



Stephen William Kline

July 5, 2018

KLINE, Stephen William, USNA Class of 1990, who lived in Clifton, NJ, died on July 5, 2018 of a heart attack. He was 50 years old. Steve was the eldest son of Richard William and Janette Hill Kline of Williamsburg, VA. He was predeceased by a sister Katharine Love Kline age 7 in 1972. He is survived by his parents, his brother Charles Richard Kline, of Harleysville, PA, Charles' wife Laura, their two children Alexander William and Elizabeth Love; and brother David Alistair Kline of Greenville, SC. Steve came to the Naval Academy from Williamsport High School, Williamsport, Pennsylvania where he was the valedictorian. While at the Naval Academy he received commendation in the French department and discovered a love of classical civilization. He served as Damage Control Officer on both mine sweeper patrolling our Gulf Coast and then a ship in the Persian Gulf. He told us of an occasion when he helped the Captain by conversing in French with a visiting dignitary, and translating into English. No one was available who spoke the dignitary's native language, so Steven found the "lingua franca". After four years in the Navy, he entered Rutgers University where he received a master's degree in classical studies. He became a Latin teacher, first at a private school, then at Lakewood High School in Lakewood, NJ and lastly Cresskill High School, Cresskill NJ where he was employed at the time of his death. When the Latin program was dropped at Cresskill, he taught social studies/history. The combination of Navy discipline, love of his subject and kindheartedness endeared him to his students, their parents and the faculty.

He baked countless hundreds of cupcakes and cookies for school fund-raising bake sales. Although he never married, and had no children of his own, his parents believe that his students became his sons and daughters. Visitation will be held at Barrett Funeral Home, 148 Dean Dr., Tenafly on Wednesday, July 11, 2018 from 4-8 PM. Interment and committal service will be in Shenango Valley Cemetery in Greenville, PA on Friday, July 13, 2018. In lieu of flowers, donations to the Cresskill High School Library or the Band would be appreciated.

Cemetery Details

Shenango Valley Cemetery

Greenville, PA

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL 11. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Barrett Leber Funeral Home

148 Dean Dr

Tenafly, NJ 07670

(201) 568-8043

<https://www.barrettleberfuneralhome/>

Tribute Wall



“ *Never have I had a teacher like Mr. Kline. That man cared about his students more than any other person I have ever met. He was willing to stop in the hallway and have a conversation with any student that said hi to him no matter if he had him/her as a student. No other teacher was more dedicated to this school. He went to every single baseball game during my high school career. He made sure to talk to me about how the team was doing and things he noticed we could improve on. He was the one who inspired me to apply to West Point and he was one of the biggest reasons I got in even though I'm sure he'd rather me attend the naval academy. I loved that man and it broke me when I heard about his passing. I will forever miss him and his delicious cookies and his never ending ability to have undying love for history. Rest In Peace.*

Noah Kim - August 19, 2018 at 11:00 PM

“ *Mr. Kline will always be a great friend of mine.*

Our connection was instant, and it had a lot to do with the proximity of where we both spent much of our time; the tennis courts, his classroom, music and athletic events, and "before and after" all of the above!

He generously offered his classroom for tennis team meetings and parties, his chairs for our matches and, most importantly, his time. That room, at the end of the D wing, will always be "Mr. Kline's Room" to me.

It never needed a number.

Stephen took great interest in all of our students. We'd always have conversations about those who were doing well, those who weren't, and all of the others "in-between." So many times he would reflect on an experience with a former student, and I'd have to stop and think..., to picture them.

The alumni were all so fresh in his magically-ordered mind!

Stephen chaperoned hundreds of events, and was in and on the seats, wings, bleachers, sidelines, and buses to and from many of them. He took his classes everywhere, from Medieval Times to the MET...with tremendous enthusiasm.

I chaperoned ONCE for him, to a Traditional Chinese Dance event in NYC. He invited me because he thought I'd enjoy it, ...and I did!

When, in 2007, our CHS Dancing With The Stars originated, he volunteered his assistance. During intermission that first year, in 10 minutes, he raised \$500 for the senior class with the first "buy-a-vote." I had thought of it, but hadn't had the time to "get it together" before that first, chaotic show. He asked me if he could do it, for the senior class, to whom he was one of their three advisors.

Across the next 11 years, he continued strongly encouraging (or "twisting the arms" of...) his students to participate in the show. He ran the Front Door for me so reliably and efficiently that I never had

to even give it a thought.

More than once, he donned a tuxedo for the occasion, even wearing it to school all day,setting the mood!

