



Kevin Joe Eldridge

September 1, 1961 - November 30, 2011

Kevin Joe Eldridge, 50, formerly of Salem, Ohio, and of Murphysboro, Illinois, passed away at 1:19 p.m. Wednesday, November 30, 2011, at the Rehab and Care Center of Jackson County, Murphysboro, Illinois.

Kevin was born on September 1, 1961, in Murphysboro, Illinois, to Walter L. Eldridge and Wilda M. (Perkins) Eldridge.

He was a graduate of the Murphysboro Township High School and of SIU at Carbondale. He received his master's degree in English and Creative Writing from the University of Iowa at Iowa City, IA and also taught at Iowa State University at Ames, Iowa. Then he taught at University of Louisiana at Monroe, LA, and finally was a Professor of English and Creative Writing at the University of Ohio at Salem, OH.

Kevin is survived by his parents Mr. and Mrs. Walter Eldridge of Murphysboro; three sisters Beverly S. Randolph and her husband Merle Randolph of Marion, OH, Patricia L. Whitacre of Kissimmee, FL, and Lola G. Wilkerson and her husband Stephen J. Wilkerson of North Port, FL;

three nephews and two nieces and a number of aunts and uncles.

He was preceded in death by his stillborn infant, his maternal and paternal

grandparents, and his dog Cody, whom he raised from a puppy.

Tribute Wall



“ *Kevin Joe Eldridge*

October 23, 2023 at 06:26 AM



“ *I have only just heard this awful news. I am also one of those who met Kevin at the Iowa workshop. There are many detailed and specific memories, but I just remember the general good feeling I had whenever Kevin was around. My mood would be lousy, I would be homesick for New York, and somehow Kevin and his easy smile and laid back slouch made it vanish. And he had this effect on so many others. My sympathies to his family and friends.*

Rocco Dormarunno - September 16, 2012 at 02:06 PM



“ *RIP Uncle Kev, I know you are in a much better place and happy now. Sadly the last words from you to me were that "you look forward to the day we can sit down and have a long talk so you can share some advice with me and you love me" my last words were "I would love to have that conversation and hop it can happen one day soon and that I love you." Unfortunately we never got to have that conversation but I know one day I will see you again. I love you uncle Kev!*

Emily Wilkerson-Moore - December 09, 2011 at 03:22 PM

JG

“ One of the fondest memories I have with Kevin is of a crisp fall night under the hunter's moon. We were were sitting in his kitchen and waiting for our dates to arrive so we could all go to the symphony (Schubert's Ninth (The Unfinished)). While waiting, we started writing a poem, trading off stanza's. I have no idea what happened to that poem... but the memory is more than enough.

I think that the fondest memory I have with Kevin started 15 years ago and finally came full circle this summer. 15 years ago Kevin went to New York for the summer break and asked me to house sit for him and look in on his cat, Kafka. I hadn't seen or talked to Kevin in nearly 10 years until the fall of 2010 when he finally caught me on Facebook. Well, this summer he reminded of my time looking after Kafka. I had nearly forgotten about that but the memories soon returned vividly to the point where I decided to write a short prose poem about my time with Kafka. Kevin paid me the highest compliment after I sent him a copy. He told me that it amounted to the most masterful piece of writing he had read all year. Coming from Kevin, that means the world to me.

Thank you, brother. For everything.

I miss you and I love you

Joseph Guinigundo - December 05, 2011 at 05:50 AM

JG

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Joseph Guinigundo - December 05, 2011 at 05:37 AM

CM

“ I only just met Kevin a month ago, or so. We simply shared a couple of fun dreams..but it was enough to never forget him.

Colleen Martin - December 03, 2011 at 12:21 PM

BB

“ *My sincere condolences to Kevin's family, whom he loved so much. I met Kevin in Iowa City in 1986. Always the coolest person in the room, Kevin was the guy with a little bit more: More brilliance. More poetry. More wisdom. Deeper griefs. That photographic memory. His unflinching willingness to tell me the truth. Kevin was the friend you called when your heart was broken, when your life was in shambles. And he was the one to run to with your greatest triumphs. His belief in the best of his friends was unshakable, and he reminded me repeatedly, over many, many years, that anything is possible. Kevin was the guy with more heart. More love. Kev, I will miss you and remember you always, with love. -Betsy*

Betsy Brown - December 03, 2011 at 11:41 AM

BM

“ *All of our prayers and thoughts are with you today. God bless.*

Barb and Bill Mullins - December 03, 2011 at 10:18 AM

S(

“ *I am so sorry for your loss. I am remembering back as neighbors growing up with Kevin and playing in the neighborhood. We have lost a wonderful person on earth but God has opened his loving arms for a new Angel. May the Peace of our Loving Father be with your family at this most difficult time.*

Sandy McCoy (Schmitto) - December 02, 2011 at 08:54 PM

DW

“ *We are so sorry for your loss. Our thoughts and prayers will be with you.*

Debbie Sherman, Shirley Akin, Nancy wynn - December 02, 2011 at 08:14 PM

NL

“ My dear childhood friend. I am so glad we reconnected after all these years. So many memories. I am amazed at the man you became and and blessed to call you my friend. This world is sad without you but heaven is enriched with you. I love you. Till we meet again.

