



Bob Kuehn

Remembrances and Remarks
from Friends and Colleagues

*from Bob's Memorial Service
West End Place
Boston, Massachusetts
June 21, 2006*

On June 21, 2006 nearly 500 people gathered in the courtyard at West End Place to honor and remember Bob Kuehn. Ten of his closest friends and colleagues shared their remembrances of Bob with those assembled. Please share these remarks with friends of Bob.

Aaron Gornstein

Executive Director, Citizens' Housing and Planning Association

I want to welcome the family, friends, and colleagues of Bob Kuehn to pay tribute to Bob and to celebrate his life. The large number of people here this afternoon is a testament to the significant impact he had on all of us.

In particular, I want to acknowledge Tom Kuehn, Bob's brother, who is here with us. I also want to recognize Janet Hegarty, who has worked for Bob for 18 years, and all of the staff of Keen Development for the tremendous job of planning this service.

It is fitting that we are at West End Place. This is where Bob lived, and it's an example of a development Bob built along with the partnership of the Archdiocese Planning Office for Urban Affairs.

And, like all of Bob's properties, it is beautifully designed, well-maintained, and of course involved very complicated financing that probably cannot be replicated.

Bob was a true innovator and a pioneer. He was at the cutting edge of mixed income housing, and undertook smart growth before the term was in vogue.

Bob was a master at turning problems into assets. He would take a hidden resource, such as an abandoned factory building, and turn it into something special that the community could be proud of. The greater the challenge, the more Bob wanted to take it on.

Baker Chocolate Factory in Lower Mills, Chelsea Post Office, and Kennedy Biscuit Lofts in Cambridge epitomize this.

He played such a pivotal role in setting the bar high for design and quality for others to follow. I think of Battle Road Farm in Lincoln as a great example of mixed-income homeownership in a suburban community, and it is still held out as a model for great design.

But Bob's interests and contributions went well beyond developing affordable housing and preserving historic buildings. In fact, Bob was a true Renaissance man: he was a Fulbright scholar, a teacher, an architect, a historic preservationist, an art enthusiast, a fisherman, a pilot, an entrepreneur, a civic leader, and yes, an avid poker player. He certainly lived life to the fullest and with great enjoyment, as you will hear from his friends this afternoon.

He also put an incredible amount of time and energy into his volunteer efforts, whether it was Preservation Mass, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Community Preservation Coalition, or the Island Affordable Housing Fund, just to name a few. I would often wonder how he was able to juggle all of these endeavors while also being a developer. Somehow he found the time.

He especially carved out time to be actively involved with CHAPA. Bob had a special affection for CHAPA, which he joined in 1976. When he passed away, he was finishing up his two-year term as CHAPA's president. We all enjoyed being with Bob. He had a great sense of humor and wit and such an affable personality. I guess it was those Midwestern roots.

He commanded tremendous respect among our entire board. As one board member emailed me yesterday:

"When Bob spoke at CHAPA meetings, it was time to listen. He was either going to make a noteworthy statement or a witty comment, either of which, one would not want to miss."

Bob was a great teacher and I learned so many things from him over the years. But two things stand out:

1. The first lesson I learned from Bob is to remain calm amidst adversity. If you are confronted with a problem or crisis, don't over-react. Think the problem through, and then respond thoughtfully and in a measured way. I must admit that I haven't always heeded Bob's sage advice on this score.

2. And the second lesson I learned from Bob was to search for the common ground, whenever possible. To seek compromise over confrontation. Bob wanted CHAPA to be the "big tent" under which all viewpoints would be heard and respected. He wanted to build bridges to other constituencies. That's why he felt so strongly about the Community Preservation Act and why he was so proud that almost 115 communities have adopted the act.

It my sincere hope that his impressive record of accomplishments, good deeds, and wisdom will endure in our state.

Denton Crews

Co-chair, West End Place Managing Committee

On behalf of the residents of West End Place, I would like to welcome all of you to the House that Bob Built. If Ralph Waldo Emerson was correct in saying that "all institutions are but the lengthened shadow of one man," then West End Place is surely the lengthened shadow of Bob Kuehn. This building was the work of many hands, but Bob's hands, like the gentle hands of an accomplished harpist in the midst of a great orchestra, can be seen and heard in this place.

