

**MEMORIAL FOR
PETER REICHMAN FLOWERS
PRESENTED AT THE MEMORIAL AND RECOGNITION CEREMONY
HELD IN THE FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT
OCTOBER 30, 2018
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE SHREVEPORT BAR ASSOCIATION**

Peter Reichman Flowers was born in Shreveport, Louisiana to Elizabeth Dee Dossett Flowers and James E. Flowers, Sr. on March 2, 1956. He was the third of four children and grew up in Shreveport attending school at Southfield and C.E. Byrd. Thereafter he obtained his undergraduate degree from Louisiana Tech University and his juris doctorate from Loyola University in New Orleans.

In 1983 he returned to Shreveport and first worked as a law clerk for Judge James Clark in the 1st Judicial District Court. After a year of clerking, Peter began his career at the Caddo Parish Public Defender's Office in August of 1984. By November of 1985 he received his first acquittal by unanimous vote in a felony jury trial. This was his third jury trial and the first one he handled on his own. In less than eighteen months of practice he accomplished what takes some attorney's a lifetime. But this was only the beginning for Peter Flowers, As the years passed his accomplishments in the courtroom would continue with regularity. During this time, he also married the love of his life, Mitzi Stone who during these first years assisted him in his practice as his legal secretary.

In 1989 Peter left the public defender's office and joined the firm of Graves, Daye, Bowie, Beresko & Flowers. It was at this firm that Peter solidified himself as the premier criminal defense attorney in the area and learned the ropes of running a private law firm. Peter always credited Attorney Graves with teaching him the routines and policies necessary for a successful law practice we continue to employ those policies in our firm today.

It was also during this time that Peter and Mitzi had their first of three children, Peter Reichman Flowers, Jr., (Nick) was born on June 22, 1990. This began a whole new chapter in his life that meant more to him than any case or client ever would.

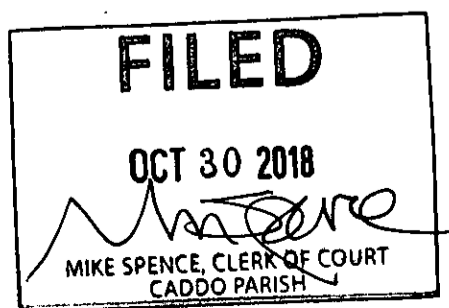
In 1989 Peter moved on to form the firm of Mills, Timmons and Flowers where he remained until 1999 heading up their criminal department and also handling a substantial amount of plaintiff's civil litigation and insurance defense work. He and Mitzi welcomed daughter Miller Elizabeth on October 6, 1993 and a son Willem Gibson Flowers (Will) on October 11, 1996.

1999 and 2000 brought with it big changes. Sadly, he and Mitzi divorced. It was during this time that Peter also left Mills, Timmons and Flowers and with his good friend Daryl Gold opened the criminal defense firm of Flowers & Gold which in time became his final law firm Flowers & Long.

During his practice Peter was admitted to practice in Louisiana and before the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Louisiana, the 5th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court of the United States.

He was a member of the Louisiana, Shreveport and American Bar Associations, an examiner for the Louisiana Bar Exam, on the boards of Louisiana Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, Federal Inns of Court, former chairman of the Caddo Public Defender Board and past Captain of the Krewe of Justinian.

If all we were here for today is a recitation of the biography of Peter R. Flowers that would about cover it. But there is so much more to who he was. So as Paul Harvey used to say - Here's the rest of the story.



The first sign that Peter was destined to become an attorney came during his years at Byrd High School. As a teenager he decided to grow out his hair. While later in life his tresses would abandon him, at sixteen this guy had a head full of thick brown hair that grew well past his shoulders. The girls were impressed, the school administration, not so much. The principal called him into his office one day and told him "Mr. Flowers, you will cut your hair". Peter said, "I will not". The principal said, "then we will expel you from school" Peter said, "If you do I will hire a lawyer and sue you" The fight was on. When the dust settled not only did Peter not have to cut his hair, he used the whole incident as his campaign platform for student council president. Byrd high school has the pictures of their former class presidents hanging on the wall in a school hallway and to this day, amongst a sea of close-cropped hair cuts you see a lone long haired full bearded Peter Flowers. He was the hero of the class of '74 and over 40 years later his classmates still referred to him as "our president" when expressing their condolences on his passing.

After high school Peter attended Louisiana Tech University where one of his roommates was a childhood friend by the name of Kix Brooks. Like Kix, Peter was a guitar player and he, Kix and other friends played around the Shreveport and Ruston area. After graduation in 1979 Kix said "hey man, let's go to Nashville and make it big", Peter looked him in the eye and said, "we'll starve, I'm going to law school". Kix went on to play huge venues and reach international fame. Peter went to law school and obtained a notoriety of his own. Peter and Kix remained close over the years. I never heard Peter express any regret over that decision and I believe it was because he knew he was doing exactly what he was meant to be doing.

