

## John Kiley, 1950-2009

Written by Todd McGreevy  
Thursday, 19 February 2009 00:11

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The Quad Cities' lost a treasure on February 15, 2009 when community leader John Kiley died at the age of 58 years young.

On Wednesday February 18, his great friend Randy Richards soothed the full house at Sacred Heart Cathedral with an insightful eulogy -- seasoned appropriately with song lyrics from the soundtrack of Kiley's life. Kiley touched too many souls to count in his career as a social activist, culture and music fan, marathon runner, United Way leader, teacher and most recently development director at the Catholic dioceses. Richards deftly summarized the challenge with reconciling all that Kiley accomplished in his life, explaining that in his estimation, Kiley had to really be 108 years old to have achieved so much and touched so many people. He had in fact been lying to us about his age.

Especially poignant was Richards' call to prize and praise Kiley's life as well lived. "Praised for his courage. For when courage goes, honesty is the next casualty and soon after we witness the death of integrity."

Our world needs more Kileys with his courage and integrity. May we all recall Kiley's smile, laughter, words and deeds often in our own efforts to do what Kiley did every day -- make our community and world a better place to live.

Another of John's great friends, Victoria Navarro, shared her poem about John. It too elicited both tears and laughter and was equally as insightful about John Kiley and all the roles he played in our lives.

Richards' eulogy and Victoria's poem are both reprinted below, in their entirety, with the authors'

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permission.

In addition, Linda Cook [authored a fine memorial to John Kiley](#), in her piece in the QCTimes. Photos may be submitted for the gallery to the right by emailing support@rcreader.com.

### Kiley's Eulogy

by Randy Richards - Feb 17, 2009

*We've been through some things together  
With trunks of memories still to come.  
We found things to do in stormy weather  
Long may we run.*

*Although these changes have come.  
With our chrome hearts shining in the sun  
Long may we run.*

Kathy asked me to say ~~with~~ words about Kiley. ~~begin with these story.~~ this to be a great honor and head

*I came upon a child of god  
He was walking along the road  
And I asked him, where are you going  
And this he told me  
Im going on down to yasgurs farm  
Im going to join in a rock n roll band  
Im going to camp out on the land  
Im going to try an get my soul free  
We are stardust  
We are golden  
And we've got to get ourselves  
Back to the garden*

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In August 1969, a young John Kiley made his way to Yasgur's farm in upstate New York to join 500,000

That was quintessential Kiley. He was at once intellectually, musically, artistically and socially avant garde

Kathy makes exquisite creations with oil and brush, copperplates and massive presses and sometimes t

*As you brush your shoes  
And stand before the mirror  
And you comb your hair  
And grab your coat and hat  
And you walk, wet streets  
Tryin to remember  
All the wild breezes  
In your memory ever.  
And everything looks so complete  
When you're walkin out on the street  
And the wind catches your feet  
And sends you flyin, cryin  
Ooh-wee.  
The wild night is calling.*

I have listened to so many stories from so many of you about all of the times you spent with Kiley and al

In thinking this over, there is only one conclusion I can draw. Kiley was a liar. He lied about his age. The

*May your hands always be busy  
May your feet always be swift  
May you have a strong foundation  
When the winds of changes shift  
May your heart always be joyful  
And may your song always be sung  
May you stay forever young  
Forever young, forever young  
May you stay forever young.*

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And despite John's 108 years, he was forever young. He never lost his youthful exuberance for the abun

*In conflict, be fair and generous.□*  
*In governing, don't try to control.□*  
*In work, do what you enjoy.□*  
*In family life, be completely present.*

What a magnificent life! What a ride Kiley has taken all of us on with him. What stories we can tell of him

A life to be prized:

Prized for his good fortune along with his sister Kathy to have been born to Lil and Robert Kiley. The cos

Prized for his wonderful wife Kathy. A brilliant star in her own constellation and the first two syllabus of a

Prized for his Joanna and Julia, daughters close to the tree but not in its shade. Two reflections not repr

Prized for his Elliott and Iris who knew their grandfather too briefly. But everyone in this room promises t

Prized for being part of the Ambrose mafia. Mentored by Geiger and DeJohn. Dawson and Kennedy. Mo

Prized for finding work he loved or transforming work he did not love into something he could love.

Prized for the all of his friends, an ocean of friends and embarrassment of riches of love. Last night at vi

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And a life to be praised:

Praised for how he used his gifts and good fortune to benefit others.

Praised for a compassion informed and guided by intelligence. For compassion without intelligence is so

Praised for his courage. For when courage goes, honesty is the next casualty and soon after we witness

For all of this we are grateful and joyous and we try not to be sad. But still we are in grief

*Everytime I see your face  
It reminds me of the places  
We used to go,  
But all I've got is a photograph,  
And I realize you're not coming back anymore.*

Let us hold them both, the joy and grief. In proper measure as the times demand. For true the taste of o

The family has asked me to invite all of you to the Kahl Ballroom for a food and music and conversation.

*Oh won't you stay  
One more day with your own ones  
Don't rush away  
Rush away from your own ones  
This old world is so cold,  
Don't care nothing for your soul  
You share with your own ones*

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Thanks Kiley, hope you liked it

### **Something About John**

by Victoria Navarro - Feb 17, 2009

I want to say something about John

I want to say something that won't make people sadder

Because that is what John would have done.

I want to say something thoughtful

because that's what John was...thoughtful and selfless.

I want to say something that will help us mend,

because that's what John was...a mender.

I want to say something clever and pithy to make us smile or even laugh out loud

because that's what John was...witty.

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I want to say something so profound that it will give us pause for days to come

because that's what John was... a thinker and a teacher.

I want to say something to give us comfort now and in the future

because that's what John was... a caretaker.

I want to embrace you all and share life's energy,

because that's what John was... a true friend.

I want to hug my family, especially my granddaughter,

because that's what John was... a family man.

I want to be patient and loving with my husband,

because that's what John was... a devoted, adoring spouse.

I want to go dancing with reckless abandon and listen to the Clash and ride home in my convertible, be

I want to plan trips that I can't afford,

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go to rock concerts, even when I've been told they are sold out and tickets are impossible to get,

I want to learn new languages,

have new experiences that people say I am too old to have,

I want to make my community better,

Make things happen!

because that's what John was...a dreamer.

I know we all knew John in different ways,

But the soul, the core of the man, if you will,

was always the same...

pure and good.

Thank you

for letting me say something about John.



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