As the developer of West End Place, along with his colleague the Reverend Michael Groden (I suppose we could say the building had two fathers, Father Groden and Father Kuehn), Bob had the vision and the tenacity to build. Hand in hand, he worked with many of you here - the Planning Office for Urban Affairs of the Archdiocese of Boston, the City of Boston and the BRA, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Old West End Housing Corporation, Maloney Properties, not to mention the architects, attorneys, builders, contractors, housing agencies, and (amazingly) eleven different lending institutions.

It wasn't an easy birth, but what a healthy child it is today, just beginning its tenth year. We have 183 residential units making up the condominium (actually it's two cooperatives tied together as a condominium, fondly called by some of you a cond-op) almost evenly divided between market rate units and affordable units. We have 300 adults and 64 children, with immense diversity ethnically, nationally, racially, and economically. And among our number, we have at least 18 families certifiably from the old West End. Each cooperative is organized with its own directors, as is the garage beneath this courtyard, all under the oversight of a Managing Board. Bob Kuehn served from the beginning as a member of the

Managing Board, attending nearly every meeting and helping us in the transition to ownership, purchasing the garage, working to keep units affordable, and even debating with us policies for pets and doorway decorations (we were tight about both, as you might imagine). Today, we are a stable community with a building that is well cared for, fees that rise only modestly, healthy reserves that cover maintenance and replacement costs, and residents who enjoy the company of one another at events in the community room and the courtyard. Yes, Bob's hand is in this place.

Mostly, however, we have known Bob as the man with the smile who picked up his mail in the lobby and the fellow board member who came a little late to the meetings but gave himself diligently to the affairs of governance. And curiously, he seemed very quiet until we called upon him for advice or something moved him to suggest a solution. He was reserved, even reticent - surprising traits, actually. He was less hard driving than we had expected, more accommodating than we might have anticipated. He was self-assured yet unassuming, sociable yet private. We often pondered this paradox. And once, when I commented upon it, he had a ready reply. He quoted Martin Lomasney, the powerful politician who for three decades was the ward boss of the old West End: "Never write if you can speak; never speak if you can nod; never nod if you can wink." Well, that was Bob Kuehn for sure. And perhaps it was what made him a formidable poker player, as well.

As we remember Bob at this memorial service, it seems fitting to recite a poem that could express our sentiments and maybe render him immortal. It is a poem by Robert Frost called "Away." It was one of the last pieces that he wrote. It could be Bob speaking.

*Now I out walking
The world desert,
And my shoe and my stocking
Do me no hurt.*

*I leave behind
Good friends in town.
Let them get well-wined
And go lie down.*

*Don't think I leave
For the outer dark,
Like Adam and Eve
Put out of the Park.*

*Forget the myth.
There is no one I
Am put out with
Or put out by.*

*Unless I'm wrong
I but obey
The urge of a song:
"I'm - bound - away!"*

*And I may return
If dissatisfied
With what I learn
From having died.*

Yes, that is something Bob could have said. One can imagine him with a twinkle in his eye uttering those very words: "I may return." You have not left us, Bob. You are with us here... and will be... ever more.

Clarissa Rowe

Community Preservation Coalition

Good afternoon. I'm Clarissa Rowe and I met Bob more than a decade ago. It was my first meeting as a board member of Historic Massachusetts. We were in the middle of the meeting when this great big bear of a man squeezed into a very small conference room. He literally filled up the space. He was late...or as we like to call on "Bob Time". He sat down and regaled us with the latest tales of woe of the redevelopment of the Chelsea Post Office, in downtown Chelsea.

Several months later, that splendid building opened as a satellite campus of Bunker Hill Community College and began to fill with students, some the first in their families to get that far in school. Years later, I listened to the mother of a disabled artist, who was getting his first live/work space in the Baker Lofts in Dorchester Lower Mills, talk about what it meant for her son - personally and professionally - to move into this new community.

Bob touched the lives of so many by who he was and what he did.

Bob always seemed to choose projects in downtown areas of older cities that needed extra help or a spark to get going. He especially loved old mill buildings, but almost any old building would do. Chelsea, Dorchester Lower Mills, Cambridge, Providence, Rhode Island and where we are today in Boston's West End --- all benefited from his attention. He was reviewing Finegold/Alexander's architectural plans for the Williamstown project when he died.

Bob was a man's man. He was larger than life. He was a great story teller and his face would light up when he talked about his latest building, or more important, his latest fishing trip. His deep laughter could shake the room. He was savvy, smart, principled, and modest.

