

Sedona Conference mourns passing of executive director Craig Weinlein



It is with profound sadness that The Sedona Conference announces the death of executive director Craig W. Weinlein. He died on Sunday, June 9, at the age of 68.

Craig succeeded founder Richard Braman as Sedona's executive director in 2014, but his involvement dated back to the organization's very beginnings, serving on the faculty of Sedona's first Conference on Patent Litigation in 2000.

He was deeply committed to the organization's mission of moving the law forward in a reasoned and just way and was soon one of its preeminent advocates. He became a member of The Sedona Conference Advisory Board in 2004 and joined its Board of Directors in 2009. He was chair of the Board of Directors at the time of his death.

"I was so glad ten years ago when Craig decided to retire from a successful IP practice in Texas, move to Arizona, and take over from Richard Braman," Sedona's deputy executive director Kenneth Withers said. "Under Craig's leadership, The Sedona Conference stabilized its finances and staff and expanded our substantive scope.

"We even weathered the Covid crisis and came out stronger, which is more than many other nonprofit organizations can say. Earlier this year, Craig was so excited to launch our new initiatives into A.I. and the Law. His leadership will be sorely missed, but the Sedona community is strong, and we will carry on in his absence."

Prior to becoming Sedona's executive director, Craig was a partner with Carrington, Coleman, Sloman & Blumenthal, LLP in Dallas, Texas. He joined the firm in 1981, shortly after earning his LL.M. from Columbia University, and remained in its employ for 33 years, practicing primarily in the area of complex litigation, with a concentration on intellectual property cases. He served 10 years as chair of Carrington's Intellectual Property Practice Group.

While in private practice, he tried dozens of cases and argued numerous appeals in federal and state court. He is counsel of record in 29 reported court decisions.

While Craig will be remembered as an influential leader in the legal profession, his co-workers at The Sedona Conference remember him for his generosity, kindness, sense of humor, and even temperament.

"He really was like a father figure," said Jenifer Lobdell, Sedona's event coordinator. "I spent a lot of time traveling with him, and we had a lot of great times together.

“I remember one of my first meetings was in Fort Worth, and he was so excited to be back and take me to his favorite Mexican restaurant. He tried to show me how to salsa dance. He had great rhythm.”



Craig Weinlein, second from left, with Sedona staff Ken Withers, Jenifer Lobdell, and Michael Pomarico at an International Programme conference in Hong Kong in 2019.

Craig was a prolific author. His book *The Art of Witness Preparation*, published in 2012, was a unique contribution to the scholarship on complex litigation by providing guidance on preparing witnesses to testify effectively and persuasively in civil litigation. Unlike most literature devoted to trial advocacy, the book focused on the witness’s performance in the courtroom rather than the lawyer’s, addressing an often neglected angle for civil trial attorneys.

His diverse catalogue of publication credits also includes articles in *The American Journalism Review*, *The Journal of Arts Management and Law*, *The American Symphony Orchestra League’s Principles of Orchestra Management*, and *The Journal of Air Law and Commerce*.

Craig’s authorship provided a hint of his many varied interests. He played drums in a Phoenix-area band, Guitarras Latinas, was an accomplished photographer, an avid fisherman, and had a history of involvement in musical theater dating back to his youth.

His parents, Alphonso and Estelle Weinlein, ran a dance studio in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., and Craig was a proficient enough dancer to perform twice on the Ed Sullivan Show and appear on stage, according to *The Poughkeepsie Journal*, with the likes of Don Ameche, Carol Lawrence, Robert Goulet, and Ethel Merman, among others. Child actress Pia Zadora was a onetime dance partner.

Craig earned his bachelor’s degree from Vassar College and his Juris Doctorate from the Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law.

He is survived by his wife, Christine, children Megan and Christopher, and two grandchildren.



Craig (far left) pictured with his Guitarras Latinas bandmates.