

**MEMORIAL FOR
JOSEPH S. CAGE
PRESENTED AT THE MEMORIAL AND
RECOGNITION CEREMONY
HELD BY THE FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT
OCTOBER 28, 2021
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE
SHREVEPORT BAR ASSOCIATION**

Background

The first time I laid eyes on Joe Cage was a sunny day in the spring of 1960 at the Class AA State Track Meet on the LSU campus at Baton Rouge. Competitors in the sprints, relays, field competitions, and other contests were loosening up, calming nervous stomachs cursed with a million butterflies, or trying to focus wayward muscles. Tension of the state's biggest AA event of the year was reflected in the sweat-lined expression of every athlete.

All except one. On a grassy area outside Tiger Stadium, the javelin champion from Neville High had organized a poker game and was sitting in his track suit calmly dealing the cards.

I mention this moment because it introduces us to several aspects of the Joe Cage persona:

Personal magnetism

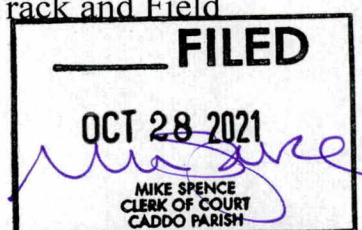
Coolness under pressure

Independence

In both the law and life these attributes served Joe and this community well.

Personal Magnetism. People have always gravitated to Joe, drawn to his openness, his casual, laughing demeanor, wherever he went. He was seldom without a smile, a story, or a practical joke. He was everybody's friend. His prowess as an athlete and later as a trial lawyer made his ever-growing circle of friends and admirers even more compelling.

Coolness Under Pressure. A cool head regardless of the pressure was honed early in Joe's life in the world of sports. He was a natural in every sport he tried—and he tried most of them. In Neville High School in Monroe he set state and national track records in the javelin throw. He was named Ark-La-Tex Athlete of the Year in 1960 and later was inducted into the Louisiana State Track and Field



Association Hall of Fame.

In a tennis match I would challenge anyone to return consistently his spinning serves. And in golf he achieved the near-impossible—two holes-in-one on the same round, a feat bearing odds of 1 in 1.85 billion. His approach to sports translated seamlessly into a successful career as a trial lawyer, both in private practice and as a federal prosecutor.

Independence. Joe was forever independent, never looking for any footprints to lead the way. In high school, when Friday afternoons on game days were traditionally reserved for the players' silent contemplation about the game only hours ahead, Joe found it a perfect time for eighteen holes of golf. He could have had a football scholarship to any college in the nation, as most were looking to sign the next All-American halfback, but he chose a track scholarship to Louisiana Tech. Later, as a lawyer, he took independence to a new level riding atop the wings of an airplane in full flight.

Related to Joe's sense of independence is his personal confidence and refusal to take himself too seriously. While he could not be more serious about his work, he could easily laugh at himself—such as the occasion of a conference in his office when he stretched his arms wide in the air to make a point and one of his daughter Susanna's knee socks slid out of his shirt sleeve and dangled over his desk. He laughed the hardest of all as he pulled the sock out and sputtered to explain the clothes dryer mishap.

Law Practice

Joe applied his talents and his competitiveness to a successful career in the law. Having served in the United States Attorney's offices in New Orleans and Shreveport, he was appointed United States Attorney for the Western District in 1982, where he served 12 years. Thereafter, he served as Commissioner for the Louisiana State Police and as a member of the defense team of the Capital Assistance Project of Louisiana. He brought an energetic initiative to each of these positions, refusing to yield to pressure, and often taking the work to new dimensions.

Family

Joe knew he was lucky to have the family he did: his wife, Susan, three children, and six grandchildren.

Lagniappe

In case anyone is wondering about the outcome of the poker game at the state track meet in 1960, there is no available information on the winners and losers (though a fairly reliable guess could be made). But the javelin throw afterward was won by Joseph Shelby Cage, Jr., securing All-State honors for the fourth consecutive year.

Friend and law partner,

Ed Greer