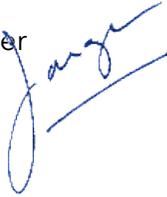


OFFICE OF THE VILLAGE MANAGER

LETTER TO COUNCIL

NO. 119-2021

To: Mayor Gabriel Groisman and Members of the Village Council
From: Jorge M. Gonzalez, Village Manager
Date: August 13, 2021
Subject: Passing of Brian Mulheren



The purpose of this Letter to Council is to share with you a news item from the New York Times regarding Bal Harbour Village resident Brian Mulheren, who sadly passed away on Sunday, August 8, 2021. A hard copy is enclosed.

Services for Mr. Mulheren will be held in New York City as follows:

Sunday, August 15, 2021 - Wake from 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. at the Campbell Funeral Home, 1076 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10028

Monday, August 16, 2021 - Memorial Mass at 10:00 a.m. at St. Patrick's Cathedral

Should you have any questions or require additional information please do not hesitate to contact me.

The New York Times

Brian Mulheren, New York Police's Go-to Man in Emergencies, Dies at 73

In the 1970s and '80s, he was the police commissioner's liaison with City Hall and became known as "Mr. Disaster."



Detective Brian Mulheren in about 1968, the year he joined the New York Police Department. Credit...New York Police Department



By **Sam Roberts**

Published Aug. 10, 2021 Updated Aug. 12, 2021

Brian Mulheren, a veteran detective who as an audacious, deft and indefatigable one-man emergency management liaison between City Hall and the New York Police and Fire Departments became known as "Mr. Disaster" and the "Night Mayor," died on Sunday at a hospice in Miami. He was 73.

The cause was chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, said his nephew Charles J. Ott, a retired police sergeant, who attributed the condition to Mr. Mulheren's exposure to debris at the World Trade Center site after the terrorist attack in 2001.

Mr. Mulheren played an outsize role for a first-grade detective. He was armed with a gold shield, but his uniform, such as it was — it typically consisted of a rumpled beige trench coat and a crumpled Irish tweed hat — was devoid of the stars and bars that define status on the police force.

Yet by sheer force of personality and the connections he had cultivated, he was deferred to by city commissioners and by police supervisors who outranked him when he arrived, often first, at the scene of a crisis in his black Lincoln Town Car, which was crowned with a forest of antennas that linked him to every emergency radio frequency in the city.

In the 1970s and '80s, he served as City Hall's wake-up call when an officer was shot or a firefighter was felled. Before the city established a full-fledged emergency management department, he seamlessly and almost single-handedly coordinated interagency strategies.

"He was one of those rare people who kept the N.Y.P.D. and the Fire Department together," John Miller, the Police Department's deputy commissioner for intelligence and counterterrorism, said in an interview. "He basically created the organized response to chaos that we replicated and have used ever since."

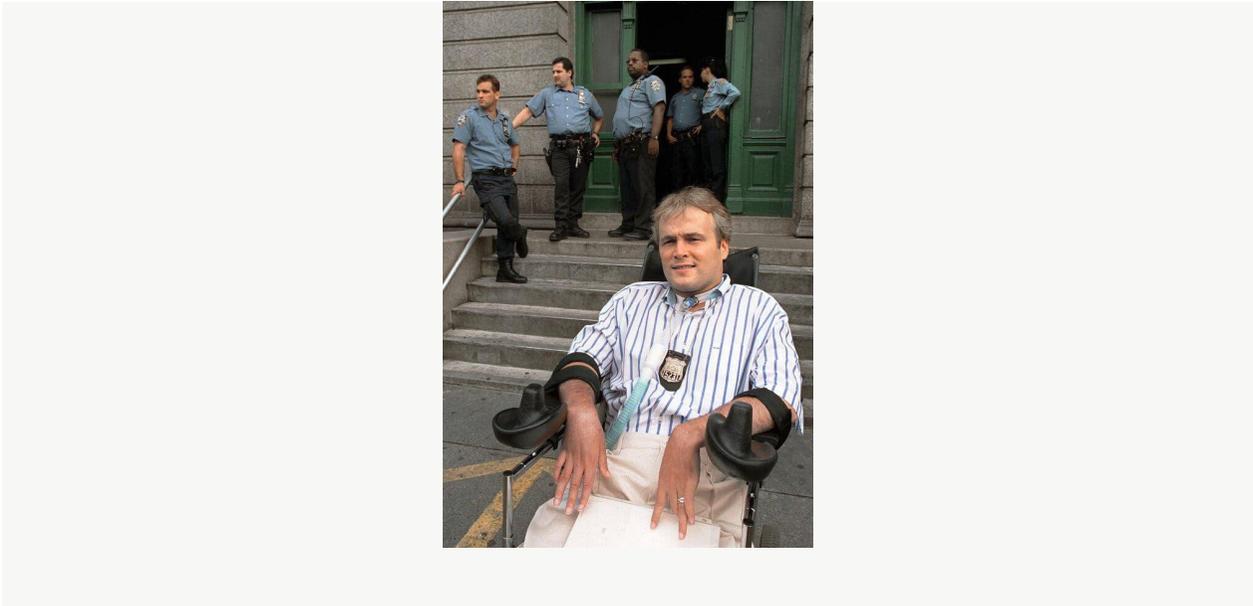
He was also recognized as a guardian angel to emergency workers who were injured in the line of duty.

