



Kenneth Carl Whiting

March 12, 1962 - July 16, 2020

Kenneth Carl Whiting, died unexpectedly after a brief illness on July 16, 2020 in Provo, Utah. Ken was born on March 12, 1962 in Lansing, Michigan to his surviving parents Gordon and Barbara Whiting. He lived a remarkable life, worthy of celebration and remembrance.

Ken had high functioning autism at a time when few knew what autism was or how to navigate it, and it was a major part of his life. It created a myriad of challenges for him that he managed with great courage and strength, but it was also an integral part of him and of making him the wonderful, eccentric, kind, loving, and generous person that he was.

Ken had a rare combination of frugality and generosity. Over many decades, he was a hard-working, dependable employee, and though he never took home large paychecks, he always prepared for the future and became financially independent. His crowning financial victory, at which he never ceased to chuckle, was the day he paid off the mortgage on his own condo and finally “stuck it to the bank!” Ken was a faithful contributor to his church, and generously supported local charities to help the homeless and the poor. Though he refused to part with his 30+ year old, run down couch, he considered himself the luckiest person in the world and found great joy in his few possessions while always looking for ways to help others.

Ken possessed a remarkable memory for facts and figures of all varieties: fascinating, important, absurd and mundane! In an age before the Internet, he served for family and friends as a sort of personal Wikipedia. If you needed to know what day was Constitution Day in Norway, Ken could inform you without effort that it's May 17. If you have forgotten or never knew, Ken could remind you that Harrison was the ninth president, between Van Buren and Tyler, and that he only served a record short 31 days in office. Whatever the topic, in those days where one couldn't simply Google the answer, asking Ken was just as effective. More recently, he was known to regularly beat Apple's “Siri” to the punch when it came to queries of all varieties.

He was a great lover of cinema. In the days before streaming services and on demand, Ken's love of movies led him to one of the few financial indulgences he allowed himself of collecting videos. Over the years he developed a vast and carefully curated collection of movie titles that he loved to share and enjoy together with family and friends. He joyed in hosting movie nights, in serving as master of ceremonies, and in choosing or providing viewing recommendations. Movie nights with Ken might feature high-brow work from the likes of Orson Wells, Ingmar Bergman, or Akira Kurosawa, but could just as easily feature the silly or absurd films of John Cleese, Terry Gilliam, or Chuck Jones. His tastes were eclectic and broad, but more than anything he joyed in exposing a friend or family member to something new.

He will be sorely missed by his parents, siblings, cousins, nephews, nieces and friends.

Memorial services are by invitation only for the safety of Ken's surviving family members. We appreciate your understanding.

In lieu of flowers we ask that those wishing to express their condolences make a donation in his name to one of Ken's favorite charities: the Community Action Services and Food Bank (<https://communityactionprovo.org>)

Comments



“ I'm saddened by the sudden death of Kenneth. I enjoyed having the connection of being able to call over to the Warehouse and always knowing I could reach him full of knowledge. I'm a real touchy person and one time at Smith's Store I saw him I had just started working at VitalSmarts and barely knew Kenneth, but I went up to him and grabbed his arm and said "Kenneth HELLO!! he was OK said hello I found out later from Terry oh he doesn't like that!! He was OK by it which I was glad that I didn't upset him , I offer my sincere condolences to his family. He will be missed Faye Cullimore

Faye Cullimore - July 22 at 11:06 AM



“ Kay Goodson lit a candle in memory of Kenneth Carl Whiting



Kay Goodson - July 21 at 11:51 PM



“ Kenneth was my downstairs neighbor for years. We became very close friends, and routinely spent hours on the phone or in person talking about anything and everything. Kenneth was brilliant...I would say that he was probably a Savant. It is true what his family says about using him instead of Wikipedia or SIRI. I did that often, because he really WAS faster and probably more accurate.

Kenneth had a kind and generous heart. He also had a very gentle soul. He was a great listener, which is a rare quality. He also had a good sense of humor. We developed sort of a quirky sense of humor between us that was an amalgamation of movies, political and Utah County social commentary. We thought it was hilarious, but probably no one else would have.

I adored Kenneth, and considered him to be one of my closest and most treasured friends. I will miss him. I apologize if my previous attempt at a post has been put up...I can't see it here so hopefully there is only this one. Kay Goodson

Kay Goodson - July 21 at 11:50 PM



“ I remember the first time I met Ken. I introduced myself and Kenny Reay and he said, "Hey, we are both Kens! Every time we see each other you say 'Hi Ken.' and I will respond 'Hi Ken'" So for years after we would always start our conversations with, "Hi Ken." "Hi Ken." His recollection of old musicals and show tunes was priceless. He could break into chorus mid sentence with lyrics I had never heard, and may never hear again. His demeanor was absolutely special. His questions in "All-Hands" meetings would be poignant and thoughtful, usually requiring those answering to take a minute to collect their answers. Ken was one of a kind and will be sorely missed. We have lost a great one.

Kenny Reay - July 20 at 01:16 PM



“ We loved Kenneth so much at VitalSmarts! I enjoyed working with him as his HR Director and helping him navigate insurance and special situations he had. He brought laughter and dedication to his work everyday. He is one thing that I miss about not working at VS anymore. He will be missed!

Jaclyn Tjaden - July 20 at 11:37 AM



“ Kenneth was a dear friend and colleague at VitalSmarts. He showed great courage in life and gave so much of his heart. He knew so many zip codes and saved the day numerous times by catching shipping entry errors.
Kenneth loved to make jokes and clever remarks, always bringing a smile to my face. I enjoyed his comments to company-wide emails I would send, making a pun or joke. He was a dedicated worker and knew how to give. He was All In!!
Love you Kenneth.
Joanne Staheli

Joanne Grenny-Staheli - July 20 at 10:54 AM



“ Kenneth was the model of integrity at VitalSmarts. Everything had to be done right. He cared deeply about ensuring customers got the best we had to offer. And he expected all of us to live up to our values. I am a better man for having worked with Kenneth. I look forward to seeing him again.

Joseph Grenny - July 20 at 10:30 AM



“ Ken worked for me for several years at Novations. I was amazed at his intelligence and good humor. He could tell you any zip code in the USA by memory. He was always punctual and took his job seriously. Whenever I ran into him after that job he always took time to talk and relate what he was excited about. I'll miss him very much.

Norm Smallwood - July 19 at 08:33 PM



“ Kay Goodson lit a candle in memory of Kenneth Carl Whiting



Kay Goodson - July 19 at 07:33 PM



“ Kenneth was my downstairs neighbor for many years. He was also one of my closest friends. He had a great sense of humor, and an encyclopedic knowledge of facts in almost every field of knowledge. I used to call him to ask a question because he was faster than google. He had amazing stores of knowledge, for instance he knew the zip code of EVERY place in the world by heart.

Kenneth made me laugh a lot. He had a quirky sense of humor. We enjoyed movies together, and liked discussing movies and their history. We e-mailed each other a lot, even though he just lived downstairs. Most of our emails had to do with politics and other serious issues. We would save the fun discussions for when we visited in person. I particularly loved the clock he had on the wall in his condo that ran backwards. (I never could figure out how to tell time from it, but he could)

Kenneth had a gentle, compassionate soul, and was without guile, He was very sensitive to other people's feelings, and he had lovely manners. He was a true gentleman. He was very concerned about the well-being of those less fortunate, and had an endless well of empathy for the downtrodden. I loved Kenneth and I will miss him greatly. He was one of the closest friends I have ever had. I cherish our friendship. I will forever miss him.

Kay Goodson - July 19 at 07:17 PM