



William Melvin Schultz

July 19, 1938 - April 12, 2021

William Melvin Schultz, 82, better known as "Judge," "Billy," or "Judge Billy," died on April 12, 2021, in Houston, TX, the city in which he was raised and in which he spent over 30 years becoming a well-respected member of the legal community. He spent his final days surrounded by family.

Billy was born in Houston on July 19, 1938. He was close to his siblings, JoAnn and Harold -- so much so, that when Harold was sent to military school for a year, Billy insisted on accompanying him. Billy often said he grew up "in the best time in the best place," enjoying the freedom of playing sports in empty lots and riding bikes around the neighborhood, as well as the security of working at his father's laundry whenever he needed money.

The family gardener once told Billy he'd become a judge -- a prediction which ultimately came to fruition. After graduating from San Jacinto High School in 1955, he completed his undergraduate ('58) and law degrees ('60) at the University of Houston.

Billy then began a long and distinguished career in the law, during which he became the first Jewish judge in the Southern District of Texas. In addition to his private practice, he served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney, investigating and prosecuting many noteworthy white collar fraud cases, as a U.S. Bankruptcy Judge, and as lead counsel for unsecured creditors committees in several

landmark corporate bankruptcies, including those of Continental Airlines and United Refining Company. In the final phase of his career, he mediated and arbitrated hundreds of cases involving personal injury, uninsured/underinsured motorists, and insurance coverage disputes.

Besides his illustrious career, Billy was also a devoted family man. He met his future wife, Leah, at a wedding when they were 14 -- and married her when they turned 18. Billy was a dedicated father to their three children: coaching Little League, taking them on fabulous vacations to Europe and Israel, and always making it home in time for dinner. He loved spending time with his grandchildren and attending their sporting events, performances, and other endeavours.

As for him and Leah, people often said they were joined at the hip because they did everything together, including snow skiing, racquetball, tennis, and golf. They loved traveling with their friends; their favorite destinations were Mexico, California, and Aspen, where they spent every summer for 30 years. Other highlights included their trips to Africa, Australia and New Zealand, a cruise up the Danube, and the Dominican Republic. Billy and Leah were also well-known for their dancing abilities, especially the jitterbug, and often cleared the dance floor at bar mitzvahs and weddings. The couple remained together, and in love, for more than six decades.

Throughout his life, Billy was just as comfortable in a designer suit (and man bag) as he was in his signature jeans and sweatshirt. He was endlessly curious, and eager to learn and explore -- especially if it involved good food and good drinks. Various quests included finding the best beer in Europe, the best veal chop in the U.S., and the best vodka on the planet. He was an infrequent gourmet chef whose specialties included baked escargot, classic Caesar salad, steak tartare, and bananas foster. He also loved golf (and his three holes-in-one); ice cream, particularly Haagen-Daaz, Dove Bars, and

Talenti; and music, from Puccini to The Who.

Billy will be remembered as kind and caring, polite yet fun. He will be remembered as a man who balanced an impressive legal career with a deep devotion to his family, his friends, and his hobbies -- a man who left a mark on this world with his brilliant mind, his huge heart, and his grace.

Billy is predeceased by his parents, David Henry and Bessie Krafcheck Schultz, and his sister, JoAnn Rosenberg. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Leah Gansar Schultz; his children, Brian Schultz (Dixon), Wendy Mehling (Chris), and Lauren Hampton (Jake); his grandchildren, Austin Schultz, Josh and Daryn Mehling, and Raven and Jett Hampton; his brother Harold Phillip Schultz; and many beloved nieces and nephews.

Tribute Wall

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“ We were so sad to hear of Billy's passing. He will be missed by many as he touched so many hearts . Our thoughts and prayers to Leah, all the family that he was so proud of. Love, Sharon and Harvey

Sharon Zinn - April 15, 2021 at 04:43 PM