

## CHRCL Remembers Founder and President Peter Schey

April 24, 2024



On the afternoon of April 2, 2024, the President of the Center for Human Rights & Constitutional Law, Peter Schey, passed away from complications of cancer.

Peter founded the Center for Human Rights and Constitutional law in 1980, and at its helm, he led the Center through hundreds of cases and campaigns that improved the lives of hundreds of thousands of immigrants, detained people, and children. Peter was lead counsel on *Plyler v. Doe*, which established that undocumented children had rights under the Constitution. He brought the case that stopped Proposition 187, which sought to deny medical care, social services, and education to undocumented people. Peter joined Carlos Holguin in litigating *Flores v. Reno*, which established the minimum standards for Department of Homeland Security and other immigration facilities that detain children. Peter helped hundreds of individuals, especially young people, but he always sought cases that would have a bigger impact. In a pragmatic way, sometimes tinged with dark humor, he was a dreamer. He always aimed for a goal that seemed out of reach.

Peter was tenacious, dedicated, and brilliant - and he was not familiar with the word "no." He approached injustice as an opportunity to work. If we lamented new legislation, he would end the conversation with directions to email the bill's sponsor. If we worried over a child harmed in detention, he would conclude that we would simply have to fly a dozen volunteers to detention facilities across the border, take a couple hundred declarations, and draft a motion to enforce by the end of the next week.

Peter spent a very significant amount of his time suing the government. It is a testament to his character and fight as an attorney that government attorneys feared his arrival, knowing that they would have to fight hard for any concession, and that they'd likely lose. It is also a testament to his character that he has invited many of those same attorneys to go sailing with him, that he always asked about their families, and that they would often chat with him after a hearing.

The Center and the community mourn the loss of a giant in the fight for justice.

A public memorial will be held July 14, 2024 in Los Angeles. An email will follow with more details.

If you would like to make a donation in Peter's honor, we invite you to contribute to one of the causes below.

Sarah Kahn  
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Defense for Children International Palestine (DCIP) promotes and protects the human rights of Palestinian children by offering free legal aid, documenting violations of international law, and advocating for greater protections.

[Donate to  
DCIP](#)

The Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA) was founded in 1986 to advance the human and civil rights of immigrants and refugees. CHIRLA became a place for organizations and people who support human rights to work together for policies that advance justice and full inclusion for all immigrants. Peter was General Counsel for CHIRLA and they continue to be a partner and supporter of his Casa Libre/ Freedom House project.

[Donate to CHIRLA](#)

United States Adaptive Recreation Center (USARC) is committed to guiding people with disabilities toward the creation and affirmation of rewarding lifestyles by facilitating challenging and adventurous recreational programming and creating awareness throughout the community.

[Donate to USARC](#)