

To Keith

How do you summarize a man's life and a 50-year friendship in a just a few words and still provide his due honor- I can not alone but I do believe at days end our combined sentiments will convey our joy in being with him and are grief in losing him.

Today I feel less complete for I have a lost a part of me with Keith's passing. He was my oldest and dearest friend whom I loved as a brother. Although we lived at some distance, just knowing he was there provided me with an added sense of purpose, direction, and through our calls, companionship. Those of you growing up close to Keith will recall that he was the one who always made us think twice before embarking on something with possible risk. Sure we called him "paranoid" and "oh dad" but he was usually right and he often shielded us from harms way. That cautionary characteristic with Keith never changed. Keith was solid, steadfast and cautious but if he cared for you there was no better person to lean on.

I've mentioned that Keith and I were friends for about 50 years. We met at North Side elementary school in Kindergarten. In those days you were made to sit or line up in alphabetical order and Keith and I were always close if not next to each other; that never changed. We were always together and despite his hesitancy to leave his familiar surroundings, there were many times where we managed to find adventures. There were the Led Zeplin concerts to which I owe my loss of hearing, the skiing to which I owe my torn rotator cuff, to my bringing him to strange areas to buy cheap boating items where he was whispering into my ear, "ill take the two on the left" and trips to China town to buy fireworks to which I thought we would never see any of you again. And of course there was the time where some of us went water skiing at 12 at nite and he was skiing and fell off and we did not notice that for 2-miles. All true events which have left indelible memories with me, Keith and others. In fact every day brings a memory back. It was just the other day I was watching jaws with Joannie and Ari. Keith and I saw Jaws at the movies at a matinee in South Hampton when it first came out. We were about 17 or 18 and the rest of the movie goers were about 10. lots of screaming and crying and the 10 year olds were no better.

Keith was entertaining. He made laugh and he was interesting. His love of music, mechanical and electrical knick knacks were just fun to see. He introduced us to inline skates, go-karts, beepers/pagers, and brick cell phones when we were still kids. He was also fun to just watch. Keith could tell an entire story without uttering a word by just gesturing with arms and facial expressions.

I would be remiss If did not speak as to the father and husband he was. What I knew about Keith was that more than anything he wanted to love and be loved. His children brought just that and more. He loved you guys with all of his heart and he fought for what he thought was best for you without any hesitation. In the summer when he first began to consider that he might not live much longer, his focus was on how to continue in the best way for Brandon and Kristie; it was the first time in our history that we cried together. He told me that he was not afraid of dying but that he just did not want to go now when his life had finally provided the fruits of his dreams. With Cherish' as your name connotes, he struck gold. Joanie and I always said that since the time he met you, he has been the happiest.

Now despite all of these beautiful memories and character descriptions; he was very much the character indeed. Just like one can not judge the book by its cover, on first pass with Keith many did not appreciate all of these wonderful traits. He often impressed others as arrogant, loud and nothing less than a know it all. But if you got past that and realized that was his way of helping, once you peeled back the cover, there was sweet solid core. I will admit you had to work to get there sometimes. Yes he was opinionated and he loved a good verbal spar and even if you were a nuclear physicist he would tell you a better way to split atoms. I did not admit this when he was alive, we were too competitive, but he actually was correct, most of the time. Again, His intent was not to impress but to offer help.

Well he is gone now and I can't believe it still, he's on my phone contacts and I fell like I can press a button and talk to him. I want to now but I cant, I am left with the most fabulous memories of the best times of my life from age 4 on so he will never really leave me, as I said, he is a part of me that will continue to make me whole. Good by my brother. I love you.