The reason that I am standing here today is to talk about Bob's last passion, community preservation and the Community Preservation Act. In the early 1990s, Bob was part of a Preservation Posse, lead by another Bob, Bob Durand. (Would the people on the Durand Commission please raise their hands?) These men and women traveled all over the Commonwealth to understand the future of historic preservation in this history rich state. Bob Kuehn was instrumental in making the Commission understand that the preservation and adaptive reuse of old buildings and historic landscapes in our older cities helped the entire community. The Durand Commission was the beginning of the community preservation movement here, and the people on that commission started a movement, which today is building affordable housing units, protecting land, and preserving our state's historic resources.. Local communities can opt to raise property taxes to get a state match to fund historic preservation, affordable housing and open space projects. So far 111 of Massachusetts' 351 cities and towns have passed the measure and other states are beginning to copy this innovative "smart growth" initiative.

Bob Kuehn was present at the creation of the Community Preservation Act as an idea, as a piece of legislation, and as a reality. For the last five years, the Community Preservation Coalition, another posse of talented people (please raise your hands), has guided the implementation of the act throughout Massachusetts. Bob has been its greatest strategic thinker and its tireless champion. He gave untold hours of help and advice to anyone setting up a new housing corporation or looking at a historic landmark and trying to figure out how to reuse it. He helped people in his then hometown of Cambridge and all over Martha's Vineyard.

Now there are those who say that the reason he helped out on the Vineyard was so that he could fish between meetings - and they would be right. We always had to schedule our monthly meetings around Bob's spring fishing trips to Florida.

He took great pleasure in the CPA's success stories. He was proud that, to date, over 870 affordable units have been built, over 300 historic resources protected, and over 7,000 acres of land protected. One favorite CPA project, the Wampanoag Museum, which sits on the cliffs of Aquinnah, must be one of the most beautiful spots in the state.

He was a warrior when our state's "evil empire" wanted to raid the CPA fund for other purposes, and fought to keep the fund intact. He did not like small details of anything - those he left to me, to Dorrie Pizzella, Josh Zade or to the wonderful Janet Hegarty, who worked with him for 18 years surely a testament to her loyalty and patience. Bob envisioned a world writ large; he was truly a master of the big picture.

His death leaves a huge hole in my life and the lives of many others. This hole can only be plugged by our continuing his passion for the things that he cared about so deeply. We must join together to carry on his legacy and work for passage of the Community Preservation Act in the state's 240 cities and towns that have yet to enact it. In doing so, we will save the historic buildings, create the affordable housing and preserve the open space that gives the Commonwealth character and make Massachusetts what it is --- a very special place. I know Bob would really like that.

John Hall

Hall Properties and HallKeen Management

What a presence! When a ruffled Bob Kuehn came into the room you noticed. Larger than life, with a mostly salt - but with a bit of pepper - beard that you'd need hedge clippers to trim, twinkling eyes, a dry but delicious sense of humor. Intelligent, articulate, complex, complete integrity and a perfectionist to boot: These are words about Bob that you will hear this afternoon.

I first met Bob when he was the computer genius behind Housing Economics, but didn't get to know him until he was appointed arbiter to settle a series of disagreements between the Harvard Square Defense Fund and Dick Friedman and myself, who were attempting to develop Charles Square. During this process, Bob did his job perfectly: Neither side got what they wanted and the project got built. Bob earned the respect of us all. We knew he would play it straight and that his irrepressible sense of humor would diffuse the inevitable incendiary moments between the two sides. So I didn't meet Bob like many of you did, through affordable housing (Charles Square wasn't), or through rehab (it was all new construction), or through good deeds. My only claim to fame was I was the first to take him fly fishing.

My family had rented part of a salmon river in New Brunswick and at the last minute my brother dropped out. On the spur of the moment I asked Bob, not telling him my mother was a touch ornery - as was the fishing. Bob, of course, charmed my mother but was illiterate on the river, his casting creating tidal waves on the serene pool and the only thing he hooked was himself until he got a mercy bite on the last day. The next summer my mother insisted that that nice Mr. Kuehn be invited again. This time we went up in Bob's plane accompanied by a rather large

thunderstorm during the final 30 minutes of our trip. We landed on a grass field and tied down the plane precisely two minutes before being involved in a storm that would have terrified King Lear. Bob was completely unconcerned, displaying total confidence in his flying skill and meteorological timing. I had to visit the laundress. The next day Bob got his own guide due to his fishing ineptness. Little did we know that Bob, after his first experience - perfectionist that he was, had learned how to fish and made the rest of us look like amateurs.