Nancy Lee - December 02, 2011 at 08:01 PM

LL

“ Kevin, if there is a heaven, Steve McNally will call you on the eve of the Winter's first snowfall and has read Rimbaud's "A Dream for Winter." I say goodbye with the same words in which said your first hello to me:

*In the winter, we will leave in a small pink railway carriage
With blue cushions. We will be comfortable.
A nest of mad kisses lies In each soft corner.*

*You will close your eyes, in order not to see, through the glass,
The evening shadows making faces.
Those snarling monstrosities, a populace
Of black demons and black wolves.*

*Then you will feel your cheek scratched...
A little kiss, like a mad spider, Will run around your neck...
And you will say to me: "Get it!" as you bend your neck -
And we will take a long time to find that creature -
Which travels a great deal...*

(Arthur Rimbaud, In a railway carriage, October 7, 70)

Laurie Ann Lichtenstein - December 02, 2011 at 03:46 PM

WJ

“ To Kevin Joe's family,

I very fondly remember evenings I spent with Kevin at Dave's Foxhead in Iowa City. Kevin was always charming, funny, and warm. Kevin was an exceptionally talented writer, and I altogether appreciated his poems--wonderful, insightful work. Kevin could also be a first class character, of the good kind. He will truly be missed.

Wayne Johnson - December 02, 2011 at 01:14 PM

“ Dear Family of Kevin Joe Eldridge,

It is with deep sadness that I write to you from Utah, where from time to time I have remembered Kevin Joe's beautiful poems.

Kevin and I were classmates during our M.F.A. time, and our offices were on the same hallway. I can still see him in his cowboy hat, duster, and sunglasses.

Kevin introduced me to Patsy Cline. I had grown up in the East and had lived abroad for the few years before Iowa, so I was in a kind of culture shock when I ran into Kevin in my first days ever west of the Mississippi. I remember how funny he was, shocked that I had arrived at September, 1986, not having been familiar with Patsy Cline's music. He said, "Woman! Listen to this!" --and he played "I Fall to Pieces" on the jukebox. Everyone in workshop with Kevin was made aware of the virtues of Hank Williams.

I hope Kevin and Stephen McNally are enjoying reading Vallejo and Neruda and James Wright together. They touched me deeply with their live readings of poems over the phone late at night.

One never knows if the family of an artist has a sense of who the artist was on the page.

I hope that among Kevin's relatives there are readers who will connect with the deeply moving material that Kevin has left. He was an amazing poet.

Every once in awhile I looked for his books.

Anyone who was at the Workshop with us understands that there is no accounting for the manner in which the publishing of poetry in this country works. I must emphasize that Kevin made many gorgeous poems, and that he deserved to have had many books out and available to a wide readership by this stage of his life. We

all knew this.

I am sending you all my deepest wishes for your healing.

Respectfully yours,

Karen Subach

Karen Subach - December 02, 2011 at 12:56 PM

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Karen Subach - December 02, 2011 at 12:52 PM

SJ

“ *Kevin is a very special soul. I love his way with words. Thanks, Kevin, you gave us a lot to remember you by here on earth! I was blessed to know Kevin. My heart goes out to Lola and the close family and friends at this tough time. Thanks for being with him in his sickness, but let's all remember him at his best.*

Sarah Jacobs - December 02, 2011 at 11:45 AM

BC

“ *I was so glad to see Kevin in September at the Class of 79' 50th birthday party. We got to catch up on some old memories and reconnect after so many years. Kevin truly had a rare gift for words, something I seem to often lack and maybe especially at this time.*

My heartfelt prayers for all his family at this time. You rest now Kevin, your life has truly now begun. See you again some day, my friend.

Bill Connor - December 01, 2011 at 11:03 PM

KH

“ I haven't seen Kevin in a long, long time and it was a Godsend to reconnect with Kevin over the past year. His wit, humor, and esoteric writings will be truly missed. ZoSo, it was a honor to have been your friend.

Kevin Hendricks - December 01, 2011 at 08:30 PM

SL

“ Kevin was my great friend when we were students in Iowa City. My heart goes out to you, his family. He was so blessed to be surrounded by your love.

Sheila Griffin Llanas - December 01, 2011 at 07:59 PM

C(

“ My deepest love for all the family and friends of our beloved Kevin. Words can't express how I feel and how I know you feel. I will miss him..

