

South profile: Ron Fulkerson

By Dottie Abney

Ronald Dean Fulkerson made a name for himself at an early age growing up in South Oklahoma City. His friends and neighbors knew him as Ronnie, a popular young entrepreneur managing a variety of business enterprises.

He assisted his Dad on an ice delivery route to homes in the area, earning and finally saving enough money to buy his own truck. He also delivered newspapers twice a day and could have tossed them from the window of his vehicle, but he preferred to walk. It was important to Ronnie to get the paper directly by the front door of his customers homes because he knew them personally. He'd memorized all of their names and he could tell you who lived where on the streets of his hometown.

Graduating to junior executive status, he shortened his name and established Ron's Vending Company while a student at Capitol Hill High School. He started with 25 penny peanut machines, installing nine of them at his highschool with sanction of the student council, and after nine months, 116 machines were producing enough revenue to increase his college savings fund to a

respectable amount.

His inventory of peanut and ball gum machines was placed in small cities within about a 30-mile radius of Norman. He made it a point to remember the names of proprietors where he installed machines, kept the peanuts fresh and the machines clean and in good repair. "A good location," he explained, "was anywhere people loaf."

Other profitable ventures Ron undertook were seasonal. He ran a Christmas tree lot in the winter and fireworks stands in the summertime. He also worked as a lifeguard at the old Blackhawk swimming pool. But even while he was busy as a young businessman, he made time for other activities. He was mayor of the YMCA Teen Town, president of the Big 5 council, runnerup for Ki-Yi king, a member of Chieftans and distributive education clubs and played basketball.

Ron was a student at the University of Oklahoma when he entered the service in March, 1953. He was sent to Korea with the First FOB Battalion with the rank of Sgt. When he came home he enrolled at Central State College in Edmond on the G.I. Bill, earning a bachelor of science degree in economics and business administration.

Ron worked as a contracting officer for Tinker Air Force Base and later became a contract trouble shooter for the F.A.A., continuing after hours the vending machine business and in season, the fireworks stands. He married a girl from Arkansas, Jo Ann Ober, and they became parents of three sons, Steve, Scott and Shawn.

Life was busy for the young couple during that period, and as his numerous jobs became even more challenging, Jo Ann said to him one day, "Why don't you become a lawyer?" Ron says it was the best advice he ever received. He took advantage of what remained on his G.I. Bill, enrolled at Oklahoma City University taking night classes while continuing his day job, and completed his law degree in four years.

By the time he was ready to begin his practice of law, he had built a building at 1537 S.W. 59th, now the new home of the South Oklahoma City Leader. He worked at that location from 1961 until 1987. Later his son, Shawn, became a partner in the firm which is now located at 10444 Greenbriar Place.

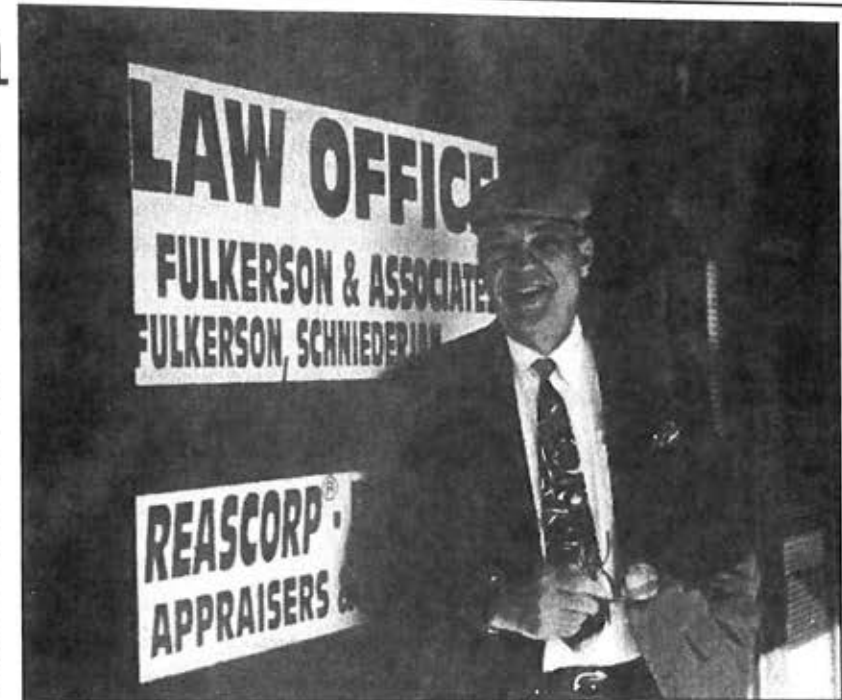
Ron said he continues to have associations with many former newspaper customers from his high school days.

"They are some of about 60,000 family members of Oklahoma Citians our law office has served since 1961. In the past 33 years we have closed over 15,000 case files in our law firm."

It could be said that Ron's work consumes most of his time, but he has regular appointments with his granddaughters, Shana, 5, and Sheridan, 3, to teach them to swim, he goes fishing and hunting with his sons and he still sees his Dad, Tex Fulkerson, now 86, and his mother, Mildred, 83, every day of the year unless he's away from home. They live in a house right behind Ron and Jo Ann's, built complete with handicap facilities where, Ron says with pride, "My Dad runs a garden and a greenhouse right out of his wheel chair."

In addition to many activities and responsibilities as a member of the Oklahoma County Bar Association, Ron has been president of the South Side Sooner Athletic Association, a member of the South Chamber of Commerce, Toastmasters Club and Southwest Kiwanis Club.

He was born in South Oklahoma City at Capitol Hill General Hospital, attended Lee and Shields grade schools and Capitol Hill Jr. and Sr. High Schools. His great-



Ron Fulkerson

grandfather, J. W. Fulkerson, made the run into Indian Territory in 1889. Ron takes great pride in the fact that now, more than a hundred years later, he and all his family, including one of his three sisters, Dorothy Hendrickson, and his three sons and two daughters-in-law, Lorie and Michelle, are still here in the place they call "Home."

His son and law partner, Shawn, says of his father, "It is amazing to me that a person who has practiced law as long as he has continues to have the compassion, understanding and kindness to get to know his clients on a personal level. He truly gives good meaning to the term 'Country Lawyer'. He is a real live Matlock! I believe his most significant accomplishment is his love and dedication to his family, friends and clients."

Name: Ron Fulkerson

Age: 61

Hometown: South Oklahoma City

Occupation: Attorney

Family: Wife, Jo Ann; three sons, Steve, Scott and Shawn.

Significant

Accomplishments: President, South Side Sooner Athletic Association; member, South Chamber of Commerce, Toastmasters Club, Southwest Kiwanis Club.

Hobbies and Interests: Fishing, hunting, working and most of all, family.

Favorite Food: Nino's Mexican Plate

Favorite Movie: "Gone With the Wind"

Favorite TV Show: Old movies

Favorite Music Personality: Sarah Vaughn

What I Like Best about South OKC: "It is home. I know so many people."

Ideal Vacation Spot: Soldier Creek at Lake Texhoma

Person I Most Admire and Why: "Herman Merson, because he is my role model."

Twenty Years from Now, I'd Like: "To be pretty much where I am now with more time to spend with my wife."

If I Had to Do It All over Again, I'd: "Do nothing different."

The Best Advice on Life I Ever Received: "When my wife suggested I make a career of the law."