



Kevin James Kelly

November 24, 1940 - July 13, 2023

Kevin James Patrick Kelly, 82, died on Thursday, the 13th of July. A resident of Jupiter, FL for over fifty years, he died from cancer at his home. He is predeceased by his son, Kevin, and his first wife, Kathleen, leaving behind among his sons, John and Jeremy. His parents, Emmett and Pauline Kelly, had seven children, most of whom lived in southeast Florida. Among his siblings, he is predeceased by Major, Patricia, and Keith. He has left behind his older sister, Betty Kenny, and his two younger brothers, Chris and Tom. He is also predeceased by his second wife, Jean, and he leaves behind his third wife, Kathy.

A memorial service will be held at Taylor and Modeen Funeral Home in Jupiter, on the fifth of August, between the hours of 3:30 and 6:30pm. All friends and family are invited to attend.

Kevin's – my father's – family moved from Michigan to Lake Worth, FL in the early 1940's. After a brief return to Michigan, they finally settled in Singer Island, FL, in the early 1950's. My dad married my mother a couple of years after graduating high school. They both attended St. Anne's, in West Palm Beach. They moved about the country for several years before settling in Cove Point, in Jupiter-Tequesta, having previously lived in Boca Raton, Gainesville, and West Palm Beach.

While in Boca Raton, in the 1960's, my dad studied philosophy at Florida Atlantic University. After earning his undergraduate degree with high distinction, he was awarded a fellowship for graduate study in philosophy at

Duke and had planned to become a professor. He abandoned his studies at Duke after a semester (for reasons which remain unclear), transferred to the University of Illinois for a short time to pursue other studies, and ended up at the University of Florida in the mid 1960's – by which time little Kevin and John had been born. After graduating with a degree in architecture, he moved back with the family to South Florida. There he began working at an architectural firm in West Palm Beach, and by the early 1970's he was a project manager.

Regarding his professional life, my dad had earned a reputation for being an authority on matters pertaining to building code. I should also mention that my dad possessed considerable talent as a designer. He received a prestigious award from the state of Florida in the early 80's for his work in architectural design. Among those he has named as his influences, are Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis Kahn, Richard Meier, the Bauhaus School of the late 1920's. His own work was nonetheless original. Whenever I drive through West Palm Beach on I-95, I look eastward as I pass the 45th street exit, and I can see in the distance the medical complex he designed in the early 1990's. I find myself admiring – more so as time goes by – the elegance of the structure's design.

As concerns his many admirable qualities, there were many. My dad was quick to laugh. Friends and family will remember fondly my dad's laugh – a startlingly loud cackle (unusually high-pitched for a baritone (this lovable cackle was rivalled only by my mom's, which was much subtler). When my uncle Bill (my mom's brother) visited the home, my mom and dad would gather with my Uncle Keith, Chris, and Tom (they were often accompanied by their wives, Sue, Eileen, and Barbara, respectively). Friends of the family would then show up, during the late hours of the night. My brothers and cousins would be there, too. We never knew what the grown-ups were talking about in the other room; but that didn't matter. There would be some chuckling, and then, all of a sudden, tremendous laughter would erupt from the group, and you could hear my dad's cackling sailing high above it. The

sound of it made everyone happy. I like to think that in those mirthful moments at the house in Cove Point something rather pure was being transmitted from the adults to all the children.

My dad was involved with the Boy Scouts and later volunteered to coach boys' basketball with JTAA. He was known to be a formidable chess player. He regarded the game with a seriousness and piety which he seemed to impart to me and my brothers. He coached each of us from an early age and was proud when we would distinguish ourselves in school tournaments. It cannot be exaggerated how much my dad enjoyed boating (he even raced boats as a young man). Later, in his forties, he bought a speed boat which he drove at an almost criminally high speed; he was notorious for "terrorizing" (as my Uncle Bill would say) the elder coastal inhabitants all along the Loxahatchee River.

There was one particularly admirable quality my dad possessed I did not mention earlier, which I will try to describe by means of a short anecdote. Most of the family will remember the death of my dad's oldest son, Kevin, and the great sorrow this caused him. My dad would certainly wish to be remembered for his love of Kevin. I also think he would have wanted to be remembered by something he did some time after Kevin's death. On several occasions he contacted mothers and fathers who had lost a child. As I recall, he sometimes even showed up at funerals which he had read about in the paper. I believe he would sometimes contact them by mail. He would talk to them and share Kevin's story; he would explain how he learned to cope with the grief. I was young when I learned of this but was deeply impressed. When I asked if there was some special message, he wished to give them, some moral from experience he wished to impart, he said that he wanted to assure them that there would come a time they would find peace and could learn to laugh again.

My dad was a special man. May he rest in peace.

Previous Events

Gathering of Family and Friends

AUG 5. 3:30 PM - 6:30 PM (ET)

Taylor & Modeen Funeral Home
250 Center Street
Jupiter, FL 33458
(561) 744-2030
<https://www.taylorandmodeenflorida.com>

Tribute Wall



“ *Kevin James Kelly*

October 22, 2023 at 10:17 AM



“ *Kevin Kelly is my Uncle and has been a large part of my life. Recently I have been able to spend special moments with him and my Dad Tom. We would enjoy talking boat stuff and everything else that is going on in life. I always remember the great times my family and Kevin's family had growing up. You always had "Bumps in the Road ", but Uncle Kevin was always deterred by it. He and my Dad really got me into the boating thing and that's where my my career path took me. I'm just thankful that I had that last cup of coffee, a hug, and I will see you soon...this past March. Uncle Kevin Rest in Peace. I Love You! Jarrod. PS: Looking forward to our Lake and Bay ride down the road!*

Jarrold Kelly - July 30, 2023 at 06:32 AM



Thanks for sharing this remembrance, Jarrod. He spoke of your visit in the last days. He also appreciated your card - which he kept - from a year ago or so when he was in the hospital.

Jeremy Kelly - August 07, 2023 at 02:18 AM