

# Longtime Waco Attorney Killed In Head-On Collision

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Longtime Waco attorney Charles Milton McDonald, 86, was killed in a head-on collision Thursday just east of the Lake Whitney Dam in Hill County, officials said.

McDonald, well-known in legal circles, was semiretired when he was inducted into the Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association Hall of Fame in Austin [three years ago](#), becoming only the second lawyer from McLennan County to receive the honor.

The attorney, who split his time between Clifton and Waco, was driving a 2007 Mini Cooper west on State Highway 22 when he allegedly crossed over a center stripe, Department of Public Safety Senior Trooper D.L. Wilson said.

McDonald side-swiped a 1995 GMC pickup truck that was traveling east and struck a 2010 Toyota Tundra traveling behind the GMC nearly head-on, Wilson said.

McDonald reportedly was killed on impact. The driver of the GMC had no reported injuries, Wilson said.

The driver of the Toyota, who was not identified, had non-life-threatening injuries, and a teenager passenger in that vehicle had minor injuries, Wilson said.

Both were taken to Baylor Scott & White Hillcrest Medical Center by ambulance.

Witnesses told police they saw McDonald's car weaving long before the impact, Wilson said, adding it's possible that a medical condition could have contributed to the crash.

The circumstances of the crash are still under investigation, Wilson said.

McDonald represented thousands of clients and participated in at least 100 jury trials across the country in the more than 54 years he practiced law, the Tribune-Herald reported in 2012.

“Charles McDonald’s contributions to justice have never faltered,” TCDLA Executive Director Joseph Martinez said at the time McDonald was inducted into the hall of fame. “He is god-like to lawyers who have known him for years. But for us, he has been an example for lawyers across the state.”

McDonald was the 56th lawyer to enter the hall of fame, and he also served as a TCDLA president and board member after helping establish the association in 1971.

In 1982, McDonald represented Marge Lundy, the owner of the Nite Owl bar in West, who gave a 15-year-old Willie Nelson his start. Lundy was on trial for murder in the shooting death of her brother-in-law, but she was acquitted after McDonald convinced the jury she acted in self-defense.

McDonald and his law partner, Lynn Malone, also represented Ed Graf at his first trial in 1988. Graf was sentenced to life in prison in the arson deaths of his two adopted stepsons two years before.

Graf was sentenced to 60 years in prison in October after pleading guilty to the crime before his second trial ended.

The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals awarded Graf a new trial based on his assertions that his conviction was based on arson science that has since been proved faulty.

Graf served more than 25 years in prison before he was awarded the new trial.

Felipe Reyna, former district attorney and retired appeals court justice, called McDonald “an honorable man whose word is his bond,” the Tribune-Herald reported in 2012.

“During the 10 years I was a prosecutor, I learned a lot from Chuck. And I hate to admit it, but I lost many cases to Chuck,” Reyna said.

**Staff writer Tommy Witherspoon contributed to this report.**

