



## David Kushner

July 7, 2020

David Kushner died at home in Mequon on July 6, 2020 at the age of 97. He was born in Boston, lived in 18 states, and happily spent the last six years in Wisconsin.

Dave is survived by his children-John Kushner and Lane Therell of Napa, California, and Beth Kushner and Marc Rasansky of Milwaukee. Dave also is survived by two sisters, Libby Herson and Cicely Nathan, both of Framingham, Massachusetts.

In 1941, when Dave turned 18, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps. His B-24 was attacked when he was flying supplies over the Himalayas to the Flying Tigers. He was rescued from the trees into which he parachuted, but with a lifetime of nerve damage and some whopper scars. He also served in North Africa, where he retrieved downed aircraft and personnel, supported nuns and the orphanage they ran, and skirmished with the French Foreign Legion.

He returned to Boston to go to college on the GI Bill. One day, he advised his family that he was getting married. He then asked his intended bride out. Dave proposed to Patricia on their first date and she accepted on the second. They were together for the next fifty years.

Pat died in 1998. Dave started to travel with his kids, going to Nepal and

Spain with Beth and to Israel and China with John. After waiting a few years, he also started to date and his favored opening gambit was to announce that he had his own teeth and could drive at night. Apparently, it was a real crowd pleaser.

Dave built Habitat houses (once with President Jimmy Carter, who Dave described as a "heck of a nice guy"), and tutored children who were learning English without concerning himself with how or why they were in this country.

He abhorred anything he deemed a "foolish waste of money." This included paying someone to perform any task that he might at least attempt, including pruning trees, cleaning gutters, and basic plumbing. It was usual to step over skeletal legs, clad in shorts, dress socks, and sandals, sticking out from under the kitchen sink. In his 80s, when Marc spotted a ladder at the front of the house and asked why it was there, Dave's response was "how else could I paint the chimney?" At the same time, he was unfailingly generous. He picked up tabs, he overtipped, and he gave the best presents.

His jokes were groaningly bad. He relished offering a daily report about the state of his digestive system, whether or not the listener wanted to receive it. And his short-hand description of his morning routine can't be published but was alliterative and also included the words "shower," "shave," and "shine."

Dave approached life as a grand adventure. Every cup of coffee, sandwich, or afternoon dish of ice cream was pronounced "the best ever." He loved Zero Mostel, Oscar Peterson, real hardware stores, complicated practical jokes, klezmer, "as seen on T.V." products, and Edmund O. Wilson books. Birthdays were to be celebrated at Sanford (where Ralph Selensky was considered "world's greatest waiter"), but he also admired a good deli. He was passionate about Thanksgiving, particularly the father/daughter tradition of making applesauce.

Dave viewed death as another part of the adventure. He faced it with scientific interest, a sense of wonder, and hilarity. If anyone ever had a truly good death, it was he.

Until the end of his life, Dave remained a champion forwarder of emails. He drove until he was 94, exercised daily, and read physics, history, philosophy, and mysteries. He enjoyed texting selfies, typically waving, and would then add "hello" in case you missed the point. And he was a ruthless, unscrupulous Scrabble player.

He liked most of all to be helpful, whether that meant power washing your front walk or uncovering home repairs that you never noticed you needed. He made beautiful furniture. When nothing else beckoned, he'd polish silver or sharpen knives or brush the nearest dog. He leaves behind a collection of warm-up suits, his plaid flannel shirts (worn year round), hopelessly tangled suspenders, and what he called "old guy hats." He will be remembered for many things, but a sense of style will not be among them.

We are grateful to Diana Jacoby of Newcastle Place and Jane Stahowiak of Caring With Honor. Nobody could have done a better job of supporting Dave and he loved you both. We were lucky that Dave had Dr. Scott Jorgensen as his primary care doctor. And we are thankful to Bob Chernow, who was a friend, financial advisor, and superb audience (and sometimes source) for Dave's terrible jokes.

Dave gave each of his children a model of a locomotive. It represented his view of life, which was to consider yourself on top of a speeding train. You never knew how you got up there, you never knew where you were going. But you tried not to fall off and to enjoy the scenery.

John inherited Dave's mechanical skill. Beth inherited Dave's skinny legs. We both inherited much of Dave's philosophy and hope we can live it with the same aplomb. Dave's ashes will be buried at John and Lane's house, along with Patricia, assorted family pets, and half a karate instructor (don't ask).

Dave was joyful, buoyant, and without a shred of pretense. If you want to honor his memory, compose a dirty limerick (use "Nantucket" if possible), sing off key while pounding the steering wheel, or find a pool table and shoot some Eight-ball. He was remarkable. He was a character. We will miss him.

If desired, memorial contributions can be made to WildAid, the Navy Seal Foundation, or the Gary Sinise Foundation.

# Tribute Wall

GW

“ Just read an amazing obit,Dave Kushner's, whom I've never m(i)t.A celebrator of life,Reunited with his wife,Hope he's whisked her on a train to Nantuck(i)t!Fabulous tribute and perfect accompanying photo! Best thing I read in the entire Sunday paper. No doubt someone of his caliber will be missed. Heck, I will miss him!

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**Georgia Wood** - July 14, 2020 at 12:00 AM