



## **Rob St. Clair**

Growing up on Guilford Road gave me the unique opportunity to be able to walk across the street to Barrington, then later just another block to Jones. (If you ask my grandkids, I'll swear it was uphill both ways in three feet of snow.) I've got fond memories of climbing over the fence with my brother on Sunday mornings after high school football games, scrounging underneath the bleachers looking for coins and other treasures. When told, my grandmother used to laugh. She reminded me that she graduated in Upper Arlington's first high school graduation class in 1925.

After high school, I attended Ohio Northern University, majoring in speech and participating on the school's debate team. I spent two summers working as a lifeguard at Tremont Pool, then another summer as a camp counselor at Camp Akita. Although my ultimate goal was to attend law school, in 1968 I decided to obtain another one of my goals, become a United States Marine. So, a year before the draft was established, I enlisted, giving the recruiter who picked me up hitching a ride back to Ada a big smile. My dad grinned, mom cried.

I was commissioned upon graduation, then spent 1971-72 in Vietnam working with an advisory team in Quảng Tri Province, north of Hue. Like most Vets, I could write a book about my experiences. After three years on active duty, I attended law school at Ohio Northern. To help pay bills, I joined the Marine Corps Reserves. It turned into a surprisingly great career: Among other billets, I commanded a rifle company in Columbus, a communications battalion in New York City, served four years with U.S. Forces Caribbean in Key West (a great opportunity to go island hopping), and enjoyed two tours at Headquarters, Marine Corps, including working

as an Action Officer at the Pentagon during Operation Desert Storm. I retired in 1996 at the rank of colonel.

Upon graduation from law school, I returned to Columbus and worked as an assistant county prosecutor. After two years, another attorney and I decided it was time to leave and hang out our own shingle, so we started our new firm, Evans & St. Clair. Over the years we grew to 13 attorneys, but being the managing partner was a headache. Beginning in the 70s, I began working as a magistrate for the Ohio Department of Education hearing teacher misconduct cases. This became a front row seat to early internet mayhem, mostly involving teachers doing gloriously dumb things online (pre-Facebook). After hearing more than 150 cases, I'm not sure if there's any behavior that would still surprise me. At about the same time, federal law regarding special education (IDEA) dramatically changed. Hearing officers for due process hearings could no longer be school district administrators (eliminating potential bias); they had to be outside attorneys. The Ohio Department of Education hired me to become the state's first hearing officer. That led to endless travel all over the state hearing parents' requests for a due process hearing on behalf of their child. Add speaking at quarterly seminars and writing the guidebook for conducting due process hearings, I learned more about special education law than I ever thought possible.

Later in my legal career, I decided to focus my practice on probate, especially litigation. I enjoyed working as an adjunct professor at Columbus State Community College teaching "Probate for Paralegals." In 2005 I became involved in the most sensational case of my career, what became known as the Moody Massacre. In Bellefontaine, close to Lima, the night before his high school graduation, 18-year-old Scott Moody, who lived on a family farm with his mother and 15-year-old sister Stacy, decided to shoot and kill his two grandparents, his mother, a high school

classmate who was spending the night, his girlfriend, shoot his sister twice in the face, and then commit suicide. Within just a few hours, the Logan County Sheriff closed the case, saying it was a tragedy, a murder-suicide. Scott Moody was guilty of the crime.

Scott's sister Stacy lived, and later from her hospital bed at Riverside Hospital she claimed that it was an older man, with gray hair, who had shot her. It was a multi-million dollar farm, and I became the attorney for Scott's father, now the administrator wanting to defend his son's estate from two wrongful death actions. I needed to prove that Scott Moody was not only innocent of these killings, but I also had to try and find out who was the real shooter. Over three years I developed an extensive file, and because there were so many unusual twists in this case I was encouraged to write a book about this unfortunate tragedy. I finally had it published: "Saving Stacy: The Untold Story of the Moody Massacre," available on Amazon. That led to several podcasts and book club talks. Because of the book's popularity, and the continued corruption in the Logan County Sheriff's Office, I followed "Saving Stacy" up with my second true-crime book: "Killing Dan Ott." It took law enforcement in Burton, Ohio, northeast of Akron, 10 years to finally realize that 31-year-old pug grower Dan Ott was killed as a result of a mistaken identity – caused by deputies working in the Logan County Sheriff's Office. A third book is on its way.

My son (also a UA grad, class of '02) is on active duty with the U.S. Army. When he was stationed at Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia, he received orders to Afghanistan. I decided it was time to take a sabbatical from the practice of law and I moved to Georgia with the idea of helping out my daughter-in-law and my two young grandsons for a year. Then I met Sarah.

Being able to play golf year-round and not having to shovel snow has some great benefits. I love the South, and meeting Sarah, a retired math professor

(statistics) who now teaches online for the University of Georgia, was a big plus. Her schedule allows us to travel, and I can't tell you the fun we've had traveling all over the world to destinations that have been on our bucket lists. But for a change in pace, in 2023 we decided to buy a boat and experience the Great Loop. We bought a 40-foot cabin cruiser in Annapolis, motored down the Intercoastal Waterway to Florida, went around the Keys, then on up to Destin. Unfortunately, because of health problems, we gave up on our idea of completing the Great Loop and settled into a berth at a wonderful marina in Jacksonville.

In Columbus, Georgia, I've had a chance to teach military history at our local college and served as the president of the Chattahoochee Valley Friends of Libraries. I'm also ingrained in the world of cultural arts, working as the president of our Columbus Artists' Guild for the past 10 years. I picked up photography when I moved to Columbus, throwing money at new digital equipment. I wanted to go back to Vietnam and see what had changed since my previous visit in 71-72, so I planned a three-week solo trip to Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia. Friends with the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation told me to take lots of photos, and maybe they would purchase some. That encouraged me to want to travel to where Americans had fought in the world and photograph how a war had changed the local landscape. It's been a rewarding hobby, and it helps Sarah and me when deciding on future travel destinations.

So, that's my life story – dull at its core, but hopefully peppered with just enough drama to keep my four grandkids reading. I'm looking forward to seeing you at our reunion, hoping we can swap some slightly too-tall tales.

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