

Hey Friend, have you got some time? Cause I'd sure like to share my wine! Oh I could tell you some good times and tales...about a few of Dr. Joe Kuban's trails. They swore this old desert was hot...but I assure you, in his eyes it's not. Spend a night out in the desert... Sing YOUR song out in this desert!

Like his beloved Big Bend ecosystem, the Dr. Kuban we know and love teamed with life and compassion and commitment to his Calling. His days on Earth played a charming melody with notes of artistry and advocacy, research and education, travel and exploration, song and dance, community and solitude, growth and evolution. Dr. Kuban's dynamic life was an ecological succession of students and family, colleagues and friends, and his faith in God.

As a Teacher.

Dr. "K" was a master of the classroom. His enthusiasm for science was contagious...his gift for making exciting the blandest of biological principles brought to life the intricacies of chromosomal replication, mitosis, natural selection, and countless other topics in a way that fostered fascination for our natural world. He showed us that the world is an immense classroom and that education is a lifelong process.

Dr. K was a storyteller who wove threads of entertaining anecdotes into his lectures throughout the school year...

- The Chisos Mountains biker gang encounter
- The Alligator garr incident
- The Mexican free-tailed bat cave
- The Smoking cactus
- The Search and rescue of the 5 Nolan boys
- The Blessing of the Inca Shaman Antonio
- The tale of Chisos cook Casa Mero

...and many other favorites gave a human context to the more dusty of ecological principles. Before we knew it, we were caught up in Dr. K's enthusiasm for engaging in conservation, studying nature, and preserving the graceful life we discovered there.

Dr. K took a vested interest in our daily lives. He joked with us about the trials and tribulations of high school. He taught us to think about our actions and their implications on practical and moral levels. He helped us to grow into young adults during our years at Nolan Catholic, and he said farewell to countless classes with a unique senior song.

As a Family Man.

Joe was a Son of Fort Worth parents and a brother to Annette, John, Frank, and Marty. He was a proud and caring Dad to sons Matt and Michael, both Nolan graduates.

Joe was a Soul Mate to DeLane, the "Love of His Life". Before she called him Husband, DeLane referred to Joe as the "Absent-Minded Professor" when they started dating. In a tribute to his Guardian Angel, Joe wrote and recorded his last song, "You can't take the love of this woman" for his Wife DeLane.

Joe was also an uncle and most recently a proud grandfather.

As a Friend.

Joe was a musician whose guitar songs will forever echo in our collective, cherished memory of campfires on the Brazos, nights with stars like diamonds in the Big Bend, sunsets floating on the Napo River in South America, and rehearsals with his dedicated Lost Chizo bandmembers to record 2 CDs-worth of priceless music.

Joe was both a jokester and a confidant. His humor and genuine nature made new friends wherever he went, and his trust was a gift that came with unconditional loyalty.

Joe was a thinker who never stopped producing extraordinary ideas such as his Ecology program, his rainforest workshops, and his extensive conservation work. He was a runner whose daily constitution was a form of prayer. Joe was an adventurer with a thirst for exploring the unknown trails, the uncharted ecosystems, and the unprotected beauty of the world.

As a Man of Faith,

Joe dedicated his life. He was a lifelong seeker of God's truth whose experience of grace was not confined to manmade structures but encompassed the whole of Creation. Joe developed a strong awareness of his Calling through the many ways he prayed. His Catholic faith, the worship music he wrote, and time spent with his unconditionally loving family were some of the lifelong prayers he uttered.

Joe's love of the Big Bend region was an expression of faith that he shared with so many of us over the years. The most remote and wild corners of the Park were his favorite destinations for spiritual renewal. Joe once said, "It makes perfect sense why Jesus would hang out in the desert for 40 days and nights..." The Park's solitude enabled him to re-connect with his Calling from God.

Once renewed, Joe's faith was a force to be reckoned with. After going up to the mountains he always came back down to dwell among the people. He was not afraid to speak his mind in the face of injustice, and his character would not accept the mediocre. Any job worth doing was worth doing well, Joe taught us, and he dedicated his days to making the world and our lives better for his passing.

Closing

Now, we must say goodbye to our dear friend Dr. Joe Kuban.

Joe, there's a rainbow over Ward Mountain...as we stand here far east of the Chisos...soon the late summer rains that you love will wash down arroyos once again...Even now the sweet smell of creosote is in the air...it's everywhere, as we breathe and pray.

In the heavenly desert that is your new Home, the air's washed clean with God's healing Love...everything turns Green...the ocotillo's leafing out again...and the late summer rains of Heaven refresh your soul and ours.

Drop by drop into His pools beyond, God's rains do fall so that life's streams may flow... Let the Father's Love be our respite from the heat of day... Let His gentle healing Voice ease our pain away.

Now as the mountains rip apart the seams of Heaven's clouds rolling past, these raindrops catch us by surprise to take Dr. Kuban Home at last. When the Day it ends and the air it cools, we too will stand refreshed in Your mirrored pools. Lord, be our respite from the heat of day... Be that gentle healing Voice... Don't leave us alone... Take Joe home... Goodbye dear Friend.