One February, I offered a series of post-basketball-game dance classes for parents, and he signed up first. He always wished that he knew how to dance, and shared that he was a little envious of the ability that our kids had, to capably get on the dance floor. He was the most enthusiastic student in those dance sessions, and about learning in general.

The words that I would use to describe him? Unique, brilliant, caring, enthusiastic, energetic, rare, funny.....VERY funny, committed, loyal, reliable, understanding, trustworthy, dedicated, kind, introspective, helpful.....and more.

We shared many lunches and dinners, and have had a million conversations of differing lengths. We usually agreed, but not always.

Either way, they were always respectful exchanges.

I could go on, and I will, to anyone who wants to talk about him with me.

I will remember him always, and will continue to refer to him as these nice thoughts and memories arise. And you should too.

I don't know who got the better half of the relationship between Cresskill and

Mr. Kline....., but I know for sure that I got the better half of ours!

Be glad that you had the opportunity to know him, and please shine his light as you move forward.

Be kind, be smart, be patriotic, dance, play, strive, volunteer, and be the best that you can be.

That's what HE would want us all to do!!

XOXO
Ms. Muller

Barbara Muller - July 12, 2018 at 09:38 PM

CL

“ Steve will be dearly missed. We were roommates during Plebe year at USNA, He was a true gentleman with a powerful intellect, and I am privileged to have him as a friend. On behalf of our other roomie, AJ Reiss, Third Company, and the rest of the Class of 1990, I offer my most sincere condolences for the loss of Steve.
Craig Laws

Craig Laws - July 12, 2018 at 03:03 PM

RA

“ He was a great teacher at chs even though he was not my teacher he always had a great big smile on his face and said good morning to everyone in the hallway

rachel - July 11, 2018 at 06:41 PM

JP

“ The 2013 CHS sports awards



james perlas - July 11, 2018 at 06:20 PM

JP

“ I, like every other student who passed through CHS, learned a lot from Mr. Stephen Kline. From history, to humanities, and even the power of school spirit: Mr. Kline’s (deceptively calm) energy affected the school as a whole.

To me, the most important lesson Mr. Kline imparted was this: to be unapologetically passionate about the things you love. His love for history, learning, and his students/school never failed to show. In a culture where it’s oh-so “cool” to be apathetic and uninterested, Mr. Kline showed love without restraint.

Thank you Mr. Kline, for teaching all of us a thing or two about what it means to be love the world around us.

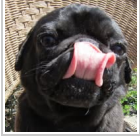
james perlas - July 11, 2018 at 04:45 PM

AM

“ There are not enough words to express how much Mr. Kline meant to so many of our children. He was smart, funny, at times corny. He was a friend, mentor, storyteller and everyone loved him. He was "that" teacher. The one that all the kids wanted to have. His ability to connect and bond with our children on all levels in and out of the classroom was just incredible. We are all saddened by his untimely death, but find comfort in knowing that he left this world full of the love that everyone had for him. Our deepest condolences to the Kline family.

The McClelland Family

Anne Marie McClelland - July 11, 2018 at 04:00 PM



“ My daughter, Liza Sobel, took Mr. Kline’s Latin classes for years, through Advanced Placement Latin. Mr. Kline was Liza’s favorite teacher, and he was the most motivating teacher Liza ever studied with. This is a high standard, since for the last ten years since Liza graduated from high school, Liza has been immersed in educational environments. (Doctorate and teaching college at Northwestern University.)

I’ve read numerous memories about Mr. Kline, and our personal memories regarding Mr. Kline also reveal a teacher who influenced his student for life and changed their lives. Liza attributes Mr. Kline’s scrupulously teaching her Latin grammar rules to her ability to absorb new languages in college and graduate school. Liza has written numerous compositions based upon what she learned with Mr. Kline, including her Cornell University Senior Honors Thesis—a Requiem in Latin, and a song based upon a myth they studied, Narcissus and Goldman. Mr. Kline taught her how to learn and study and spurred her on to a lifetime of learning.

However, Mr. Kline was much more than a Latin teacher. One of my more cherished memories is him sitting with us at Cabaret Night, watching Liza sing. When we invited him to our house for Passover dinner, he came! Liza fulfilled some community service by working with Mr. Kline on the Latin program. When we think of Cresskill High School, we think of Mr. Kline.

He came to numerous other school events. Liza was initially surprised to see him at her track meets. (I didn’t even go to those.) Mr. Kline was a fixture at the Memorial Day parades, and we enjoyed catching up with him each year. After talking to him, you knew he “got your kid” and appreciated him/her.

Mr. Kline was a gift to the school and entire community. He took an interest in so many students. Reading the memories, I see he touched many students’ lives and shared in their activities and enhanced their accomplishments, just as he did for Liza.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention that Mr. Kline was fun and very funny. With humor he pointed out inconsistencies or hypocrisies. He also stood up for the students and did what was right by our kids.