Charlene Summers (Schott) - December 01, 2011 at 05:22 PM

YP

“ I had the biggest crunch on Kevin in High School, I lost contact with him after high school, but he was a wonderful person, I will keep you in my prayers. God Bless

Yvonne Poston - December 01, 2011 at 04:47 PM

C(

“ I've known Kevin since we were five. We went to church together through grade school. We would always compete in Sunday school and vacation Bible school to see who could learn the most Bible verses. We teased and picked on each other all through grade school never knowing why the other did it. At our 50th birthday reunion he told me how he had a huge crush on me in grade school and his mom and dad teased him so much about it that they teased him out of it. I told him how I had a huge crush on him back then also. I also reminded him about the day I had written a note to someone in class (I think we were in the fourth grade Mrs. Young) and I had it outside at recess. I can't remember but I think it was Brett Berger who took it from me and ran to the field and gave it to Kevin. Kevin sat on a football and read it, and of course it was about him. I was so embarrassed that I decided I didn't think he was cute anymore. Kevin for give me for not calling you since you been home.

Charlene Summers (Schott) - December 01, 2011 at 03:56 PM

GM

“ Our sincere condolences, to the entire family, to Uncle Walter, Aunt Wilda, Beverly, Patricia, and Lola. We are so sorry for this great loss to all of you.

Geraldine Spears Moss & Bobby Moss - December 01, 2011 at 03:24 PM

CF

“ I used to work at one of Kevin's old haunts and got to know him through many a brilliant conversation and heated debate in which he would often leave me flattered, confused, angry, humbled, entertained, and a little more educated than I was before. I always looked forward to seeing him and I'm sorry to know that is no longer an option in this lifetime. My sincere condolences go out to his family and all of those who were fortunate enough to call him "friend.”

Connie Frazier - December 01, 2011 at 03:02 PM

RR

“ Kevin and I became good friends in our freshman year of high school. We had some unique, fun times back then. Unfortunately, as time and life do, we lost touch. However, with the wonder of technology we were able to re-connect and spend some time together through conversations on the phone, Facebook and was able to have a great nite out with Kevin and Bill on his 50th birthday not to mention he got to see his class mates at the reunion of which I know he he had to find the strength and courage to do considering his condition. Kevin was a teacher, a writer, a son, a brother and my my friend. Rest in Peace and be with God, Kevin Joe.

Randy Russell - December 01, 2011 at 11:31 AM

DK

“ Although I never had the pleasure of meeting Kevin, I do know his sister Lola well. To the Eldridge Family, you have my deepest sympathy and to you Lola, you have my love, respect. I will continue to pray for you all during this dark season in your lives. Rest assured knowing that Kevin is in the arms of Jesus, hopefully that will bring you all some comfort.

Debbie King Killian - December 01, 2011 at 10:57 AM

BJ

“ Kevin and I taught together at the University of Louisiana in Monroe. From the moment I met him, there was an instant connection. He quickly became like a brother to me. At a very difficult time in my life, he took me in, and we shared a house together for a while. We also shared some great times. Kevin was gentle, kind-hearted, loyal to family and friends. He loved music, poetry, lively conversation, his faithful Dalmation Cody. He taught me so much about great literature, about being open minded to people and ideas, about living with passion, without fear. When I visited him recently, he taught me much about life, and its passing, and how one faces it calmly, with strength, and with a real understanding that what follows this time on earth is something immeasurably better. I will always cherish our friendship, will always hold him in my heart, and will look forward to that day when we meet again. To Kevin's wonderful family, my deepest sympathy. God bless you and keep you.

Bob Jordan - December 01, 2011 at 10:32 AM

KB

“ My condolences....I enjoyed being in class with Kevin and being entertained by him cutting up with his friends.

Kevin Boucher

Kevin Boucher - December 01, 2011 at 09:40 AM

JF

“ *Walter, Wilda, and family:*
I am so sorry for your loss may God give you peace at this time.

Joyce Fields - December 01, 2011 at 09:31 AM

CR

“ My love and prayers are being sent to each of you this morning. Please know I will continue to keep you close to my heart in the days to come. Trish, Shane, Bridget & Shawn, Trinity; Bev & Rudy; Lola & Steve, Devyn, Trent & Nick; Walter & Wilda, may the memories you created with Kevin provide you with a small measure of comfort as you remember and celebrate his life.

Crey - December 01, 2011 at 09:07 AM

JG

“ Kevin, William (Paul) Bottom, Brett Cavaness, and myself were the tightest band of friends in high school. We had so many fun times and ribbed each other in the way that only the best friends can.

I was so glad we had the 50th birthday party reunion this year around Apple Festival time, so that we could all see each other once again. I am going to miss Kevin, his wit, and am hoping to make it to Murphysboro for the funeral.

Jim Gilbert - December 01, 2011 at 08:02 AM