

ELLEN MARIANI, 9/11 TRUTH ACTIVIST, HAS DIED

Family members of Ellen Mariani have disclosed that the outspoken "9/11 widow" and truth activist died in late 2015, says her former attorney Bruce Leichty. Mariani's daughter Lauren stated that her mother died of natural causes.

Leichty reports that the news came as a shock to him. After his professional engagement for Mrs. Mariani ended in 2013, he and his former client had remained on friendly terms, and "after frequent communications over a long period of time I was essentially giving her the space I thought she deserved and wanted after some 12 years of litigation," he said from his California office. The website established by the Ellen Mariani Legal Defense Fund, still in existence at www.marianilawsuit.com, did not report on the death because website founder and manager Vincent Gillespie did not receive a report of the death until Leichty learned of it, says Gillespie.

Mariani, originally from New Hampshire, had moved to Colorado and then to Arizona to be close to a daughter and her family. Leichty says that he is informed that Mariani's health took a sudden downturn while she was living with her daughter's family at their shared Arizona home.

"I am told that after receipt of her settlement she had been having some mobility issues, but that mentally she had remained healthy, until one morning her daughter Lauren came downstairs and found her mother unable to communicate normally." The daughter, who did not authorize this report, indicated that her mother never recovered and died 10/31/15 after a prolonged hospital stay.

"The reasons for Ellen's illness and death remain somewhat mysterious, but neither of the family members I have spoken with suggested that Ellen was the victim of foul play," noted Leichty. Mariani guarded her age closely, he said, and her age at the time of her death is not determined; no obituary was published.

Leichty says he subsequently spoke with another daughter who lived in another state but confirmed her mother's death. Family members said they had been reluctant to release information publicly at the time of death, he says, partly because of their experience with contentious litigation that had developed over the estate of Mrs. Mariani's deceased husband, Louis Neil Mariani.

Louis Neil Mariani, whose name is listed as a victim of terrorism at the 9/11 Memorial in New York, boarded United Airlines Flight 175 on 9/11/2001 in order to be present for the wedding of one of Ellen's daughters in California, and none of his remains were ever found after that flight is said to have crashed into the South Tower of the World Trade Center.

Ellen Mariani was the first family member to file a lawsuit against various air carriers, security companies and port authorities in what became known as the 9/11 litigation, after which Congress passed special legislation providing for a Victims' Compensation Fund and channeling all lawsuits to the Southern District of New York. The VCF was available to those who were willing to forego a lawsuit, but Mariani spurned the Fund and launched her own investigation, at one point even being persuaded to sue George W. Bush, notes Leichty. In that Pennsylvania federal court case Mariani was represented by Philip Berg and it

was later dismissed. Leichty said that filing was a move Mariani later regretted, although she never gave up her interest in digging for the truth.

Leichty's representation came about in connection with the more conventional tort litigation, conducted in the courtroom of Judge Alvin K. Hellerstein in the federal court in the Southern District of New York, where plaintiffs and defendants were represented under special rules created for a "mass tort" case-- although Hellerstein refused to allow Leichty to appear before him on the grounds that Mariani no longer held any personal rights.

Mariani had been convinced to relinquish her role in that case in favor of a probate executor after firing several attorneys, says Leichty; however, he says that Mariani soon came to believe that her interests were not being properly represented by the probate executor. She then sought relief to again pursue her own interests independent of the interests of the probate executor, as an injured spouse and not just as a representative of a decedent. She made her arguments both in New Hampshire probate court and in federal court, to no avail.

In addition to raising funds from supporters to file an unsuccessful petition to the U.S. Supreme Court, one of the last court actions in which she was involved was challenging a ruling of the 2nd Circuit, where a two-judge panel imposed sanctions on her and Leichty for disclosing the Israel-related connections of the New York trial judge, Alvin Hellerstein, and some of the defendants she was suing. One of the grounds Mariani asserted for trying to regain control over her spousal injury claim was that her successor

probate executor had a hopeless and blatant conflict of interest, in that his law firm had represented one or more of the defendants in the 9/11 litigation.

Many of the federal court pleadings and rulings are found at the website www.marianilawsuit.com.

"Ellen was a hero to many in the 9/11 truth movement for holding out, not taking the easy money from the victims' fund, not accepting the government's narrative, not wanting to settle, continuing to ask questions, and trying to find out what actually happened on 9/11 and why," says Leichty. Mariani also came under attack on the Internet, he notes, including from persons questioning her narrative and suggesting that she was a "crisis actor."

"The Ellen Mariani I knew was a bereaved and determined widow seeking the truth, a stubborn independent-minded woman who was less concerned about compensation than about justice," says Leichty. "The level of opposition, legal illogic, willful blindness and sophistry she and I encountered from 9/11 defendants and from the media and from the judges we dealt with was totally consistent with that."

"We lived in different states so we didn't see each other frequently, but she always impressed me with her authenticity and common sense. She was extremely vigilant and resilient. She insisted on being treated with dignity and honesty and not being patronized or pitied or medicated," says Leichty. "She won my enduring respect."

Leichty said the last time he spoke with Mrs. Mariani was when

he hosted 9/11 researcher Christopher Bollyn at a speaking event in San Dimas, California in September 2014. Bollyn chaired the Ellen Mariani Legal Defense Fund which raised money for Mariani's Supreme Court petition.

"Ellen graciously spoke to the audience by telephone before Christopher's presentation. I had the sense that with her own struggle over, she was just trying to be a grandmother and resume a normal life, but she was still passionate about 9/11 and her role as a truth activist was never far from her heart."

"I tried a number of times to get in touch with her during 2015, but never heard from her, and a number of others also said that Ellen was no longer communicating with them. So I eventually looked up the contact information I had for her daughter, and then learned the sad news."

"It probably came as an extra shock to me because Ellen was somehow the kind of person you just thought would never die. She always assured me during the case, somewhat defiantly, that she was not old and had a lot more living to do and that I was on dangerous territory even suggesting otherwise. And so after my legal engagement ended I looked forward to visiting with her periodically again in the future, and perhaps even cooperating with her in putting together a book, which she often spoke about." Leichthy says he does not believe the book was started.

Family members advise that Ellen Mariani is buried in New Hampshire not far from where she grew up, with the notation "9/11 Widow" on her gravestone.

"May her spirit of resistance and integrity live on, and may

her tribe of truth increase along with the answers that are yet to emerge about who was ultimately responsible for the death of her husband," says Leichty.