So, Peter goes to law school graduates and lands right back here in his hometown. Peter took to criminal defense work like a duck to water. When I was preparing this eulogy, I knew Peter had a long practice before I met him and so I ran a search of the Shreveport Times Archives and was astonished at what I found. For many criminal defense attorneys to get one unanimous not guilty verdict is a lifetime accomplishment. Peter got his first in 1985 when he had only been practicing for about eighteen months. Article after article I found reported not guilty verdicts or in some cases responsive verdicts. You could see the momentum build as the years went on. If you murdered your spouse in the heat of passion, you called Peter Flowers. If you were a politician with sticky fingers, you called Peter Flowers. If your kid was in the wrong place at the wrong time, you hired Peter Flowers. He had name recognition and a talent that was undisputable. International murder, murder for hire, malfeasance in office, they called Peter Flowers. Peter wasn't one to brag, but I am, and I can tell you that for the first ten years that I worked for Peter Flowers I didn't have to read the paper or watch the news for the updates because we were *in* the news with our cases.

I don't know how many acquittals, responsive verdicts, or guilty verdicts came down over the years. I do know that the last twenty years or so of Peter's career was spent solely handling criminal defense matters and at any given time he carried at least 100 open files. Not every case went to trial and not every case should go to trial. Some of his better victories came with a successful plea deal. I began working for Peter in 2001 and in a ten-year period Peter went to trial on nine cases. Of those, his client was found guilty as charged 3 times, found guilty of a responsive charge 2 times and was acquitted 6 times. That's 6 times a jury foreman before the court and announced, "Not Guilty." Words cannot express the feelings of relief, and satisfaction that pulse through the defendant and their attorney when they hear those words. Peter was death penalty certified and to my knowledge tried at least three death penalty cases and each defendant's life was spared.

The complete numbers and statistics are lost to history now. He was very humble and did not boast about his courtroom successes. To be honest, he didn't consider a responsive verdict a victory like most defense attorneys. And let's face it, Peter wasn't representing the pillars of the community and it's not socially acceptable to run around town bragging on how you got someone perceived to be a criminal off scott free. Peter didn't do it and so I know I shouldn't now, but I will give an example of one victory just to give you an idea of his talent.

In 1987 a woman was found dead in her home having been stabbed 64 times. Neighbors saw a young black man with short hair in a white shirt and blue pants near the house at the time of the murder. A 19-year-old neighbor was later arrested and charged with second degree murder. His family hired Peter Flowers and the case proceeded to trial. The State presented evidence of the defendant's bloody fingerprint on the refrigerator near the body and cuts on his hands consistent with cuts cause by slipping off a knife handle while in the process of an attack. The defense presented was simple. This guy didn't do it. It wasn't him. After 4 ½ hours of deliberation the jury verdict came in. Not Guilty!!

Everyone wanted to know his secret. Why was he so successful? How did he convince these juries so often? The secret was Peter himself. Peter saw the good in everyone even if he had to look really hard to find it. Peter was full of compassion, no matter who it was. He believed in the good of everyone. This was true in his life, not just his practice. If a homeless person wandered into or around the office looking for money, he would make them a sandwich in our kitchen and give them a coke before sending them off likely with a little cash in their pocket. He picked up hitch hikers all the time. One in particular he drove through East Texas and by the end of the trip they were best friends. For about ten years after that we would receive random post cards from across the nation from his hitch-hiking friend. He never locked the doors to his home or his car and the only reason he locked the office doors is because we made him. That was something about him that always amazed me. Here is this guy that deals with the nastiness of the world every day, yet he still trusted mankind to do the right thing and not break into his house. And it was genuine. He treated everyone the same. Whether the client was a doctor or a ditch digger, they both got the same Peter Flowers. He never looked for the explanation of what the criminal mind would do, he looked for the explanation as to what the good heart would do.

To say Peter was dedicated was an understatement. I have never in my life seen someone prepare for a trial like this guy. If Peter walked in the door to pick a jury, you can bet he has prepared that case in its entirety at least three times. He was constantly turning the case over and over until he found the answer he was looking for. No person, nor theory was immune from a Peter Flower's defense. He would fearlessly question or subpoena anyone from hairdressers to drug dealers, or cafeteria workers to nursing home patients if he thought they could help his client. Peter loved an expert and didn't hesitate to look nationwide for the best. Over the years he brought in accident reconstruction teams from the Northwest, the expert that first presented the "twinkie defense", the blood and forensic expert that participated in the Green River Murders investigation and my all-time favorite, the expert that testified as to the "duck hunting addiction defense". Yeah, it worked. Compassion and hard work. That was Peter Flowers. Beginning to end.

