

# After 40 summer reunions, the river took her

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Every summer for more than four decades, Mollie and Randy Schaffer trekked the four hours to Hill Country, for a usually sun-drenched riverside reunion with their close-knit crew of law school classmates.

Technically, they weren't Mollie's classmates — but they treated her like she was one of them. She'd been by her husband's side all through law school, looking after him and his friends as an unofficial den mother who never had a mean word to say about anyone.

## 'The kindest'

"She was one of the kindest people I've ever known," Kent, Randy's brother and a fellow Houston lawyer, wrote this week in a social media post. "I don't know how she made it in our family for 50+ years."

Her death in the July 4 flash flooding that killed at least 95 people in Kerr County will leave a hole in the family of prominent Houston attorneys, he said.

A Houston native, Mollie met Randy in 1967, a few weeks after they'd graduated from high school. At the time, they were both holding down summer

jobs at Texas Children's Hospital, where Kent said Randy's father was the chief of medicine and Mollie's mother the chief of nursing. The teens hit it off and got married not long after.

When Randy got into University of Pennsylvania for undergrad, Mollie followed him north. They had their first son while living in Philadelphia, then moved back to Texas so Randy could start law school at the University of Texas at Austin.

Richard Craig, now an attorney in Austin, was one of Randy's law school classmates, and part of the same study group. He said Mollie was like a "den mother" to the aspiring lawyers — cooking, taking care of them, and sometimes joining in when they went out for barbecue on the weekends.

## 'She was the glue'

After law school, Randy built a name for himself in the Houston legal community, and Mollie focused on raising their two sons — one of whom followed in his father's footsteps to become a well-known local attorney.

Craig described Mollie as the family's "strong rock," and Kent said she was a voice of reason.

"We have many lawyers in the family, and those



Courtesy photo

**Mollie Schaffer, the "glue" holding together a prominent Houston legal family, died saving her husband in the Kerr County floods.**

that aren't lawyers are doctors so you can imagine the clash of egos when we get together," he told the Chronicle. "When we had disputes Mollie was always the one saying knock it off. She was just that type. She was the glue that kept all the family together."

She also loved the arts, both as an artist herself and a regular theater-goer, but was always game to indulge Randy's interests, tagging along to baseball games and trips to Cooperstown.

Over the years, Mollie and Randy stayed in touch with their law school friends — and around 1980, Craig said, they were the ones who proposed "getting the band back together."

For that first summertime reunion, Mollie and Randy picked an idyllic spot in Hunt, a small unincorporated community nestled in the fork where the Guadalupe River splits.

The gathering that first year was such a success that they decided to do it

again — again and again, for 46 years. Instead of drifting apart after college, the group grew closer over time. Every summer, they came together to trade updates on their lives, retell old tales and swap new stories.

For Mollie and Randy in particular, Craig said, Hunt "was their happy place." Mollie only missed their gathering one year — last year — when her mother was ill.

By then, the group's numbers had begun to dwindle with age, and they

collectively decided the 2025 gathering would be their last.

It was to be a Fourth of July weekend bash at their usual haunt in Hunt, the River Inn.

When they went to bed Thursday, the weather seemed fine, Randy later wrote in a Facebook post. But at 3 a.m., they heard someone banging on their door.

It was the manager, telling them to flee. They ran to Mollie's SUV and drove until the water caught up with them, lifting the car off the road.

## Died 'selflessly'

Mollie told Randy they needed to dive out the windows, but she waited for him to get out first. As soon as he got outside the vehicle, the swirling water swept him away. He clung to a pole for an hour, hanging on until the waters receded and he could look for Mollie.

Authorities recovered her body two days later.

"Mollie died in a manner consistent with how she lived — selflessly taking care of someone else before she took care of herself," he wrote in a Facebook post. "She wouldn't leave the car until she was sure that I had done so. She saved my life. It wasn't my day to die. I wish that it hadn't been hers."