Fishing was a perfect activity for Bob: not too strenuous, completely individualistic on the river or ocean but allowing him to demonstrate his social skills with his warm persona in the lodge while skinning us all at the poker table.

My partner Denny Hall and I have had the pleasure of being in business with Bob since we started HallKeen in 1990, and what a treat. Totally independent, stubborn to a fault, he would torture projects to get the perfect mix of perfect units. Then he would redesign again until he absolutely ran out of time. He was always striving to build a faultless project. We loved being in business with him for all the qualities I mentioned above, but also for his compassion. Bob cared about people, cared about his causes, and also recognized that you had to pick your tenants carefully and that if you didn't make a profit you wouldn't be in business very long. He was one of a kind - a practical idealist - and a really good guy.

I can't believe he's gone, that I won't hear that unmistakable voice again suggesting I take him to Casablanca so he could use up my dividend of two free meals a year. But I don't envy St. Peter either, unless he caves in to Bob's latest plan to make heaven's housing perfect.

Bob Green

Lyme Properties

So someone has to talk about the debaucherous side of Bob. Well, fear not. It's pretty tame, as you know. But he did love to gamble. Or the camaraderie of gamblers. Eating pizza, smoking cigars and drinking beer.

And for his poker playing, Bob invented the KUEHNER. A "Kuehner." If you were to ask Bob how to spell it, he'd look up, raising his eyes above his glasses, with a wry half-smile and say, "Well. It could be K-U-E-H-N-E-R. But wouldn't K-E-E-N-E-R really capture it?" Indeed it would, Bob. (Can anyone forget the Kuehn/Keen Development Corporation name change letter?)

But, I guess all of us here today get to declare it to be K-U-E-H-N-E-R. It's an ancient poker term created by Bob to refer to his favorite bet: \$4. Now in our poker game - hosted by Bob for 28 years - our currency is \$1 and \$5 poker chips. Pretty simple and pretty easy to bet a couple of dollars or maybe \$5. But a Kuehner's a little different. It's significant; it's a little complex; it's unique; it says I'm betting a lot but I'm not bluffing - if I were bluffing, I'd bet \$5 like every idiot. And I want to make you think a little bit about it. So, we have a Kuehner!

So, for 28 years, Bob hosted and presided over our game, first at 20 Avon Street, then here at # 918 upstairs. And while we deeply appreciated it - God knows, no one else would have hosted it - we put up with a lot:

- Until we bought him a color set, years and years of Red Sox games on an 11", black and white, rabbit ears, portable TV. No cable. Not ever. So when the Red Sox went cable, no Red Sox. He just couldn't bring himself to give in, even after we paid for cable TV and gave him a number to call for installation. High Def? Not a chance.

- In one of the most unforgettable moments in the 28 years: a family of raccoons strolling through the room. That got even Bob's attention.
- In another, Bob chose to have Squeaky, his cat of 27 years, remain a presence at the poker games for years following his death.

Fittingly, for 28 years, Bob was the banker. No one ever wants to be the banker in poker, which was fine with Bob. And while his renowned organizational skills were up to the banker's responsibilities, there was surely a night or two, what with too much beer, too many Kuehners or whatever, when he lost more than he budgeted and the bank went bust. But he always covered it and won the next month.

So, fearful that we are that there's yet another of those 10-page single-spaced, castigating letters out there somewhere addressed to the Poker Group - or one yet to come - we'll be back here at West End Place in July - cat and all - betting Kuehners.

David Clem

Lyme Properties

Being a real estate developer in Massachusetts is not an easy profession. You learn hard lessons about who your friends are. Bob Kuehn was a loyal friend and I feel privileged to have known him.

He was a big man, with big thoughts, big lists of what he intended to try next, and big contradictions. In spite of all the things about his behavior we didn't understand, we loved him. From Uzbekistan to Llano, Texas there is no shortage of Bob Kuehn stories.

When I recall a Bob Kuehn story, it always comes with a visual image, and it almost always makes me smile or laugh out loud.

Twenty years ago I invited Bob and a group of friends to Texas on a hunting and fishing trip. He showed up dressed in new camouflage from head to toe. He looked like the prototype for the first Humvee.

