

## **MEMORIAL RESOLUTION OF THE ALLEN COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION**

### **PHILLIP RENZ**

WHEREAS, we are here to pay our respects to the memory of our deceased colleague and friend, Phillip Renz, who passed away on July 25, 2014 at the age of 63; and

WHEREAS, Phillip Renz was born on November 3, 1950, in Fort Wayne to the late Alfred Renz and Bertie (Smith) Scherer. Phil graduated from Bishop Luers High School, St. Francis College and Indiana University School of Law.

Phil Renz was a member of the Sons of the American Legion Post #381, Kendallville Eagles, and Adams Lake Conservation Club. He was a member of the Allen County Bar Association and, during his tenure as a lawyer, earned the respect and the friendship of those he dealt with in the practice of law. As a young man growing up in Fort Wayne, Indiana, he went to Bishop Luers High School and St. Francis College, where he majored in psychology. Phil went to work at North American Van Lines where he was a supervisor and decided law school was what he wanted to do. He went to law school at Indiana University and, after law school, joined the Boxberger law firm. That firm ultimately merged with the law firm that became Carson Boxberger, with which he became partner and retired in 2011. In his earlier days, he was the city attorney for the City of Fort Wayne. All those who knew Phil in his earlier days know that while he was a city attorney, one of his most "interesting" cases involved the old Rialto Theater down on Calhoun Street, which the City of Fort Wayne was attempting to shut down because it showed XXX movies. There was a rumor going around that "other things" were going on there, and Phil told his friends he never had more fun in a case in his life.

During his legal career, Phil was a true professional in many ways. He was a great believer in the "pro bono" providing of services to those who could not pay for it. There was never a client, if he or she had a good case, which Phil would not represent. He donated many hours of pro bono service and he was one of the true forerunners of the belief that lawyers should help people even if they couldn't pay.

In approximately 1987, Phil discovered that he had a terrible health problem that would have destroyed most lawyers - Type 1 diabetes - but it didn't discourage Phil. All it gave to Phil was the desire to go forward in a better way and with God helping him along the way.

During Phil's practice of law he was a mentor to all young lawyers he dealt with. He treated new lawyers well and they appreciated and respected him - as they should have. Phil was not afraid to share his intelligence and legal experience with all who worked with him and even those who worked on the other side of him. He was a handsome young man who had an infectious smile, a sparkling look in his eye, and a sense of savvy that would guide those who looked for guidance from him.

Phil met Mary Lange. They became friends when they worked at the same law firm and, after she had lost her husband to a tragic accident, he helped her by going to functions with her, just being with her and letting her know that he was there to help her with anything she needed. They not only became friends but they became husband and wife on July 7, 2007. Not only did Phil and Mary love each other, but they respected each other and were best friends all the way. Not all marriages are made in heaven, but this one was. Phil truly worshiped the ground that Mary walked on.

But there were two women in Phil's life - Mary was one and his daughter Leslie was the other. All of Phil's colleagues and friends know and remember the way that when Phil talked about his daughter Leslie, the sparkle that came into his eye, the different glow in his face and the way he worshiped and adored her.

Phil's wife Mary asked me to say a few words at Phil's calling and I told the story about how easy it was to be Phil's friend. It wasn't difficult to be Phil's friend. This was a man who was not difficult to like. He was caring, he was compassionate, and he was kind. Phil was a very social guy and it wasn't very tough when you got invited to get together with Phil to say, "Hey, count me in". That was because Phil was a very cool guy. Phil had a lot of friends, and the reason for that was because Phil was such a cool guy that we all hung out with Phil because that made us cool too.

Phil Renz was a cool guy in a lot of ways. One of the ways that Phil was cool was he was a really classy dresser. The man flat out knew how to dress. He

always looked good when he was in court or at a social occasion, meeting for a drink or even going fishing. Phil could really dress for an occasion and one of them, in particular, was making an entrance to a golf outing. Back in the late 80's, Phil, who couldn't play a lick of golf, called me and said that he couldn't play in our Florida scramble golf outing for the Allen County Bar Association because he had hurt his back. He didn't want to play because he thought he was going to hurt our team. So I said, "Phil, we don't expect to use any of your shots anyway, we just want you to show up and be in our foursome" because Phil was cool. So Phil said, "No, I can't swing a club" and I asked Phil, "Can you sit in a golf cart and can you putt the ball?" to which he replied "Yes". So I said to him, "Okay Phil, you're in and we expect you to show up". So, Phil shows up the next day at Riverbend. This is back in the time when Miami Vice was the hot TV show, with Don Johnson as the star, and all his Miami good looks and his South Beach wardrobe. We are all warming up and getting ready to play and here comes Phil - he's got the white pants, the white shoes, the white socks, the white belt, this cream colored shirt, a white linen coat, and a really cool hat - he looked more like Don Johnson than Don Johnson did. We had a great time with Phil because we were with Phil and because Phil was cool.

