Lance Heflin, former Executive Producer of *America's Most Wanted,* whose work led to the arrest of more than 1,000 fugitives and reunited abducted children with their parents, passed away this week after a brief hospital stay. He would have turned 68 on November 21, 2020. He is the son of the late Clarence Heflin, who served as State Senator and Representative in Missouri from 1967-1983.

Lance was born in Independence, Missouri, one of four children. He had an identical twin brother Vance, with whom he shared a love of visual storytelling. He went to Truman High School and then the renowned University of Missouri School of Journalism, where he became a teaching assistant, as well as Managing Editor at KOMU-TV, beginning a legacy of teaching broadcast skills to new generations.

He began his professional career in Miami, where he was a photographer at then WCKT-TV (now WSVN-TV), and a photojournalist and investigative Producer at WPLG-TV. His investigative work about the failure of federal programs to improve underserved neighborhoods and the smuggling of Haitian refugees earned him two Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Awards and two Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards. He went on to CBS News, where he worked for the *Evening News* and *Sunday Morning* and was a founding producer of *48 HOURS,* where he earned four National Emmy Awards. He left in 1989 to become Executive Producer of *America's Most Wanted*, a new show on a start-up network called Fox. At the time, Fox only broadcast two nights a week and was in its infancy. No one could have predicted that *America's Most Wanted* would become "must see" television for millions, and more important to Lance, be a place where suspected criminals on the run were brought to justice.

Lance brought his talent, experience and passion for justice to *America's Most Wanted: America Fights Back.* Under his direction, AMW was responsible for the capture of more than 1000 fugitives around the world, including 17 of the FBI's Ten Most Wanted Criminals. But what Lance was most proud of was the ability of the program to help find more than thirty missing children and return them to their families. He told his family and friends he would stay with the show for 20 years or until there were 1,000 captures, whichever came first. They happened together in August 2009, exactly 20 years after he joined the show.

In 1995, Lance co-founded an independent production company, Straight Shooter Productions. There, he created the internationally syndicated show, *Manhunter,* as well as the nationally syndicated program, *America's Most Wanted: Final Justice.*

After retiring from AMW, Lance switched gears and followed another passion: winemaking. He became part owner of Vint Hill Winery in Virginia, working side by side with his two sons Patrick and Walker Heflin, as they built a café business from scratch adjacent to the Winery.

Another of Lance's passions was sports. He was thrilled that during his lifetime he witnessed championship victories for his beloved teams: The Kansas City Chiefs, The Washington Nats, The Caps and The K.C. Royals.

The Heflin family are longtime residents of Bethesda, Maryland and are members of the Congressional Country Club.

Lance was so loved by family, friends, and respected by colleagues. He leaves behind his wife of 40 years Jan Evans, whom he met at the University of Missouri School of Journalism, sons Patrick and Walker Heflin, sister Linda Hobbs, brother Randy Heflin and beloved nieces and nephews. He is pre-deceased by his parents, Betty and Clarence Heflin and his brother Vance Heflin. The family hopes to be able to hold a Celebration of Life in the spring/summer of 2021. Condolences, memories & photos can be shared with the family at lance.heflin.memories@gmail.com. Memorial Donations can be made in Lance's name to The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. www.missingkids.org/donate.