Bob stood on a rock and fished for almost four hours in a stock pond not 50 yards wide. He hardly said a word. He caught a few fish, but nothing special. I thought he was disappointed, but that evening he told me he had forgotten how relaxing it was to fish. How it brought back warm memories of his childhood.

I expected Bob to share some of those memories of his childhood, in ways perhaps that only men can relate to, but he abruptly stopped. He showed me his Boy Scout pocket-knife that he had kept for 30 years. Now some might say that is classic Bob - he never threw anything away! But I think it was more than that. Bob started fishing again, and I know it brought him great happiness.

A second memory of Bob involves flying. He and Bob Green flew up to Lebanon, NH to pick me up to fly to Saratoga for the horse races. As we were flying over the Green Mountains, Bob announced that he had recently been diagnosed with narcolepsy.

This was my first flight with Bob in his new plane. He had asked me to fly with him in a rented Piper Cub just after he received his license to fly. Bob asked me how much I weighed, since the plane could only handle 500 pounds. After I told him, he asked if that was my real weight or my "approximate weight" - I said it was approximate. Bob said in that case maybe we had better wait until he could fly a bigger plane.

But on this Saratoga flight, Bob said he discovered he had narcolepsy because he kept waking up while he was flying alone without knowing where he was or how long he had been asleep. Suffice it to say, we talked non-stop to Saratoga and back. This is a guy who crashed landed on his recertification test, so totally engaged in conversation with the flight instructor that both forgot to put the landing gear down. We are lucky he lived as long as he did.

Finally, my enduring memory of Bob is in a tweed sport jacket. I believe he still owns every tweed jacket he purchased since his days at Yale. Without fail, he always buttoned the jacket, as any properly trained Yale man would do. Even when it was so tight it hiked the rear of the coat half way up his ass!

I will let you in on a secret. You can tell the age of the jacket by the weight of the fishing line he used to secure that middle button. The older the jacket the heavier the tackle.

Bob Kuehn was my friend. I am going to miss him terribly.

Larry Sparrow

Trinity Financial & former Project Manager, Keen Development Corporation

Like most people out there, it is difficult for me to think that Bob is gone. I started with Bob in 1978, right out of architecture school, at Anderson Park - really Bob's first large job, working with Ed Abrams and George Macomber. This was Bob's first of many restorations of older buildings. I moved on in 2000, just as Building #114 was finishing up. In between Anderson Park and Building #114, we did a lot of great work. Looking over the Keen website last night, I had forgotten how much we did.

I thought of Bob as a mentor, at times an older brother, and a teacher. I felt like I was in English class for 22 years. Heck, I even got a gold star one time. I would like to share a brief story about Bob that speaks not to his accomplishments, but to what I think was in Bob's heart and soul.

One late afternoon, as I was sitting in my office I noticed, out of the corner of my eye, something dart across the carpet. Now it is hard to believe that a small field mouse could possibly be in a Keen Development building, but this little guy must have gotten past the high security.

Well, I got a coffee cup and had Alison, Lisa, or Penny (I forget who) stand over by the file rack where I knew the mouse was and rattle some of the papers. The mouse darted across the carpet, and believe it or not, I caught it in this coffee cup. The mouse was very cute and very small, and I was sort of proud that I actually caught this thing.

Bob heard the commotion and came out of his office and asked what was going on. I showed him the mouse and he asked what I was going to do with him. I remember saying that I hadn't really thought about it but I guess I would go to the bathroom and flush him down the toilet. I can't defend my position but Bob said "You can't do that, here give it to me."

Ten or fifteen minutes later I headed out and said good night. The mouse was in the coffee cup on Bob's desk. I went to my truck in the Charles Hotel garage, and as I was leaving I had to go past the office front door. I was stuck in a little traffic and just happened to see Bob come out of the front door, coffee cup in hand. and bend down into the plant bed to let the little mouse go. I will always remember the image of this bear of a man standing over this tiny mouse, gentling reaching down with his finger urging it to go.

It is not important that the next morning I happened to see the mouse back in my office. This was Bob. He had a compassion for others that are less fortunate than many of us are and I will remember Bob, not only for his many accomplishments, but for his warm heart, hearty laugh, and the caring that he extended towards not only a small mouse but to the hundreds of people that have lived in his buildings.

My best wishes are with you, Bob.

