



Paul Anthony Katemopoulos

OCT 4, 1958 - OCT 6, 1997



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Table of Contents

Obituary	Page 3
-----------------------	--------



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OCT 4, 1958 - OCT 6, 1997

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Obituary for Paul Anthony Katemopoulos

'Let There Be Light'

"The world has lost an ember of light
with Paul's passing.

As a man, he never had a bad thing to say about anyone.

I was proud to be associated as a fellow worker with Paul.."

Paul left us suddenly, too soon, just two days after his 39th Birthday, and we are all heartbroken.

Yet, his effervescence, tremendous sense of humor, work ethic, generous spirit, kindness and love for life, family and friends, live on in all who knew and loved him.

Growing up in Hong Kong, Paul personified the spirit of international friendship, diversity and acceptance, easily making and keeping lifelong friends from all corners of the globe.

He first attended St. Paul's Convent School, then transferred to Island School of Hong Kong. Shortly before his passing, he discovered alumni through the Island School's website, and was so excited about being able to connect with long-lost friends.

Paul immigrated to the U.S. in his early teens, and attended St. John Bosco High School in Bellflower, California until 1976, then transferred to Archbishop Mitty High School in San Jose, California, where he joined his family, and graduated in 1977.



Obituary

Paul Anthony Katemopoulos

OCT 4, 1958 - OCT 6, 1997

He eventually found his calling and passion, as a self-taught and extremely gifted Stage Lighting Designer.

His business card, which featured beams of light radiating from the center, like the sun's rays, was beautifully designed by his sister, Eileen.

News of his talent, popularity and professionalism spread quickly, and he designed amazing stage lighting events for both leading and upcoming artists, at a variety of venues and festivals.

As an independent Lighting Designer, he meticulously organized and personally transported all the tools of his trade.

Upon Paul's death, his mother donated all his lighting and stage equipment to his sister Anne-Marie's Performing Arts Department at Abraham Lincoln High School, so that they could benefit from his collection.

He always made sure he knew his artists' programs, and timed his lighting to showcase their performances in the best possible 'light.'

Paul was the ultimate professional. He gave his all, and was highly respected by his clientele, coworkers and friends.

One of his favorite 'gigs' was putting up Christmas lights outside the family home, bringing Christmas cheer to all.

Paul remained a child at heart, reveling in the beauty and innocence of childhood wonder.

He loved music, Veterans, classic movies like "Ben Hur," his treasured childhood toy soldiers and racing cars, British and classic comedies like "Monty Python," all things Hawaiian, and "Toy Story," amongst others.

His wish was to eventually live in Hawaii, which he loved for its beauty, tranquility and simplicity, and which he visited with Eileen and Anne-Marie, but this was not to be...

Upon his death, his family received wonderful tributes, a testament to the person he was.



Obituary

Paul Anthony Katemopoulos

OCT 4, 1958 - OCT 6, 1997

These were some of the touching messages sent to his family:

"I was deeply saddened to hear of Paul's passing.

Paul was truly one of the nicest people I have ever known.

He was always able to make a day at work brighter with his unfailing cheerfulness and optimism. I will truly miss Paul's companionship at work, and will always remember him..."

"My friend, Paul, will truly be missed. You are all in my prayers."

"Thank you, Paul, for being my friend. If more had your kindness, the world would be a better place."

Paul was also a very loving and devoted son and brother. There was nothing he would not do for his family.

He was always ready to drive his parents anywhere they wanted to go, and was an especially devoted companion to his Mother, on their weekly shopping expeditions (adventures). He held a very special place in her heart, and it was mutual.

It was fitting that Paul was born on St. Francis of Assisi's Feast Day. They shared a child-like simplicity and authenticity. They were gentle and peace-loving souls.

At Paul's funeral, his family shared their memories of him:

Theodore, his Dad: His nickname for Paul was "Hero." Paul was always sympathetic towards anyone in need. He never hesitated in assisting anyone whom he saw in difficulties on the freeway by either personally helping out, or alerting the Highway Patrol. He was particularly concerned for the elderly, and the handicapped, and would go out of his way to assist them if the need arose. He was always loyal to his family, and to his friends and their families, especially those with young children. At work he was always fully prepared with a whole array of tools and devices. He would try to take the drudgery out of the tedium (often at his own expense) so that his workmates would laugh, and the tension relieved. We have lost a fine, caring son, who was also a wonderful friend.