Liza occasionally returned to Cresskill High School, and it was to see Mr. Kline. Liza is saddened that she was unable to come to the viewing because she is at the Aspen Music Festival. The entire community lost a treasure when we lost Mr. Kline. The high school won't be the same.

*Gail Westerfeld
The Westerfeld and Sobel Family*

Gail Westerfeld - July 11, 2018 at 03:20 PM

AG

“*Mr. Kline was the sweetest teacher of them all. I got one was a very bad student, I didn't like history much and therefore I wouldn't pay attention. Mr. Kline always helped me get through. He was always there for those that struggled. I will never forget that while we reviewed for the final exam, I was so lost. We had to write an essay and I didn't understand any of it. He had handed out a bunch of packets to help us. He came over to me and read through all of them with me and explained it all. He helped me create an outline and truly believed in me. He would always sell cookies to our class and one time he through us a party with pizzas, chips, cookies, drinks and everything and taught us how to play this history board game. He was truly my favorite teacher even though I gave him a hard time. I regret it so much that I didn't pay more attention in this class or caused distractions. But he was always there for us all. He laughed a long with us, joked around, cared for everyone, and was so loved by the Cresskill community. He will be dearly missed ❤️*

Alison Grubecki - July 11, 2018 at 12:21 PM

MK

“ I am a HS peer of Steve's. He was always kind and polite, with nary a streak of mischief. We were football teammates in our underclass years and he became affectionately known as "Book Man". Rest in peace brother, see you soon.

Michael Keiser - July 10, 2018 at 07:43 PM

SH

“ I'm a CHS graduate of 2010 and had the pleasure of taking Latin with Mr. Kline from 8th grade all through senior year. Simply put, he was the best teacher I've had, including the professors I encountered at Harvard. He had, of course, an unparalleled enthusiasm for the classics, but more than that he had a boundless empathy for his students. As an awkward, bookish teen in a small town that didn't play sports, I didn't connect with many of my teachers or peers, but I felt that Mr. Kline just understood me in a way that others didn't. He even helped me start a book club in 8th grade when no one in the English department expressed interest: it didn't matter that this was outside his department because he just gave everything to his students. I fondly remember the days when our class would sit in the courtyard reading Caesar or when we progressed to the great Roman poets like Catullus and Virgil. Mr. Kline also had a great sense of humor in the face of student disinterest in Latin: I'll never forget when he returned a corrected test to a fellow classmate with the note, "Great translation of Virgil, but this year's class is focused on *The Aenied*, not *The Georgics*." We only kept in touch sporadically over the years by email and the occasional visit to the school (he was the first person I told about my Catullus tattoo), but his influence on my current life has remained, and I'm deeply grateful that I had the experience to know and learn from Mr. Kline. All my condolences to his family.

Sophie Heller - July 10, 2018 at 06:53 PM

BT

“ Stephen Kline was the nicest man you could ever meet. We were first introduced to Mr. Kline when Brandon started middle school track in 2015. He was at all of the track meets with his timer and his hat, which he let us take a photo of the order of the races that he wrote on the brim. We always enjoyed talking with him and often bumped into him at the track when he and our kids were using it. He was always so supportive of our kids and would take the time to tell us verbally, or write it in an email. One time when Danielle was running simultaneously with the boys, the officials tried to put Danielle with the rest of the girls on the outside but he stepped in and told them she should be in the inside with the boys. We were thrilled and thankful that Brandon had him for history this past year so we could get to know him as an educator.

We are so deeply saddened by his untimely death and will miss him dearly. Our deepest condolences to the Kline family.

Sincerely,

Bob, Wendy, Brandon, and Danielle Tilp

Bob, Wendy, Brandon, and Danielle Tilp - July 10, 2018 at 04:51 PM

MS

“ *Mr. Kline was more than just a teacher to me, he was like a second father and a friend. Since I was a young girl, I wasn't the best student and never liked going to school. I always respected my teachers, but didn't specifically like any of them as a person, and Mr. Kline changed that. He was the first teacher to care, reach out to me, encourage me, and never stopped telling me how much potential I have. I always admired his school spirit, (which I didn't have much of), his kindness, and his dedication to each of his students. He really made a difference in the school. I don't think I would've made it to my senior year of high school if it were not for him. We had a very special bond and I will miss talking to him for hours after school. Thank you Mr. Kline for the unexplainable positive impact you have had on me and my family all these years and always believing in me. I will never forget that.*

Megan Slattery - July 10, 2018 at 01:30 PM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Stephen William Kline.*



July 10, 2018 at 12:23 PM

RD

“ Our son attended Cresskill HS from 2005-2009 He had Mr. Kline for 3 straight years. Latin I, Latin II and History. Gabriel loved Mr. Kline for his sincere sense of kindness and understanding. I believe the feeling was mutual. When Gabriel passed away in 2014 Mr. Kline actually created a memorial scholarship fund in our son's name. He presented the scholarship in such a way that it completely embodied our son's spirit. We will forever be in his debt for this. RIP Steve.

