

**MEMORIAL FOR  
JOEL LEA PEARCE  
PRESENTED AT THE MEMORIAL AND RECOGNITION CEREMONY  
HELD IN THE  
FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT  
NOVEMBER 9, 2023  
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE  
SHREVEPORT BAR ASSOCIATION**

MAY IT PLEASE THE COURT:

Joel Lea Pearce was born on August 31, 1964 and passed away on June 1, 2023. Joel was born in Cleveland, Ohio to Dr. Marcellus Pearce of Carthage, Texas and Lindaree Ledbetter Pearce of Johnson City, Tennessee, while his father was in dental school. Joel was a descendant of the American Revolution, and his great uncle, Benjamin W. Pearce, served as Louisiana's lieutenant governor during the Civil War.

He was the second of four siblings. In 1965, when Joel was 11 months old, his parents moved to Shreveport for his dad to set up his dental practice. Joel grew up fishing and water skiing on Cross Lake and enjoyed family trips to Arkansas for camping, New Mexico for skiing and East Tennessee to visit family.

After earning his GED, Joel attended Northwestern State University. He was involved in the local Baptist Student Union and hosted a Christian program on the campus radio station. He was also the color commentator for NSU football. In 1986, he graduated from NSU with a B.A. in English and a minor in Philosophy. He then attended law school at Regent University in Virginia Beach, Virginia, where he earned his Juris Doctorate in 1990. He then pursued a post graduate degree from Tulane Law School where he earned his Master of Laws (LLM) in international law in 1991.

After federal and state clerkships, Joel moved back to Shreveport where he set up his law practice. He practiced here for more than 30 years, primarily in areas of personal injury, criminal defense, and family law, but was not afraid to take on cases outside his wheelhouse, including accepting an appointment from Judge Crichton to represent a capital murder defendant. Joel had a big heart, often taking on causes with little or no compensation where he believed an injustice was done. In 2012, he undertook the cause of a police officer who had



been wrongfully terminated from the Bossier City Police Department, and he successfully argued that case before the Louisiana Supreme Court.

Joel was a gifted speaker who enjoyed telling a good story, debating an issue, or discussing a book on theology, like Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship*. As litigator he was a force to be reckoned with. He was a skillful orator who knew how to captivate a jury with a powerful closing argument. In one notable trial, he represented a man charged with burglary. After finishing his closing argument, Joel returned to his seat, and his client turned to him and said, "Mr. Pearce, you were so good, you almost made me believe I didn't do it."

Joel was member of the Harry V. Booth-Judge Henry A. Politz American Inn of Court, where he enjoyed participating in seminars, putting on demonstrations and especially enjoyed treating us to his colorful renditions of Borat.

For several years Joel co-pastored a local congregation called Messiah Now! where he took his love of teaching to the pulpit. A strong defender of religious freedom and believer in the sanctity of life, Joel worked on behalf of Alliance Defending Freedom and served on the board of the local Crisis Pregnancy Center. His work on behalf of human rights and persecuted Christians led him to Pakistan as well as India, where he helped set up a Christian law school.

Joel loved to travel and instilled that love in his children having been to Europe, Asia, Africa, Russia and South America. After growing up skiing, Joel took his family to Colorado every winter to ski, where he could easily be spotted on the slopes with his bright red jacket and long flowing green hat.

He had a beautiful voice and a love of music, learning to play the piano at 18. He enjoyed playing and singing worship music, especially the songs of the late Keith Green.

Never one to turn down doing something exciting, he went skydiving multiple times in Texas and white water rafting in Peru. The last several years Joel loved visiting his children and later grandchildren in Reno, Nevada, where he was affectionately known as Saba.

Joel is preceded in death by his parents, as well as his grandparents, Steve and Minnie Pearce and William and Sarah Ledbetter.

Joel is survived by his children Benjamin Pearce, Esq., (Michele Hess), Samuel Pearce, Daniel Pearce, Bethany Pearce, his former wife, Karen Kinberger, and by his siblings, Dr. Marcellus M. Pearce, Dr. Allen R. Pearce (Katherine F.) and Ann Pearce and their children, as well as numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins.

On behalf of the Bench and Bar of the Shreveport Bar Association, I Alan J. Golden, submit this memorial to the memory of Joel Lea Pearce and move that it be inscribed in the records of the First Judicial District Court, Caddo Parish, Louisiana, and that certified copies be delivered to his family.

Respectfully submitted on this the 9<sup>th</sup> day of November 2023, in Shreveport, Caddo Parish, Louisiana.

  
Alan J. Golden