

Launch of the Thompson Room
Arnold Bloch Leibler
Thursday 23 August 2018

Leonie died in December last year.

We loved each other very much. We were able to be together for 25 fabulous years.

I was not the only love of Leonie's life.

Obviously, the top of the list was her family - siblings, nephews and nieces, parents, her acquired children and their spouses and her acquired grandchildren.

There was an absolute rule that Leonie could never be called a grandmother.

But there are three others that I have to mention.

Charlie the Dog.

There was nothing Leonie wouldn't do for Charlie.

She left me four pages of handwritten instructions about how to look after Charlie.

And lots of post it notes around the house. They are still there to remind me.

Next is Point Addis.

This was the place where Leonie found real peace.

She gave me three pages of notes telling me how look after Point Addis.

Last but not least is ABL.

There are no notes telling me how to run ABL the way she tried to run it.

But I will always keep in my mind the hundreds of times she spoke to me about the firm. She always had two issues:

- How ABL should be run
- How ABL would be run if she was in charge.

There were so many things she worried about.

She wanted to make sure the young lawyers were properly looked after.

She wanted to make sure that the women lawyers were treated equally.

She wanted to have a hand in who made, and who didn't make, partner.

She wanted Wayne to be her personal driver – it didn't matter that Mark might have had first call – he was to be ignored.

She was even concerned about the office design and that it was the right shade of grey.

Most of all, she saw her main task to be “make sure Leon behaves himself”.

Leonie was so very upset when she had to stop work because of her illness.

But that didn't stop her taking a real interest in ABL and making her views known.

Two weeks before she died, Leon came to visit Leonie at Cabrini.

It may have been his last visit.

Leonie wanted a woman lawyer to have her room.

That turned out to be the last order that Leonie gave to Leon.

Leonie will be smiling right now.

I was always concerned that Leonie did not appreciate how smart she was and how much she was appreciated by the people she worked with.

Leonie would be overcome if she knew that this large room (almost next to Mark) would carry her name.

Maybe she would have been too overwhelmed to thank ABL for the honour.

But I can do that for Leonie, for her family and for myself.