Alison Carnduff

Benchmark Assisted Living & former CEO, Keen Development Corporation

As many of you know, my long relationship with Bob bridged the personal and professional, and in the more than 30 years that I knew him, I came to know intimately his endearing, baffling, maddening, and brilliant traits.

Each of us is complicated in our own way, but Bob was perhaps more complicated than most. He was drawn to complexity where most others would opt for the simple solution. Up at Devil Island in Maine, many years ago, Bob was part of group that went up in the spring to build a deck for one of the island cabins. After the first day's labor, when the deck platform had been completed and all that remained was to construct the railing, the crew was relaxing after dinner. Bob announced that he would "design the railing," and spent his after dinner hours completing quadratic equations that he viewed as essential to getting the proportions of each section of railing correct to the quarter-inch. This same quality often marked Bob's business dealings too: why have one source of financing when you could have six, and thereby increase affordability? Why settle for four layers of regulatory approval when you could have eight, if it meant a better view? But that appreciation for complexity was also a source of great creativity, in both his recreational and his professional creations. Twenty years later, that deck railing still stands, though my husband Vince claims that's due as much to his carpentry as to Bob's design.

Triumphing over complexity wouldn't be possible without great self-confidence: Bob had no hesitation about tackling almost any job: he could fix a motor, fly a plane, resuscitate a decrepit building shell, and kick-start the rejuvenation of a neighborhood. He was the envy of many of his male friends for his manly pastimes, and for a life unfettered by domestic commitments. It never occurred to him that he couldn't do something, and

if he cared about it, he mastered the skill, however esoteric. He assumed that those around him had the same capacity to learn anything, and thus gave incredible opportunities to many novices and first timers, like me at age 23.

Bob was old-fashioned, and in his professional associations tended to judge people based on his assessment of their character rather than by their particular accomplishments or pedigrees, or the services that they might provide to him. I think this self-confidence and competence contributed to his remarkable ability to relate to anyone: from senators to lobstermen, finding common ground with nearly everyone he encountered.

We often joked about Bob's legendary thriftiness: he would reuse a staple, peel off an uncanceled stamp, and couldn't understand why 12 year old, DOS computers wouldn't suffice in the world of Windows 2000. He truly believed that the atomic energy inherent in any object, building, or automobile, was useful until it literally disintegrated in his hands. He was well-known for having saved everything he had ever written, worn, or sat upon. Interestingly, for a real estate developer, he had a rather casual relationship with the concept of "maintenance" in his own personal life. He kept a fragile, old cat named Squeaky for nearly 25 years (the legacy of a former employee) without ever taking her to the vet, and cohabitated with raccoons when they took up residence in his house in Cambridge. Despite this thriftiness, Bob had unpredictable bouts of generosity: like the time he took all of us on a last minute sailing trip over Christmas, complete with fully provisioned boat, green and khaki uniforms, and new boat shoes.

Another of Bob's traits was his remarkable perseverance. Bob, it seemed, could outlast anyone or anything when he had a reason too. In this he was akin to a force of nature, and in my experience with him it seemed often to take a force of nature itself to constrain him. On that same sailing trip in the Bahamas, Bob spotted a charming lagoon that he thought would make

a marvelous overnight anchorage. The chart suggested shoal waters at the entrance, but Bob was not the kind of person to let the small matter of a sandbar get between him and something he wanted, so in we went, and sure enough ran aground. After a failed attempt to kedge off, Bob declared that he would simply wait for the rising tide: so he mixed himself a drink, dressed for a late dinner ashore, and sat and waited 'til the tide came in and floated him off the bar and into his quiet anchorage. He could literally wait a fish out of the water, or wait DEP out of a Chapter 91 permit. Administrations could come and go, policy could be drafted, implemented, rethought, and revised and Bob would still be there.

All of these traits you no doubt saw in your own experience of Bob. My kids brought out a different side of Bob: When Julia was two years old, Bob decided to appear on Christmas morning in a Santa suit. As luck would have it, his car died the night before and I lent him my Honda CRX (an infinitesimally small two-seater for a man of his size.) On Christmas morning, Bob drove through the streets of Cambridge, dressed as Santa, literally folded into a car that was half his size, appearing for all the world like a Shriner looking for a parade. Bob was deeply attached to my small children, and he seemed to love having Daniel and Julia at Farm Pond on the Vineyard, where he showed them how to use the fishing rods he'd bought for them, or snapped photographs when they turned an inflatable kayak into a swimming pool on the deck on a hot afternoon.

