



## **Thomas T. Cole**

ATTORNEY COLE DEAD AT 51

Enroute to starting life anew at 51, Thomas T. Cole -a fixture in Warren County legal circles for 15 years - died Monday. He was 51. Mr. Cole, an avid photographer and backpacker, planned to move to Duluth, Minn., where he wanted to pursue these passions, while supporting himself and his future wife by practicing and teaching law, friends said. Mr. Cole and his sons, Eric and Matt, had stopped in the Chicago area to pick up his fiancé's belongings when he died from a heart attack, according to friends. "It's a big shock. He was going to start a whole new life," said Warren County Common Pleas

Judge Neal Bronson, who had recently completed a recommendation for Mr. Cole.

On Wednesday, Bronson ordered the early release of one of Mr. Cole's clients from prison. In his absence, the case was handled by William Fowler, Mr. Cole's former law partner.

"It makes you think about mortality when something like this happens," Bronson said.

Born March 13, 1948, Mr. Cole was raised in Columbus. He graduated from the Ohio State University with a psychology degree, before moving to Lebanon in 1976.

While working as a county probation officer, he earned a law degree in 1983 from the night school of the Salmon P. Chase College of Law at Northern Kentucky University. He moved to Lebanon and worked for a series of law firms. For the past three years, he and Fowler had worked from offices above the Lebanon Citizens National Bank building in downtown Lebanon.

Colleagues remembered Mr. Cole as a dramatic lawyer, who fought hard for his clients. He served on the grievance and ethics committee for the Warren County Bar Association. "He was always very much a believer in his clients' innocence or he wouldn't take a case," said Tim Whitaker, a city prosecutor compiling Mr. Cole's biography for a bar association memorial service. Four years ago, Mr. Cole underwent triple bypass surgery and two years ago, his heart stopped while he was visiting Chicago, Whitaker said. "He was only 50 feet from a paramedic station. That's what saved him," Whitaker said. Surgeons implanted a device designed to restart his heart, should it stop again, Whitaker said. "They pretty much thought they had the situation corrected," Whitaker said.

Mr. Cole is survived by his sons, who live in Middletown, and a daughter, Sara Cole of Maineville; fiancée Cathy Dean of Oak Park, Ill., a niece and a nephew.

Visitation is noon to 2 p.m. and 5 to 7 p.m. Friday at Oswald- Hoskins Funeral Home, 323 E. Mulberry St., in Lebanon, followed at 7:30 p.m. by services. Graveside services will be at 11 a.m. Saturday at Greenlawn Cemetery in Columbus.

Lawrence Budd Warren County Bureau. Dayton Daily News [Dayton, Ohio] 15 July 1999.