

'We are all shaken' - Hundreds grieve for a judge's husband, slain in what many fear was an act of terror on American justice

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Composed and graceful, U.S. District Judge Joan H. Lefkow greeted hundreds of mourners Saturday as they filled an ornate Evanston church to honor the judge's murdered husband and reflect on a tragedy many see as a direct attack on the nation's judiciary.

In an uplifting and literary sermon, Rev. Jacqueline Schmitt described attorney Michael Lefkow as a martyr, and said that with his death, "We are all shaken to the very depths of our being."

Still, the Episcopal chaplain echoed the resolute tone heard in the past week from Lefkow and other federal judges who refuse to let the brutal, execution-style slayings of the judge's husband and elderly mother deter them from their work.

"Those who kill martyrs think that by this violent and banal act they are wiping out the truth by wiping out the people who witness to the truth," Schmitt said, facing the Lefkow family and rows upon rows of judges, attorneys and dignitaries who sat behind them. "We know that is not possible."

Though police still have no motive for the murders, sources said the investigation is focusing primarily on people connected to past cases the judge has heard.

Before attending the funeral, Chicago police Supt. Philip Cline said investigators are following up every one of the more than 200 tips.

"This case will be solved by skilled detective work and a tip from the community," he said. "This is a terrible thing. We want to get the people who did this and bring them to justice. That's our goal."

Lefkow found her husband, 64, and her mother, Donna Humphrey, 89, shot to death Monday night in the basement of their Edgewater home.

Services for Humphrey will be in Colorado, where she lived.

The deaths have resonated across the country, forcing members of the judiciary and others to consider the scope of such a personal tragedy and the ramifications of such an attack.

A wife lost her husband and her closest friend. Five daughters were abruptly left fatherless, with only fond memories of a man who rarely went anywhere without a Brooks Brothers suit and a stylish hat and tie.

If it is learned that this attack is the result of Lefkow's role as a jurist, then the murders are unprecedented in American history and nothing short of an act of terror against the United States' judiciary.

"Everybody felt this was an assault on the law and the legal profession," U.S. District Judge Wayne Andersen said after Saturday's service. "There was no allusion to that,

but I'm sure that was in the minds of everybody. The legal community was dealing with it as a community."

As morning light poured in through the stained-glass windows of St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Evanston, supporters ranging from city officials to state and federal judges solemnly filed past Michael Lefkow's casket. A gray fedora with a black band sat atop the casket, a memorial to Lefkow's fondness for hats.

Mourners included Mayor Richard Daley, U.S. Atty. Patrick Fitzgerald, Illinois Supreme Court Chief Justice Mary Ann G. McMorrow, 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals Chief Judge Joel M. Flaum and an array of Lefkow's colleagues from the federal bench.

After the service, Steven Lubet, a Northwestern University law professor, walked among mourners slowly leaving the church.

He said Joan Lefkow's determination to return to the bench is an inspiration for anyone in the legal profession shaken by the attack.

"Judge Lefkow's courage and indomitable spirit are going to reinforce people's confidence in the legal system," said Lubet, who in 1973 got his first job out of law school from Michael Lefkow. "When you see her bravery--the system will rebound."

Others left the church with a similar sense of optimism.

"We think terrorism is international. It's very local and domestic," said Theresa Cropper, a former associate dean at the Northwestern University School of Law. "It won't bow to cowards, the system won't. It will survive such an attack."

#### Days of preparation

The Lefkow family has been under the protection of the U.S. Marshals Service and in seclusion in Chicago since the murders. With the killers still at large, security was tight around the Evanston church Saturday, and police, the Marshals Service and other agencies spent days preparing for the funeral. Evanston Police Chief Frank Kaminski said the service was on par in terms of security and resources with a visit from the president.

Officers manned barricades cutting off access to all streets heading to the church, and additional police were posted in nearby alleys. Several marshals took up positions on the fifth-floor balcony of a nearby condominium building, focusing on the crowd and anyone walking toward St. Luke's.

Hours before the service began, marshals led bomb-sniffing dogs on a search through the church.

Kaminski said his officers were instructed to become familiar with the sketches of two potential suspects.

