

The image of Karl I have in my mind's eye is of him wearing his short sleeve shirt, tan pants, belly hanging over the waste and lugging around his ever-present "luggage," oft he wheeled attaché case of papers, smoking an "American Spirit" cigarette. (The peer movement's Marlborough Man)

I first met Karl after I was volunteering for the Boston Resource Center (now MBRLC) for about a month. Howard Trachtman wanted me to attend the MDDA's Peer Facilitator, and he gave Karl a call. The call was to become in my mind vintage "Howard & Karl show". Howard: Can you get this new guy in the training. Karl: Howard you are doing this to me again... We are full and the training is the day after tomorrow. Can't do it. Howard: Oh come on, he's a good guy.... Karl: Oh Ok ... I'll find a space somehow.

Karl was a cross between a big brother and father to me. He was always there for a helping hand, an ear to listen to me, sage advice to given whenever needed. He was generous to a fault with his time. He was always there for a ride and a helping hand. I also now numerous people in the peer community he was selfless about extending himself helping with his time and energy. Making sure peers were getting to doctor's appointments and eating during treatment (actually going to their homes bring food going to restaurants) with them) all during the time he was going through his medical treatment. Those of us who were benefactor (myself included) of Karl's energy and larges will always be in his debt and never forget him

Karl's involvement in the peer community is legendary. MDDA, TC, NAMMI State, NAOM GB-CAN, MBRLC, MPower/TC. He was officers in most of the organizations, and the organizations would not be were they are now. Honestly I do not know what we are going to do with out him, what I do know we must honor his memory and keep on going and make certain all the organizations continue and are viable, so to honor his memory, and make sure his efforts are not wasted.

I often worried about Karl. It seemed he has either President or vice President of every peer organization I was aware of. If he wasn't an officer he was on the BOD. I used to joke with Karl and Howard; since it seemed that they were either President or Vice President of every thing on that Peer community seemed like a third world country. Most/many day's he would get by with one or 2 hours sleep. I would try to tell Karl to take better care of himself. As many of you who know Karl he could be quite stubborn, and his most common response was "there is plenty of time to sleep when I die" He had a magnet with the same quote on his refrigerator. Sigh maybe if he rested more when he was alive....

Karl was a true renaissance man. It seemed there was not a subject he wasn't well versed on. It seemed he had encyclopedic knowledge, his ability to expound on any

topic with eloquence on music, arts, medicine, mental health, computer science, politics, the list goes on.

You can't mention Karl without mentioning those thick, mischievous eyebrows, his rumbling voice, his warm, easy smile and hug when he saw you, He knew when to make a joke, say something profound, let people talk, or take control of a meeting

Karl story was typical of many in the peer community. In our travels from one meeting to another we would go by MIT, Northeastern, and other schools and say another illustrious school I attended, but didn't graduate. He worked in the computer industry for many years. Karl was a veteran of the Navy serving in Vietnam and in the medevac, and was exposed to Agent Orange, and some of his health problems in later life were due to his exposure to Agent Orange exposure. His story is a source of inspiration to me of overcoming obstacles and becoming a leader, one of giving back to the community. I just returned from Thanksgiving weekend at my brother's and my sister in-law was watching a Hollywood program on people going above and beyond to give back to the community. I was wondering what it would take for a peer like Karl to be nominated, if there was ever a person who should be on a program like that.....

As often the case I never had the chance to thank Karl for all he had done for me, and that I loved him (I never told him that either. It is one of things I will forever regret). As an atheist, this statement seems contradictory, I know, but I hope and believe he is in a better place. I know he is no longer suffering. Rest in Peace. Karl you were an inspiration and I hope I can make a difference that is a fraction that you made. I am not sure when I will fill Karl's entry on my caller ID.

The following quotes were taken from the guestbook section of Karl's Boston.com's obit (and we would at least need the people's permission to use them, possibly Boston.com's)

"I'd like to offer my heartfelt condolences to all of us who knew Karl. Karl was a giant of a man with a dedication and a passion that oozed from every pore of his being. He was a big man with a big heart, a big roar and a wonderfully fabulous hug. He will be incredibly missed greatly."

~

Lyn Legere

"Oh Karl, you great big huggable bear of a man! I can see you coming into the Transformation Center in your pale blue shirt with a little of your tummy hanging over your pants, wheeling your 'OFFICE' to the next meeting.

We would raise our shaking hands to each other saying, " OOOOOh it's my favorite person!" and give and get big belly hugs. You were a force to be reckoned with and stubborn as could be.

Your memory lives on in M-POWER and TC and in all the people you have touched like myself. I love you big guy, you will always be in my heart.

To Karl's family, thank you for sharing his life with us. You are in my thoughts.,"

~

Marina Colonas

Karl was a great big teddy bear. He understood you and cared for you deeply no matter who you were. He was an extraordinary person. I wish I could think of some way saying how I feel --how special he was. ...He made me laugh and gave me great big hugs. I will really miss him.

~

Deborah Mann

Karl was a leading advocate for mental health issues, especially for veterans. His work benefitted countless families across the state. His positive attitude and empathy is a guide post for all advocates to follow. Sincere sympathy to Karl's family.

Phil and Pat Hadley

Karl • by Harold Sletzinger

Karl was an amazing person. I first met him when I became involved with DBSA-Boston (then MDDA-Boston) and served on the Board with him. He worked tirelessly for people with mental health conditions and was a role model of living with, rather than suffering from, a psychiatric disorder. Even when he wasn't feeling well himself, he was there for others. My condolences to his family. I will miss him.

~

Lucinda Jewell,

Things I will never forget: Karl's thick, mischievous eyebrows, his rumbling voice, his warm, easy smile and hug when he saw you, his ability to expound on any topic with eloquence, his everpresent "luggage," and the way he was just everywhere.

Now I know that he is truly everywhere...

Let us all stay inspired by his passion and dedication to the cause that became his life's work--Mental Health Advocacy.

~

Monica Briggs

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