Mr. Mulheren was credited by the family of Officer [Steven McDonald](#) with saving his life when he was shot in Central Park by a teenage bicycle thief in 1986 and rushed in a patrol car to Metropolitan Hospital, where doctors said he was unlikely to survive.

In 2016, Mr. McDonald told [Columbia](#), the Knights of Columbus magazine, that he vividly remembered Mr. Mulheren's intervention.

"You might think he's not going to make it, but we're going to Bellevue," Mr. Mulheren announced on his own initiative, according to "New York's Finest," a forthcoming book by Michael Daly.

"He had no rank or high station but stepped forward and said, 'No, he's not going to die; he just needs a second chance,'" Mr. McDonald recalled. "I believe that was the Holy Spirit speaking through Brian to everyone there. Just like that, they loaded me up on a special ambulance and flew down to Bellevue Hospital, where they saved my life by the grace of God."



Former Officer Steven McDonald in 1995. Mr. Mulheren was credited with saving Mr. McDonald's life when he was shot by a teenage bicycle thief in 1986. Credit...James Estrin/The New York Times

Mr. McDonald, who remained paralyzed from the neck down, became a champion of forgiveness, even expressing hope for his assailant's redemption. [He died in 2017](#) but lived to see his son, Conor, promoted to detective by Commissioner William J. Bratton and assigned shield No. 97, the number that had belonged to Mr. Mulheren until he retired.

Mr. Mulheren's indomitable spirit derived largely from the personal relationships he developed and from his record of intolerance for red tape, which became the stuff of legend.

In another emergency, when a firefighter was overcome and no ambulance was immediately available, Mr. Mulheren was said to have commandeered a city bus, told the passengers to debark and ordered the driver to take the injured man to the hospital.

Serving mostly under Mayors John V. Lindsay, Edward I. Koch and David N. Dinkins, Mr. Mulheren, a police buff since childhood, insinuated himself into the department's decisions to buy smaller patrol cars to economize on gas; change their color from green, black and white in the early 1970s to "grabber blue" with white accents to make them more visible and less intimidating; modernize lights and sirens; air-condition the cars; and improve radio communications. He also encouraged the Fire Department to requisition a hyperbaric oxygen therapy chamber to treat burn victims.

In his book "A Mayor's Life: Governing New York's Gorgeous Mosaic" (2013), Mr. Dinkins described Mr. Mulheren as a "quirky" detective who was "something of a personal emergency management unit."

Brian Francis Mulheren was born on Nov. 29, 1947, in Manhattan to Joseph Mulheren, a representative for the Consolidated Edison power company, and Mary (McCaughern) Mulheren, a homemaker.

He is survived by his sister, Elizabeth Ott. A brother, Joseph, died before him.

After graduating from DeWitt Clinton High School in the Bronx, he joined the Police Department in 1968. He worked as a detective in the Bronx and was assigned to a surveillance unit. He was also deployed in the Office of Management Analysis and Planning and the commissioner's office. He moved to Florida shortly after he retired in 1996 and remained engaged in civic affairs there as a member of the Bal Harbour Citizens Coalition.

Despite more than two decades of distinguished, if unconventional, service, he ended his tenure in the department on a sour note after years of vexing hidebound bureaucrats and department brass.

In 1992, his Lincoln was wrecked in an accident that he said occurred while he was chasing a suspect's getaway car. After years of litigation, he finally received a disability pension. Separately, he was cleared in a departmental disciplinary proceeding that raised questions about whether he had been on the job at the time of the accident.

Testifying on his behalf at that proceeding, [John F. Timoney](#), the chief of the department, said unequivocally of Mr. Mulheren, "I have never known him to be off duty."

Sam Roberts, an obituaries reporter, was previously The Times's urban affairs correspondent and is the host of "The New York Times Close Up," a weekly news and interview program on CUNY-TV. [@samrob12](#)

A version of this article appears in print on Aug. 13, 2021, Section B, Page 11 of the New York edition with the headline: Brian Mulheren, 73, Considered New York Police's Go-to Man During Crises. [Order Reprints](#) | [Today's Paper](#) | [Subscribe](#)