

Prominent Miami defense attorney Roy Black dies, won acquittal for William Kennedy Smith in rape trial



Prominent Miami defense lawyer Roy Black, who gained national attention by winning an acquittal in the 1991 William Kennedy Smith rape trial and was involved in scores of other high-profile cases, died at age 80.

By **CURT ANDERSON** | Associated Press

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Prominent Miami defense lawyer Roy Black, who gained national attention by winning an acquittal in the 1991 William Kennedy Smith rape trial and was involved in scores of other high-profile cases, has died at the age of 80, his law partner said Tuesday.

Black represented clients ranging from pop star Justin Bieber to race car driver Helio Castroneves. Most of the time, he was on the winning side.



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Attorney Roy Black poses in the law library of his Miami-based firm, Black, Srebnick & Kornspan P.A. Black successfully represented William Kennedy Smith in a nationally televised rape trial from Palm Beach. Black has died at the age of 80. (South Florida Sun Sentinel file)



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FILE - Lead defense attorney Roy Black answers questions from the media outside the Miami federal courthouse following the guilty verdict in the drug trafficking trial of his client, Fabio Ochoa, on May 28, 2003, in Miami. (Angel Valentin/South Florida Sun Sentinel)



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FILE - Defense attorney Roy Black returns to court after lunch to continue jury selection in the DUI manslaughter trial of Wellington's John Goodman on March 6, 2012. (Mark Randall/South Florida Sun Sentinel)



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FILE - Officer William Lozano and his lawyer Roy Black talk at a press conference outside the Justice Building in Miami on Feb. 13, 1989. (Bob Mack/South Florida Sun Sentinel)



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FILE - Attorney Roy Black speaks to the media about the drug charges brought against his client, Rush Limbaugh, during a press conference at the Marriott Hotel in West Palm Beach. (John L. White/South Florida Sun Sentinel)



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FILE - Defense attorney Roy Black has gained celebrity status by representing high-profile clients such as Rush Limbaugh and Jay Levin, the Boca Raton man accused of fatally shooting a Boca teen. (Susan Stocker/South Florida Sun Sentinel)



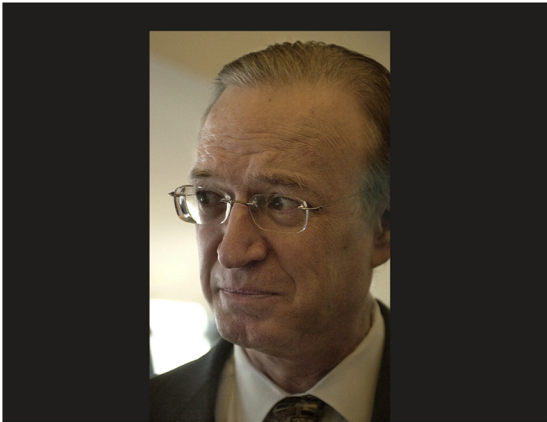
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FILE - Roy Black, center, attorney for radio talk show personality Rush Limbaugh, is followed by a camera crew as he leaves the Palm Beach County Courthouse in West Palm Beach on Monday, Dec. 22, 2003. The hearing concerned the potential release of Limbaugh's medical records. (Scott Fisher/South Florida Sun Sentinel)



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FILE - William Lozano, third from left, walks with his mom Hayde Lozano, left, brother Jairo Lozano, second from left, and lawyer Roy Black, right. This is the second trial related to the shooting and deaths of two Black men that sparked the Miami riots. (Bob Mack/South Florida Sun Sentinel)



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FILE - Jay Levin's attorney, Roy Black, speaks to the media after Levin accepted a plea deal in the shooting death of his 16-year-old neighbor, Mark Drewes. (Nicholas R. Von Staden/South Florida Sun Sentinel)



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FILE - Attorney Roy Black, left, escorts his client, Jay Levin, into the court facility at the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office in West Palm Beach on Monday, Nov. 24, 2003. Levin entered his plea during an arraignment on a manslaughter charge in the fatal shooting of 16-year-old Mark Drewes. (Scott Fisher/South Florida Sun Sentinel)



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FILE - Attorney Roy Black holds a press conference in front of the Miami-Dade Police Headquarters on April 12, 1999. (Lou Toman/South Florida Sun Sentinel)



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FILE - John Goodman (right) and his attorney Roy Black (left) arrive at the Palm Beach County Courthouse for the first day of Goodman's DUI manslaughter trial in the death of Scott Wilson. (Mark Randall/South Florida Sun Sentinel)

“For more than 30 years, Roy was my teacher, mentor and friend,” said his law partner, Howard Srebnick, in an email. “The loss(es) I feel personally and professionally are immeasurable.”

Smith’s 1991 trial became a watershed criminal defense moment when most of it was carried live on national television, famously with a blue dot obscuring the identity of the accuser on the witness stand. Smith is a nephew of former president John F. Kennedy, former Attorney General and U.S. Sen. Robert F. Kennedy and former Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, who was implicated but never charged in the alleged assault of a woman in Palm Beach during a night of heavy drinking.

Kennedy Smith is now a physician involved in an organization dedicated to banning land mines and treating victims of them.

In Miami, Black was viewed in legal circles as the GOAT — the greatest of all time, said fellow defense attorney David O. Markus, who compared him to NBA Hall of Famer Michael Jordan. “He worked harder than any lawyer I know. And he outlawyered every prosecutor who he ever went up against. I will miss him. His impact on criminal defense is beyond measure,” Markus said in an email.

The Bieber case involved allegations of driving a Lamborghini under the influence and drag racing, though the pop star eventually pleaded guilty to lesser charges of misdemeanor careless driving and resisting arrest. Indianapolis 500 winner Castroneves was acquitted in a case involving alleged tax evasion.

Over the years, Black’s clients included Rush Limbaugh; “Varsity Blues” defendant Amid Khoury, who was found not guilty of rigging college admissions; and Miami police officer William Lozano, who was acquitted in the shooting death of Black motorcyclist Clement Lloyd. The latter acquittal sparked riots in Miami in 1989.

Another of Black’s law partners, Jackie Perczek, said she learned from him that it was a lawyer’s duty to “fiercely battle the oppressors and support the underdog.”

“This generation and many to come stand on his shoulders,” she said.

Black frequently wrote articles about the law for national publications and was regularly on national television shows.

He is survived by his wife, Lea, whom he met when she was a juror in the Kennedy Smith trial and who once starred in TV’s “Real Housewives of Miami.” They have a

son, RJ, and his daughter, Nora. Funeral arrangements were not immediately announced.

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