On another personal note, just a few years later, Phil, T. Dean Swihart, and I and made a personal plan to go out at least once every couple of weeks to meet and have drinks and talk about the practice of law and just chat about what's going on in each other's lives. One of the things that we all started laughing about and talking about was the old movie with Adam Sandler, "The Waterboy". It was about a bunch of Louisiana Cajun swamp country people (and I'm sorry if anybody here is a Louisiana Cajun swamp country person), but in the movie one of the Cajuns looks at another Cajun and says, "Hey ya moron, what are you thinking about" and we were laughing and drinking and having a good time talking about this. The next day I called Phil and get his voice mail, so I left him a message that said "Hey ya moron". Phil calls me back and I get the message "Hey ya moron". Phil and I did this for 5 or 6 years and we loved doing it. We finally decided that after 5 or 6 years of doing this, that maybe we ought to grow up. Several months before Phil passed away, I ran into him, we chatted, and we asked, why did we ever stop doing that? Well, who knows, but that is what we did. It was a term of endearment that I hold for him and I know he holds for me. He will always be my "moron" and I know that I will always be his "moron" too.

Phil had a passion for fishing that was way beyond impressive. He not only had a passion for it, but also was very good at it. Phil was a “man’s man” and a “lawyer’s lawyer” and he was also a “fisherman’s fisherman”. One could sit and talk with Phil about fishing for hours and it would never get boring, not only because of his passion for the sport, but because he really knew what he was doing.

Phil took his wife Mary up to Loughborough Lake near Kingston, Ontario on their honeymoon. Now, how many guys get away with taking their wife on a fishing trip for a honeymoon? Mary reports to all of us that it was a fabulous time and she enjoyed every second of it with Phil.

Phil’s daughter, Leslie, was the ground that kept him solid. I remember one night meeting with Phil, we were talking about life and things, and he brought up Leslie. I remember him saying to me, “John, there is an old Chinese saying about happiness: ‘The foolish man looks for happiness in the distance, the wise man grows it under his feet.’” He was talking about his daughter Leslie, and he proceeded to tell stories about all of Leslie’s accomplishments, what a wonderful daughter she was, and how much he loved her.

Mary Renz, Phil’s widow - Phil had nothing but the greatest love and admiration for her. Mary described Phil in her calling card as her “angel” and “her lifeline”. That is the kind of guy that Phil was, but that’s the kind of person that Mary was to him too. Phil, throughout his trials and tribulations with his health issues, had Mary as his lifeline and she did it well. She took care of him, she loved him, and she was his lifeline to the end. The last time I saw Phil before he passed away he talked about his wonderful wife who he loved, respected, and who was his lifeline. Mary said to Phil in her calling card at his funeral, she will meet him in Loughborough Lake and bring his favorite fishing rods.

We, of the Allen County Bar Association, will miss our friend Phil Renz. He was a friend to all who knew him. He was a trusted friend and advisor. But most of all he had the respect of all who dealt with him. There is an old saying in life that “It is better to be respected than to be loved”. Phil Renz was both respected and loved. He had the respect of his colleagues in the Bar Association and he had the love and respect of his family and friends.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Allen County Bar Association gives public expression of sorrow upon this remembrance of the life of Phillip Renz, and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be unanimously adopted by these present on this occasion; and be it

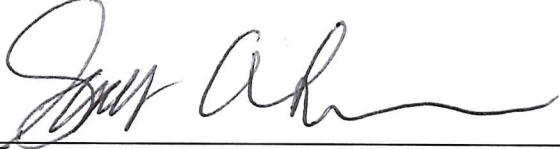
FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be transmitted by the Allen County Bar Association to Mary Renz and Phil's daughter Leslie; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be a permanent resolution in the records of the Federal and State Courts of Allen County, Indiana, to evidence the respect and admiration of the members of the Bench and Bar for their departed friend and colleague, Phillip Renz.

Dated this 19<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2014.

THE ALLEN COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

By:   
The Honorable David J. Avery, President

By:   
The Honorable Stanley A. Levine  
Judge, Allen Superior Court



*Resolution written by John C. Theisen*