Being close to Bob was not always the easiest place to be. But Bob was a critical channel marker in my life: he gave me my first job in real estate, and at his elbow I learned the fine points of deal-making, strategy, and negotiation. (I also learned perfect Xeroxing technique, the golden mean of margins, and the proper use of Wite-out.) But nothing I have said will convey his legacy or the meaning of his life as much as the simple, stubborn, beautiful existence of the buildings in this city and this region to which he gave new life and new purpose. Ernest Hemingway said "Every

man's life ends the same way. It is only the details of how he lived and how he died that distinguish one man from another." We are fortunate to have all around us reminders of how Bob Kuehn lived his life, and from them will know what distinguished him.

Dick Johnson

Morgan Stanley - Boston, a lifelong friend of Bob's

What a shame! Bob would have loved to be here today, at West End Place, surrounded by friends saying nice things about him. My wife Deni and I had a place here for several years, and my son Brad lives here now. I've also been fortunate to be a member of the Rod and Gun Club - a.k.a - the Poker Den - that has met here on Tuesdays nights in room 918.

Some of you may have heard the rumor that Minnesotans are considered reserved, or even reticent. Garrison Keillor has told the story of a Minnesota man who loved his wife so much....that he almost told her. Well, I want to dispel that stereotype right now. Bob - your friends all loved you.

Like, I'm sure, most of you, I've spent a lot of time lately thinking about Bob. Monday morning on my commute to Boston I was listening to the Dennis and Callahan sports show and Gerry Callahan went on one of his standard rants about an athlete that he didn't like, and referred to him as a "miserable human being." Of course, my thoughts immediately went to Bob...because that was exactly what he was not...he was just the opposite...a great example of what is best in people...a wonderful and decent human being.

Five of us here today graduated with Bob from North High School in Minneapolis in 1960. Dave Buzzelle, Dave Sletten, Gerry Flannelly, Ron Margolis, and me. My personal history with Bob goes back to the 7th grade - that's 51 years - a long time to have a friend. Lucky for me.

There are a couple of things about Bob that were evident early on. He was smart - and he was very, very funny. Bob was definitely a "wit". His humor might best be described as sneaky dry. When using sarcasm his

instrument was the scalpel, not the bludgeon. Recently he sent me an email in regard to a Who Do You Trust Poll, which found stockbrokers (that would be me) in last place among the professions listed. Bob's helpful suggestion was that our industry should lobby the pollsters to add politicians and used car salesman to the list in an effort to improve our standing.

Earlier I mentioned that it was evident early on that Bob was really smart. How smart? Well, he was our high school valedictorian, he somehow managed to be the first person to receive a double master's degree from Yale's School of Architecture and Urban Planning in five years, and he was a Fulbright Scholar. So, that qualifies as pretty smart to me. Ten years ago or so, Bob, Ron Margolis, Gerry Flannelly and I went to dinner before a Celtics game. It was the first time we had gotten together as a group since our graduation. At some point, the conversation headed in the direction of where some of the high achievers in our class had gone to college - or beyond. Realizing that I had two Yale grads and an MIT grad with me, I asked the question - "who was the smartest person in our class?" I was secretly hoping they would say me. Instantly, both Gerry and Ronnie said "Bob." Bob had no chance to argue - nor the inclination - and the Cheshire Cat smile pretty much said it all. He was happy with the answer.

When you become friends with someone at 12 years of age, and the foundation of your friendship in those teenage years were such pursuits as spending hot summer weekends searching for the perfect bikini, playing touch football on the beach, and nights playing poker, it can sometimes be difficult to realize that your old pal is becoming someone of actual consequence. He may have been Student Council President, but, after all, he's still just old Bob from North High, the first and last, guy that I ever watched take his wedding vows and then head down the aisle to "The Stroll."

I was thinking about what Bob might consider a perfect day and decided it would include a big breakfast of eggs and bacon or sausage, a quick flight to Martha's Vineyard in his plane, the catching of a couple of big striped bass, eating them - or a big steak if necessary, a quick flight back to room 918 in Boston for some poker, complete with thick cigar smoke, the occasional Heineken, and the Red Sox game on his 1950s black and white TV in the background. And a greasy pepperoni pizza around midnight would be OK, too.

One of our last email exchanges consisted of the following: "Bob - are you out there?" His response - "Gone fishing."

