

GERALD R. FOX  
MEMORIAL

In keeping with long standing tradition, this Memorial for Gerald Roger Fox is prepared and respectfully submitted for filing in the records of the Circuit Court for Jackson County and the Tri-County Bar Association.

Gerald R. Fox was born on April 20, 1961, in Baltimore, Maryland to James and Joyce (Sampson) Fox. Gerald was raised in Orlando, Florida, where he graduated Oak Ridge High School. He enlisted in the Army in 1981 and graduated Summa Cum Laude from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University while on active duty. In 1990, Gerald left the Army to study law at the University of Wisconsin Law School. Following graduation from UW Law School, Gerald and his wife, Susan, moved to Black River Falls and Gerald joined the law firm of Skolos and Skolos. In November of 1999, Gerald accepted a position as Assistant State Public Defender, working in Jackson, Clark, and Trempealeau Counties. He successfully tried several cases as defense counsel. His biggest win was getting a first degree homicide charge dismissed in Clark County. He was elected Jackson County District Attorney in November of 2006. He was re-elected in 2008, 2012, and 2016. Gerald R. Fox passed away unexpectedly on September 4, 2017.

Gerald's career as District Attorney was guided by a fierce sense of honor and fairness. He would dismiss cases if he had any question about the veracity of the State's evidence. Gerald was a highly skilled trial attorney who would vigorously prosecute defendants when necessary. But Gerald was also keenly aware of the long term affects a criminal prosecution could have on an offender's life and took steps to provide alternatives for youthful indiscretions. He never considered defense counsel as the enemy, but rather as a partner in seeking justice. Gerald was a founding member and an unwavering supporter of the Jackson County Treatment Court. His support came at a time that treatment courts were not widely accepted which presented risks to his own political fortunes. He was awarded the Court's highest award, and helped make the Court a model for small county treatment courts in Wisconsin.

Gerald had a unique ability to spin a down home phrase that belied a sharp legal mind. In one Court hearing, the Court had to stop the proceeding to ask Gerald to explain what was meant by the phrase "Let's get down to the lick log." Describing the caseload of the District Attorney's Office, Gerald quipped, "I'm as busy as a bunny in a wolf preserve." In another Court hearing, Gerald described the defendant as having "done everything but lick lake toads to get high."

In 2003, Gerald joined the Wisconsin Army National Guard as a commissioned officer with the rank of First Lieutenant. His assignments in the guard included serving as an Assistant Staff Judge Advocate, Command Judge Advocate, and Brigade Judge Advocate up to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. In 2005, Gerald deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and served in the Central Criminal Court of the Iraq Liaison Office as part of Task Force 134 (Detainee Operations). Lieutenant Colonel Fox graduated from the Military Judges Course and was

awarded the Army National Guard Trial Defense Service Excellence Award, the Colonel Barnett Leadership Award, recognizing his exceptional leadership traits.

Gerald was considered for a presidential appointment to U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin with the recommendation of Wisconsin's two U.S. Senators.

Gerald enjoyed hunting, shooting sports, especially trap where he was a founding member of the "Defenders" trap team, a good cigar (or two), watching the Green Bay Packers, riding his Harley Davidson motorcycle, watching movies and spending time with his beloved wife, Susan. He could recite decades of movie lines from memory and would often work the lines into seemingly unrelated conversations. Gerald's booming voice, hearty laugh, sense of humor, and unflinching devotion to fairness will be missed by all who knew him.

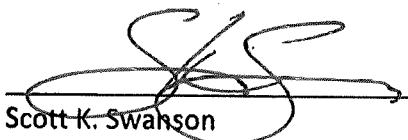
His sudden passing was an immeasurable loss to the people of Jackson County, to the legal profession, to the Tri-County Bar Association, and all who knew him.

Dated: January 10, 2020

Respectfully Submitted:

  
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Daniel S. Diehn

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Charles Betthauser

  
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Scott K. Swanson