I can say without a doubt that he impressed, frustrated, angered, charmed and entertained every single judge sitting behind me and many others across the area.

Don't get me wrong, Peter was not a saint. He could drive you crazy with his tenacity and persistence. Just ask the Caddo DA's office in the late 80s. Around 1989 after a particularly nasty trial, Peter and his wife Mitzi were leaving the courthouse after a jury had returned a not guilty verdict in favor of Peter's client. It was late, it had been a long week, everyone was tired and headed home. A prosecutor, who shall remain nameless to protect the guilty, came charging toward Peter as he was coming down the hallway and physically attacked him. Thankfully James Stewart was close by and pulled the guy off Peter who never raised a hand in defense. Afterwards a local musician wrote a song about the incident that brought many rounds of laughter and members of the Caddo DA's office had to participate in mandatory anger management sessions.

This wasn't the first nor the last time that Peter Flowers would get under the government's skin or draw the disdain of his colleagues. In 2005 when we were in the middle of a second-degree murder trial Dr. George McCormick, the Caddo Coroner for over twenty years died. Shortly after his death it was discovered that this renowned and upstanding physician had not actually performed the autopsy in not only our case, but in hundreds of cases over the last twenty years. In fact, as it turned out, the lady that was cutting up the bodies and removing the bullets started at the Coroner's office as the cleaning lady. Another attorney might have thought twice about wrestling that bear, but not Peter. We jumped in with both feet and found ourselves in the middle of a four-week hearing for a new trial where if nothing else we learned the ins and outs of conducting an autopsy. During this time there were some attorneys that would give the "Atta boy Peter" but others, were angry and disgusted that he would mar the reputation of such a fine man.

During the time I worked with Peter, it seemed like he was always doing one of two things. Working, or spending time with his kids. He occasionally went on a duck or pheasant hunting trip, but most of his spare time was spent with his kids. Soccer games, shopping for homecoming dresses, out to dinner, attending their musical performances. It was always about the kids and his family. And that included his friends. Friends were like family to him and once you became his friend, he loved you forever and was always there for you.

To his credit, when Peter was with his family. He was dad, brother, cousin, friend. He was not a lawyer and I don't think he was prone to talk shop. I didn't realize this until after he passed. When the family was preparing for his funeral I noticed that they tended to somewhat

downplay Peter's legal career. To them Peter wasn't this great renowned trial attorney - He was our Dad. The one that always came through for them and was behind them every step of the way good or bad. In this career we tend to become consumed by our caseload and deadlines. So many times, our families pay the price. It warmed my heart to see even during that horrible time of grief that wasn't the case for Peter's family.

He had a second family he took pretty good care of too and that was his office family. We were not your conventional group we were anything but formal. But he loved each one of us and was there for us. When a staff member confessed to a drug addiction, he didn't fire her, he paid for her to attend rehabilitation. If a staff member was separating from an abusive spouse, he made sure they had an apartment to go to until they could get on their feet. When my brother was on life support he made sure I didn't have to worry about any of my cases and catered food to the hospital for my entire family, but more than anything else, he trained the attorney's that came through our office to be the best attorney's they could be.

In 1983 when Peter was sitting as a newly inducted member of the bar in this very ceremony, the president of the Shreveport Bar Robert Mayo, one of today's honorees said "These are not replacement services. Those whose careers have ended cannot be replaced, but their memories are recalled here as inspiration for those just entering the field."

To the newly admitted attorneys, welcome to an exciting career. I hope you have as much fun practicing as Peter did and if he were here to give you any advice, the most practical would be "A case is not continued until the judge has signed the order!" I can't tell you how many times he beat that into our brains. The best piece of advice he ever gave me and what he believed was the secret to his success was:

All you need is hard work and faith. He said you can't focus on the money. You have to focus on the clients. You have to take each case and treat it like it's the only one you have. Take care of that client like you would your best friend or your family member and give them everything you've got. Keep your head down and keep working. If you do that then people are going to notice. You don't have to win, and sometimes you aren't supposed to win. Sometimes you just have to look good going down. If your client sees you giving it your all, even when you are losing, then they will never believe the bad outcome was your fault and even if you lose, they will still refer you to their friends and family. Because you believed in them. If you do that, you're going to be too busy to worry about the money. The hard work is going to get you to the edge of the cliff and once you get there you just need a little faith in yourself to help you take that leap to the other side where a successful law practice lays. If you have faith in yourself and couple it with hard work, you're going to look up one day and the money and the clients will be there. You won't worry about whether the phone is ringing in fact you'll be complaining that you can't make it stop."

Good luck to you all.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Long