



Cean Franklin Shands

March 27, 1967 - January 7, 2025

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It is with heavy hearts and profound sadness that we announce the passing of Cean Franklin Shands, age 57, a beloved father, advocate for justice, and a shining example of kindness, who departed this life on January 7, 2025.

Born on March 27, 1967, Cean dedicated his life to living with purpose and uplifting others. A passionate champion of justice, he devoted his career and personal efforts to fairness and truth, driven by an unwavering belief in the transformative power of compassion and integrity. His work and presence as a criminal defense attorney served as a guiding light to those seeking hope and fairness in the world.

Beyond his professional endeavors, Cean was a proud and loving father. He leaves behind his first wife, Susan McMerty Shands, two daughters, Sunderland Baker Shands and Charlene Mary Shands, and his son, Cean Franklin Shands, Jr. Loving partner, Dolly Agnew, parents Mary Helen Shands and John (Slim) Dykes, brothers Ronnie (Mardia) Shands, Derrick (Melissa) Shands, Johnny Shands, Moe (Mia) Shands, Ronnie Berry and sisters Donna (Raymond) Barnes and Leticia (Ronald) Shands-Woolfolk. As well as many beloved cousins, nieces, nephews and grands.

His children were his greatest joy and inspiration, and he poured his heart into raising them with the values he cherished—strength, empathy, and the courage to stand for what is right. His legacy lives on through their lives and the lessons they carry forward.

Those who knew Cean remember his remarkable kindness and ability to connect with people from all walks of life. He greeted every day and every person with warmth, offering a smile, a helping hand, and words of encouragement. His enduring impact on his community and the lives he touched will be felt for generations.

Cean's departure leaves a profound void in the hearts of his family, friends, and all who admired his unwavering commitment to humanity. While he will be dearly missed, his spirit of justice, kindness, and purpose will continue to inspire us all.

A celebration of Cean's extraordinary life will be held on January 18, 2025, at the Nicollet Island Pavilion in Minneapolis at 2pm. In lieu of flowers, the family kindly asks that donations be made in his memory to Neighborhood Justice Center, reflecting his lifelong dedication to the organization not only as an attorney, but as a board member as well.

Rest in peace, Cean Franklin Shands. Your light will never fade.

www.Washburn-McReavy.com

Dawn Valley Chapel 952-941-7676

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JAN **18**. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

Nicollet Island Pavilion
40 Power Street
Minneapolis, MN 55401
(612) 253-0255

Tribute Wall

CC

“ Courtney and Chris purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Cean Franklin Shands.



Courtney and Chris - January 18, 2025 at 12:04 PM

LP

“ Rest well, Esq. Shands. Grateful for all the good times and great convos. You are missed. Hope the Buckeyes bring one home for you! To your wonderful family, I am sending love and condolences to you all.

Luis Player - January 18, 2025 at 11:10 AM

SG

“ Stephanie McKinnon & Spencer Gelber purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Cean Franklin Shands.



Stephanie McKinnon & Spencer Gelber - January 17, 2025 at 06:01 AM

MC

“ Mike Porto -Foothill Ranch, California purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Cean Franklin Shands.



Mike Porto -Foothill Ranch, California - January 15, 2025 at 08:53 AM

KM

“ *Kathy, Mile, Matt, and Marc McMerty purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Cean Franklin Shands.*



Kathy, Mile, Matt, and Marc McMerty - January 14, 2025 at 09:40 PM

EN

“ *Cean was an amazing attorney, a true champion for justice, and never hesitated to praise you or call your BS - when either, or both, were deserved. I loved rolling into Dakota County and seeing his Porsche parked in the lot. You knew it was going to be a good day.*

Eric Nelson - January 14, 2025 at 05:28 PM



“ *I am saddened to learn about the loss of Cean. When I worked as a social worker for Dakota County, I experienced Cean as a very reasonable and fair attorney. I also enjoyed his sense of humor. Our mutual "clients" often presented with very serious issues, but Cean would be able to bring some brevity behind the scenes. He will be greatly missed.*

Bonita Donaldson - January 12, 2025 at 02:02 PM

PW

“ Cean was a beautiful man. As a criminal defense attorney his senior I had the fortunate opportunity to cross paths with Sean in courtrooms regularly. His enthusiasm and joy in representing the underprivileged underdogs was inspiring. Cean was a shining light. He always left me with a smile on my face. Cean's life is a credit to the criminal defense bar and the Neighborhood Justice Center. I miss him.