Obituary

Paul Anthony Katemopoulos

OCT 4, 1958 - OCT 6, 1997

Mildred, his Mum: Paul held the highest ideals and always aimed for the best in his life. He loved his parents, and his sisters. He was a Good Samaritan, and never lost an opportunity to help anyone in need. He believed in always being prepared for any eventuality. When a flood threatened our neighborhood, he appeared on our doorstep with emergency raincoats, long boots, flashlights, batteries, water and food. I will miss his constant support, and his cheerful, positive outlook on life, but I know that from his vantage point, he will keep close to us and continue to watch over those whom he loved, and who loved him in life.

Maureen, his Sister: You and I may have been thousands of physical miles apart a lot of the time, but we always kept in touch by telephone between San Jose and Hong Kong, chatting and laughing and talking about everything under the sun. You knew how homesick I was very often, and you were always thoughtful enough to tell me about the little things which make a difference. I will never forget the day you mentioned that you had placed a little rose nightlight in my room so that even when I was not at home in California, my room would be a bright and happy place with a rosy glow. It would not be in darkness. That meant so much to me and made each homecoming even more meaningful, knowing there was such a special welcome. It was exactly the sort of kind and thoughtful gesture that you made so often to so many. I will remember and sorely miss an outstanding brother.

Eileen, his Sister: Paul loved to talk to people. He could talk to anyone at any time and about anything. He was reserved and observed before jumping into conversation with people he did not know. It never took long before he would be in full swing, laughing, joking or simply having a serious in-depth conversation with even total strangers. Paul was a "Gentle Giant." He was very fond of children and would win them over in a matter of seconds. He loved certain toys from his boyhood and would remember toys and childhood events with great detail and clarity. He was proud to be an American but never let go of his love for Hong Kong. He was a lucky man. He loved what he did and did what he loved. We will miss him but the memories he left us with will live on.

Kathryn, his Sister: Paul loved life, and he loved to laugh. He also loved people, and he loved to make them laugh. His sharp wit, sense of fun, and quick comebacks always managed to light up the room with laughter. His thirst for knowledge was constant. He surrounded himself with the latest in technology, bubbling with enthusiasm over his latest find. His energy was boundless. When he set his sights on something, he went after it with full force, till he realized his dream. *"Paul, you're probably checking out the lighting up there right now, zinging your one-liners at the Master*



Obituary

Paul Anthony Katemopoulos

OCT 4, 1958 - OCT 6, 1997

himself! We'll miss your wit. We'll miss your spark. You taught us that we must always take time to laugh. You made us very proud, and your memory will shine on in our hearts forever."

Anne-Marie, his Sister: Paul, you'll be missed greatly by all of us. But, now I must and will release you to walk in that wonderful place that you've discovered on the other side. Now, you can play with Duchess, Rusty, Buster, and Gypsy. You can visit with others who have already journeyed on, and you can play with the most powerful and wonderful lighting console there is! I thank you for all you have done, and shared with us. I celebrate the legacies you have left us in your life's work. But most of all, I thank you for sending us so many messages that you are happy, safe and that you have maintained your marvellous, incomparable sense of humor, even in Heaven.

"Aloha and auf Wiedersehen, Paul.

Never goodbye - only until we meet again..."

After Paul's funeral, his Mother arranged for a Reception to celebrate his life, with a collection of cherished memorabilia and photos, shared with Paul's family and friends.

This novel idea at the time, borne of a Mother's enduring love and devotion to her only son, was so heartwarming, that the Funeral Director at Chapel of the Chimes, Hayward, asked if he could share this touching idea and tribute, with other Funeral Directors across the nation.

This "Celebration Of Life" became his grieving Mother's and Paul's lasting legacies, and the rest, as they say, is history...

Paul is survived by his sisters, Maureen and Kathryn.

In lieu of flowers, please make a donation in Paul's Memory to a Veterans' Charity of your choice, or to Catholic Charities Hawaii, to support the "Maui Recovery" at <https://www.catholiccharitieshawaii.org/maui-relief/>



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Paul by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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