David Buzzelle

Teacher - Plymouth, Minnesota, a lifelong friend of Bob's

Come along with me as I would write a novel entitled: The Life and Times of the Young Bob Kuehn. I'm the resident expert on such a task since Bob and I grew as infants from two close knit generations of families -- the Kuehn/Buzzelle clans. Bob was five days older than I, and recently Bob found a photo taken in 1943 of us with our mothers.

The first chapter of this book would be called: Whatever He Touches Turns to Gold. This is why I voted Bob as "the most likely to succeed" in our 1960 yearbook, for it always seemed that no matter what the occasion Bob always found a way to be a winner. As it turned out, many of our common friends came to the same conclusion

The next chapter would be: Turtles. As a child, Bob one day decided to collect turtles by the dozens and then proceed to number each of them so as to trace their migration patterns once they were set free.

The chapter on Mechanics would include the day he fixed a complicated steering problem on a speedboat so that our day would not be ruined. This was done, as I recall, when we were twelve years old.

At fifteen years plus thirty days, Bob was given the family Buick. So the chapter called The Buick would be as follows: The Black Beast had been kept in a musty dirt floor garage for years. This 1941 relic sputtered to life in 1958 and remains a legend in the minds of us all to this day. The gas gauge and windshield wipers were defunct and when Bob went to the "yard" to get parts he was told that "This is a junk yard, not an antique shop". So Bob did his best to calculate the amount of gas left in the tank, but no one is perfect, so we naturally pushed the car to the nearest gas

station. To this day I'm left to wonder why we didn't bring the gas to the car. On a rainy day, I was assigned to manipulate the wipers so Bob could drive us home. This was done by leaning out the passenger side window and moving my wiper to work in unison with his.

The Big Bang chapter would be the fascination with firecrackers, and Bob's calculation that he could get away with holding one until it exploded. He convinced me to light the fuse, and once I did I quickly reached safety. After it flashed, he turned to me and said: "See, I told you so." It should be noted that Bob did not repeat the experiment.

A final chapter would be titled: Bob, You are So Good to Me. At Key West this May, Bob asked me if I was having a good time. I told him that I was, and that we had great fun on the water together. We had many laughs and as a bonus, I did get my tarpon. Today, I realize that Bob was generous to many of you also, but now I also realize that WE were good to Bob, so in closing I want to thank you all so very, very much for loving Bob as much as I loved him.

Sam Low

Photographer and Writer, Yale Class of 1964

In his will, Bob specifically requested that his friend Sam Low deliver one of the Hawaiian language chants for which he's been known over the years. Sam composed this poem in Bob's memory. To many of his Yale friends, Bob Kuehn was known as "Keenzo".

Mele for Bob Kuehn - Keenzo

He aikane, he punana na ke ona ona
Sweet indeed is a good friend

He hoa kui lima
A companion to walk with hand in hand

Keenzo no ka'alu'alu no la ho'i kupuna
Keenzo of ill fitting and baggy clothing

i ku'a na'u
Let me carry out your last wishes

He ma'uka'uka hoe hewa
As a youngster, unskilled in wielding your paddle

Keenzo Pipili mau'ia e ka pi'oe'oe
You became a man women clung to like barnacles

Keenzo he pao'o lekei
like the leaping pao'o fish - you were never idle

ua a'o ua 'ailolo
you trained until you ate brains
(which means he trained until he became an expert)

'ike 'ia no ka loea i ke kuahu
you are known by the many altars you built.

He maka lehua no Kona one hanau
You are honored in your birthplace

He puko'a kani 'aina
You grew like a coral reef from a small beginning into a large island

He po'i na kai uli, kai ko'o 'a'ohe hina puka'a
You stood in deep and rough sea like a coral rock

he la'au ku ho'okahi, he lehua no ka'ala
You stood like a lone lehua tree in your wisdom

Kanu kanu, huna i ka meheu, I ka ma'awe alanui o kapu'ukolu
A private man, often guarding your inner thoughts

Niau kololani ka helena, huna na maka i ke aouli
Silently, quickly you departed to hide your eyes in the sky

Puhalu ka ihu, nana i ke ka'ao
We often understand the good things a person does
when it is too late to show appreciation

Keenzo Pau ka 'oe hana,
Keenzo your work is done

Kulu ka waimaka, uwe ke opua
The tears fall - the clouds weep