Peter B. Wold

Peter Wold - January 12, 2025 at 09:46 AM

DE

“ Cean was so much larger than life that he may have been two of a kind. I miss him. I was blessed to know him. May he rest in peace.

dean - January 12, 2025 at 12:40 AM

KL

“ Thanks to the Shands family, the coffers of the Neighborhood Justice Center will be filled with love for Cean. It is a fine tribute to a tireless advocate for social and criminal justice. I worked with Cean in the Public Defender's Office for 20 some years. He was a bright light of love who gave the best hugs. He did pro bono work for his undergrad Alma Mater, Macalister. He was always quietly generous with his knowledge, skills and time. What a lovely and loving man. No show, all heart.

Cean's children were blessed to call him Dad. Oh my goodness how he loved his kids with his whole big heart. Always bragging about Thing One and Thing Two with so much love and joy and pride. He would bring Little Man to the courthouse, dressed appropriately for court, brimming with love and joy and pride. He loved his children so much. His favorite pastime was telling stories and showing pictures of you. I hope it helps, knowing that your Dad, who was loved by many, loved you three above all else. ❤️💔❤️

Kristen Lee - January 11, 2025 at 02:07 PM

DT

Barb and I are so sad to learn of Cean's passing. Cean was a mentor to young lawyers and a wonderful friend to anyone who met him.

The obituary is a beautiful tribute to Cean and really lets everyone know who Cean was, what he stood for and why he was so loved and will be missed by so many.

We are sorry that we are not able to attend Cean's service. RIP Cean.

Dave Ayers / Barb Thompson-Ayers - January 11, 2025 at 05:41 PM

TS

Cean and I were roommates at Macalester (according to him, never mind the details) and for a handful of years afterwards, Grand Avenue, St. Clair, Summit Avenue Mansion...Selby (or was it Marshall?)...sort of.

One of my best memories is Cean's "Door of shameful Law Schools" during the summer of 1989 as he applied.

If a school was silly enough to deny Cean admission, their "regrets" letter was posted on his bedroom door.

The message was obvious, though it was also stated....to paraphrase: Their loss, though I no longer have time for them, they will regret this, I will be excellent elsewhere.

And that's very much the way Cean lived life, few - if any - regrets, embrace the life that you are blessed to live, enjoy the time you have with the people that are dear or near, or better yet - both.

Oh, how you are missed, my friend.

Tom Semple - January 11, 2025 at 09:28 PM

SW

Cean, was a wonderful person. He care deeply for his family, coworkers and clients. I will miss his personality, his smile his energy... There are not enough words to describe how awesome he was. You will be missed, my friend.

Sheriff Dawanna Witt - January 11, 2025 at 09:56 PM

MM

I worked with Cean for a number of years in Juvenile Court. He was an amazing advocate for his clients and I cannot recall him ever taking a short cut to get out of a trial or hearing. His heart was really big and his laugh was contagious. He was best friends with my wife Martha when they were in law school....she is also devastated by his death. Nobody says life is fair.....but this seems a bit more unfair than usual. I'll miss you Cean

Judge Mike Mayer

michael mayer - January 13, 2025 at 12:39 PM

TS

Cean was a dude and a cool dude--good person, good lawyer, good person to be around--never quite sure about the bowties though--RIP--hugs to Susie and his children.

Tom Shiah

tom shiah - January 18, 2025 at 06:11 AM

JH

"You'll make V." This was the first thing Cean ever said to me. We were in the first morning of late-summer tryouts for the soccer team, 40 years ago, at our prestigious prep-school, Seven Hills. I was a freshman, he was a Junior. I tried to play it cool, but I don't mind saying now... It meant the world to me to hear him say those words. Cean was just being himself... Supportive, self-assured, and kind. Thank you, Cean.

Jonathan Hawgood - February 23, 2025 at 09:05 AM

KB

Walking the halls of Seven Hills High School with Cean was just the best! He had a big smile and words of encouragement for any and every worry you articulated. I was so sad to learn of his passing. Rest in peace, Cean.

Krista Boling - February 28, 2025 at 08:05 AM