

A Second Chance

From high stress to quiet service...in a heartbeat.

I started my law career doing almost all litigation, first as a public defender, then as a state's attorney. Now I am in private practice.

I once represented a lady that had contracted the Guillain-Barre syndrome from the swine flu inoculations, which is a reaction you get from using the white of egg yolks used in the vaccine. She contracted the syndrome from this shot and we sued the federal government. It took five years to resolve but we wound up getting one of the largest verdicts in the country. That was a very interesting case.

I also prosecuted a very complicated murder case where a local elementary school principal had her husband killed. That was a highly visible and involved case. So I prosecuted those kinds of cases when I was a prosecutor.

When I was a public defender I also had some major criminal cases that I defended around the state. For example, I had a defendant in the Sandy Creek murder and drug importation case that was nationally publicized and quite involved. In fact, I have written a book about that.

When I was at the height of my career as a prosecutor my health began deteriorating. I couldn't walk across the street without being winded. Then in 1993 I had a complete cardiac arrest and was taken by ambulance to the emergency room. I was confined for three weeks in the ICU on a respirator until one night I took a severe downturn and it looked as though I wasn't going to make it. In fact, the emergency room physicians gave up on me, but miraculously, my own cardiologist happened to be in the hospital.

He came down there and went to work on me and saved my life. He was incredibly skilled at what needed to be done. He put in a defibrillator that

saved my life about twelve times. It would go off and correct my heart so it didn't go into a sudden arrest or a tachycardia.



■ BY ED MULOCK

In spite of all that I got worse. Dr. Mills told me I would have to go on a heart-lung machine and on top of that I wasn't transplantable. In other words, my pulmonary systems were so bad they couldn't risk giving me a heart because it wouldn't do any good. So Dr. Mills said, "Eddie, we are going to give you some medicines and hope that works. We are also going to pray." I was startled by his words because not many physicians will go into that realm with you, but I was impressed with the idea, especially since I was desperate. So we prayed.

The very next day, Dr. Mills came in with a smile on his face and said, "Eddie, this is a miracle. Your whole system has turned around overnight. Nobody but me thought this could happen. We can now put you on the transplant list." So I went on the list and again, miraculously, within two hours I got a new heart, just like that. Not only did I get a new heart, but it was a perfect tissue match, size and all. Since I was critical I was moved from the bottom of the transplant list to the top and as a result, I got the next heart. When I got my heart they told me that they couldn't guarantee me more than five years, but I am now in my seventh year and going strong.

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I realized that God had been looking out for me in a special way and this realization has radically changed my life. I discovered that God has loved me all these years and that he wants a daily relationship with me, not just during times of emergencies. It hit me that I had been going my own way in life and living for myself, which had alienated me from God. I learned that that was why God became a man in history and died a cruel death on my behalf, so that I could experience that daily love relationship with God.

Now I give of myself more. I say I love you more. I never pass on hugs. I always try to remember the thank yous and the anniversaries and the birthdays. I value the time that I spend with my family and my friends and with God. I am very satisfied just to sit and be with people and spend time with them. My priorities com-

pletely changed because I got in perspective what really matters in life.

I have also learned to intertwine my faith with my law practice and my dealings everyday with people. I am on numerous boards of charitable organizations. My faith teaches me the importance of giving to other people rather than taking.

The professional world is a dog-eat-dog environment and a lot of times faith slips down to second, third or fourth place as it did mine and people are not able or desirous to bring that into their professional lives. When I was young and trying to get going in business I found myself drawing back from faith because I didn't want to offend anyone. Now I don't worry about that.


I hire a lot of young lawyers and tell them, "Something might be legal but we have a higher standard than just legality. It may be legal but is it moral, is it ethical?" So I always instruct my younger lawyers not to be afraid to tell our client, even if we lose the client, that we practice law on a higher level. This is important in the practice of family law especially. Parents will come to me and want to use custody of the children to get back at their spouse in some way. But I refuse to practice that kind of law.

I also discovered that God wanted me to accomplish something special with the rest of my life. I was given a new life in order to give back what has been given to me, which is the gift of life and living. It is like being given a second chance which is what I have named my boat, my property and my ranch: Second Chance.

I started a foundation for disabled children called the *Foundation For Dreams*. It is a camp for disabled kids who are normally unable to go to a summer camp like healthy kids. The camp is set up to give children that are terminally ill, handicapped or at risk an opportunity to have a real camping experience. And hopefully it will help strengthen their will to live by giving them positive thoughts. Most camps around the country do not take children with special needs. Therefore these children don't get an opportunity to be a normal child for a week at a camp where they can roast marshmallows and hot dogs. They shoot a bow and arrow, get in a swimming pool with a counselor, do arts and crafts and music and go horseback riding.

There are very few residential camps like this anywhere. In Manatee County, Florida alone, there are 8,000 special needs children in the school system. Multiply that times all the counties in America and you can begin to see the need for this kind of program in our country. It has all given me a different perspective on life, what my priorities are, what's important.

We had a little boy come recently that is blind and mentally challenged. We had another little boy that is partially deaf, blind and mentally challenged and we've had many autistic children come. It is an absolute thrill to see the smiles on the faces of these kids and their parents when they come to camp. I wish I could multiply it by millions.

Right now we are trying to raise enough money to keep the camp going and I know we'll get it. I am not worried about it. I think we are in special hands. That is what I tell people. What about you? Do you know that you are in special hands? You can know the One whose hands are taking care of you and who has a special destiny for your life. I pray that it won't take a heart attack to point you in the right direction! 

Ed Mulock is a well-known and respected attorney in central Florida. He has his own firm and has been practicing law in Florida for 33 years. He is married with five children.

