Counsel Arnold Rosenfeld upon her election as President of the Berkshire County Bar Association. She was the first, and we believe to date the only, member of our staff to be elected to lead a county bar association.

We were privileged to attend the party hosted this time last year by the Pittsfield office to honor Mel on the occasion of her retirement. It was a community celebration of a distinguished legal career, and everyone wished Mel a long and healthy retirement which, sadly, was not to be realized.

In this time of great sorrow, we express our condolences to Mel 's family and her colleagues in the Pittsfield office; and we honor Mel 's memory by rededicating ourselves to the noble profession of representing the poor with competence and zeal.