The investigation has focused on followers of white supremacist Matthew Hale, 33, who was convicted last year of soliciting the murder of Joan Lefkow after she had found him in contempt of court for refusing to comply with a copyright-infringement lawsuit. Hale has denied any involvement in the murders.

A law-enforcement source familiar with the case said that although officials are focusing on white supremacists, they have not discounted that the killers might be an "aggrieved or disgruntled" party from another of the judge's cases.

More than 100 people lined up outside St. Luke's before the doors opened for a 9 a.m. visitation. A long line stretched from the church down Hinman Avenue the entire morning, and by the time the service began at 11 a.m., some were turned away.

"I really wanted to get in too," said Martha Mills, a friend of both Michael and Joan Lefkow. "But there were some important people, including a couple aldermen, who didn't get in either."

Many of those who came to pay their respects were from the Lefkows' Edgewater neighborhood, where block parties and potluck suppers are common.

"We all feel like it's extremely important to support them in this," said Ingrid Verhulst, who lives a couple of blocks from the Lefkows and who attended the service. "We want to make a statement that this is not acceptable. No one is going to hide behind their doors because of this."

Michael Lefkow, like his wife, had been a part of the Chicago legal community for more than three decades, devoting himself to public-interest law and often championing the underdog. Early in his career he worked with the Legal Assistance Foundation in Chicago and went on to open his own practice specializing in employment law.

In her sermon, Schmitt noted: "When Michael stood up for the rights of workers, of women on welfare, of people who needed education, who were wrongfully dismissed from their workplaces, Michael did so as an agent of the kingdom of God. Michael advocated for those who could not stand up for themselves against powerful institutions."

`Just her normal, sweet self'

He had four daughters with Joan Lefkow and one daughter from a previous relationship. All were in attendance Saturday, and they, along with many mourners, were embraced and comforted by Joan Lefkow, who looked weary but remained remarkably composed. "Joan was just her normal, sweet self, and still determined," said Art Means, a member of the church who helped with the service.

About 100 people followed the Lefkows from St. Luke's to Rosehill Cemetery where Michael Lefkow was buried under a large oak tree.

The casket, draped in white carnations and lilies, was carried by white-gloved pallbearers. Walking slowly behind was the judge, carrying in her outstretched palms the gray fedora that sat atop the casket during the service.

When she took her seat in front of the grave site, Lefkow rested the hat gently in her lap and wrapped an arm around one of her daughters.

The love Joan and Michael Lefkow shared was well known. He would often drive her to work, and with his office near the federal courthouse, they met regularly for lunch.

In her sermon, Schmitt recalled words she had spoken at the Lefkows' 25th anniversary celebration: "Joan and Michael show us a lesson today: that life is not a

game to be won, but a gift to be celebrated. That marriage is not just a legal way to maintain property and provide for children, but a gift of abundance.

"And that no matter who we are, when we find that person, or when we answer that calling, we know that we are again in that garden from which we can never be expelled."

Caption: PHOTOS 8

PHOTO (color): U.S. District Judge Joan H. Lefkow watches as her husband's casket arrives for Saturday's funeral service in Evanston. Tribune photo by Bonnie Trafelet.

PHOTO (color): Pallbearers carry Michael Lefkow's casket to St. Luke's Episcopal Church. He and the judge's mother were slain last week. Tribune photo by Antonio Perez. PHOTO: More than 100 people line up outside St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Evanston for Saturday's funeral service. By the time the service began, some were turned away. Tribune photo by Antonio Perez. PHOTO: Mayor Richard Daley and Chicago Police Supt. Philip Cline (right) joined judges, attorneys and other dignitaries attending Michael Lefkow's funeral service. Tribune photo by Bonnie Trafelet.

PHOTO: Federal agents kept watch from a nearby condo building, focusing on the crowd and anyone walking toward St. Luke's. Tribune photo by Bonnie Trafelet.

PHOTO: State police escort Michael Lefkow's funeral procession Saturday. The attorney was buried at Chicago's Rosehill Cemetery. Tribune photo by Antonio Perez.

PHOTO: Michael Lefkow. PHOTO: Donna Humphrey.

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