

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION FOR

WILLIAM TODD GATES

Presented at the Memorial and Recognition Ceremony

Held in the First Judicial District Court

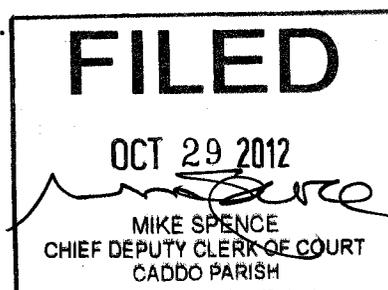
October 30, 2012

Under the Auspices of the Shreveport Bar Association

This is only my second public speaking engagement in front of the Shreveport Bar Association, and the first time I have spoken without Todd in attendance. The first time, last December, Chris Slatten and I spoke at the SBA CLE by the hour on Social Security Law. As you may guess, especially if you were there, it was a snoozefest. Several of you were asleep, even those of you on the front row. Not Todd. He sat on the last row and was downright merry as he worked (or played) on his Ipad the whole hour. Shortly after the presentation, he sent me a text which stated "You were the least annoying presenter of the whole day." In his witty, succinct, and sometimes imperious manner, he managed to compliment, demean, and show affection. Such was Todd, and as such, he is sorely missed.

He was born here on January 28, 1969, to a Billy and Charlotte Gates, of north Shreveport. His father owned Centenary Hardware throughout Todd's entire life. Todd grew up emulating his father, who taught him how to run a business but who also fostered common sense and an ability to solve problems. He grew up in the country, where he became proficient at hunting, gardening, and flying. He attended Trinity Heights Christian Academy and graduated from Loyola College Prep in 1987, and am told by one of his classmates that he made a small fortune trading penny stocks while in high school. At age eighteen, he was made the executor of his grandfather's estate, which he apparently handled with ease. He graduated from SMU in 1990 with a degree in Accounting. He then obtained a Masters in Accounting from the University of Mississippi in 1994. He graduated from Tulane Law School in 1996, and while there, served as a Justice for Moot Court Board. I met him in 1997, when he became a law clerk for U.S. Magistrate Judge Roy Payne, for whom he diligently served until 1998. Afterwards, he worked at what is now Laemmlle, Kelleher, specializing in oil and gas and business transactions. In 2000, he became the CFO for Sklar-Phillips, and later, Sklar Exploration. At age 40, he "retired" to run his own businesses and was eminently successful in a variety of business endeavors, ranging from a computer company to an oil and gas distribution and trucking business.

Although his success in business and law is astounding, the diversity of his life outside of work was also incredible. He was certified as an instrument and commercial pilot, as well as a hot air balloonist. He was also an Eagle Scout, and received it's highest honor. He eventually served on the NORWELA Board of Directors as President. He was a Reserve Sheriff's Deputy (Commander since 2009), who actively patrolled on the weekends. One of my favorite patrol stories is of the first woman that Todd arrested for DWI, who proceeded to beat him up on the side of the road. He said that she scratched and bit him, and that he was torn between defending himself and completing the arrest. That was Todd, always a gentleman. He received much teasing from the other reserve officers after he returned to the substation with the perpetrator. He went on to teach at the Sheriff's Academy, where he reworked their training program. Within a few years he had upgraded the reserve unit such that they could operate concurrently with S.W.A.T teams. He, at one time or another, kept honey bees, had a hydroponic garden (tomatoes I was told), saw Lenin's tomb in Moscow, and went scuba diving on the Great Barrier Reef. He also had a stockbroker's license, and actively traded on the futures market.



Todd's accomplishments always seemed to precede him, as Judge Roy Payne spoke in almost reverent tones about him. Prior to Todd arriving in our office, Judge Payne told me that he thought Todd was extremely over-qualified for the position of law clerk and that he hoped the position challenged him (Todd) enough. I was a little hurt by this, as I felt extremely challenged and likely will continue to be referred to by Judge Payne and others in the legal community as "challenged." Immediately, I felt overshadowed by Todd and adamantly attempted to dislike him. First, he dressed better than I did. Second, he had better skin. Third, he was superior in intelligence. However, Todd was impossible to dislike. Working with him was a joy. He used his intelligence, not just to perform his work well, but also to entertain others in the office with his wit and ascerbic humor. Todd was a practical joker as well. The best prank that never was completed was an attempt to get Judge Payne to sign an order we wrote "granting civil (1983) relief to a prisoner who alleged that the warden was praying voodoo on his liver, kidneys, and other organs." A very wide-eyed and somber Judge Payne, told us that he just did not think this order would survive an appeal. Todd and I laughed so hard we almost cried.

It was last year that I reconnected with Todd, lamenting about a complicated lawsuit in which I was personally involved. Without hesitation, he immediately offered to help me. Over the next several months, he met with me and other lawyers numerous times. He read pages of documents and performed research. He participated in legal strategy, frequently surprising other learned counsel with brilliant insights. In typical Todd fashion, when I attempted to thank him, he shrugged it off. I gave him a check written out to Norwela, which remained uncashed at his death.

Todd not only helped me, but countless others. It was not uncommon for him to receive a call in the middle of the night, having to bail one of his friends (or their children) out of jail. He looked particularly rough one afternoon when we were meeting. I asked him if he had a rough night. He told me that his friend had an unfortunate experience with a golf cart in the middle of the night, and had been arrested. While most attorneys would have made a phone call to a bail bondsman, Todd drove to Benton, and sat with his friend in jail all night until he was actually released at ten o'clock that morning. He always went the extra mile, both in his professional and personal lives.

He was devoted to his family, and was completely smitten with his four nieces, who frequently swam at his house. It was not uncommon to be in Todd's office going over documents, while he was watching the stock market, directing his housekeeper, talking on the phone to someone in London, and watching his nieces swim outside, all at the same time.

At the time of his death, Todd had been traveling a great deal, and had obtained financing to acquire, as in buy, a refinery. Simultaneously, he had planned a trip to New Orleans Mardi Gras for eight of his friends to fly down on his private plane. He was also remodeling his house, had helped a longtime friend go through drug rehabilitation, and had written his mother's garden club newsletter.

Brilliant. Polished. Witty. Gentlemanly. Generous. Energetic. Loyal. Fearless. All words that describe Todd.

I am reminded of the saying, "Do not waste time, for it is the stuff of which life is made of." Todd did not waste time, and in his short 43 years it could be said that he lived many lives. We all sorely miss him, but realize our little world is a better place because of him.

It is an honor to present this Memorial Resolution for William Todd Gates and to move that it be made a part of the permanent records of the First Judicial District Court and that copies hereof be delivered to Todd's family and forwarded to the Supreme Court of Louisiana for recordation.

THUS RESPECTFULLY DONE AND SIGNED on this 30th day of October, 2012.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Renee P. King". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and "K".

Renee P. King