Roxanne & Greg Davis

roxanne davis - July 10, 2018 at 06:36 AM

JR

“ With heartfelt sympathy we acknowledge this tragic loss to the family and friends of Mr. Kline. The students, faculty, staff and entire Cresskill community have been touched by his presence - as they will be by his absence. May the Kline family know how important and loved he was and what an impact he made on the lives of all his students.

He will be greatly missed.

-The Roberts Family

Jeanine Roberts - July 09, 2018 at 10:19 PM

SE

“*Mr. Kline was a very special teacher. I was a very poor student as all the interests I pursued into adulthood took place outside of school and I saw little reason for me to be there in the first place. Mr. Kline came in to teach Latin and saw in the back of his classroom a motivated kid who's passions laid outside societal norms and understood that holding me back by failing me or scolding me for not doing something I would ever dream of doing in the first place (schoolwork) would only hinder my future as I wasn't a bad kid I was just a very deep thinker and took philosophical issue with formalized education. I never once turned in homework, I blatantly copied other students but would never disrupt Mr. Klein's class in return for the understanding and (probably undeserved) respect he showed me on a daily basis. I was not a bad kid but I was certainly a handful, many other teachers had no time for me and viewed me purely as an inconvenient lost cause but Mr. Kline always had time to talk to me and I felt a genuine bond with him. I imagine if we had met on a different timeline and were somehow closer in age we may have been great friends. I feel compelled to write this as Mr. Kline is one of the very few teachers I had during my entire time in the public education system as well as on the collegiate level that truly took the time to understand me and attempt to encourage a kid with interests and beliefs on the fringes of societal norms to pursue them. I truly felt institutionalized from the time I was cognizant of reality in school until the time I got my degree, but Mr. Kline truly made this little outcast feel cared for. I will never forget that, thank you Mr. Kline for all you did for me. - Sean Austin*

Sean - July 09, 2018 at 07:49 PM

GT

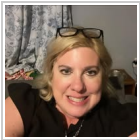
“ Steve, you will SO dearly be missed. I truly enjoyed your company at Cresskill events and when you would visit at my home. I wish your family nothing but peace and love during this difficult time. The concerts and plays won't be the same without you and your great stories. ❤️

gina timochko - July 09, 2018 at 07:37 PM

KL

“ I never met Mr. Klein, my kids were out of CMS/CHS before his time there, but I wrote out the CEF Certificates of Appreciation every June and December. He always received so many. I always wanted to meet him and learn why he was so loved. I'm sorry I never had the chance. My condolences to his family.

Kathie Lazzaro - July 09, 2018 at 03:59 PM



“ Our deepest condolences. He will leave a hole in the Cresskill community's hearts...The Odabashian Family

Beth Carmichael-Odabashian - July 09, 2018 at 11:56 AM

KH

“ Karen Hess lit a candle in memory of Stephen William Kline



Karen Hess - July 09, 2018 at 11:42 AM

TF

Rich, Karen, Alyssa and Lauren Hess (Cresskill, NJ) - Our sincerest condolences to the Kline family.

The Hess Family - July 09, 2018 at 11:45 AM

CW

After school chats in C-17 and the finish line at HS and MS track meets just won't be the same. We will miss you and your stopwatch. You embodied the true meaning of Cougar Pride.

My deepest condolences to your family.

Carol Whitney, Thomas Goeller & the Middle School Track team

Carol Whitney - July 09, 2018 at 12:16 PM

RD

Our son attended Cresskill HS from 2005-2009 He had Mr. Kline for 3 straight years. Latin I, Latin II and History. Gabriel loved Mr. Kline for his sincere sense of kindness and understanding. I believe the feeling was mutual. When Gabriel passed away in 2014 Mr. Kline actually created a memorial scholarship fund in our son's name. He presented the scholarship in such a way that it completely embodied our son's spirit. We will forever be in his debt for this. RIP Steve.

Roxanne & Greg Davis

roxanne davis - July 09, 2018 at 01:31 PM

TP

Our family is so saddened by the passing of Mr. Kline. All four of our kids had Him as a teacher either for Latin or History. Some of our fondest memories include him. He was always the first person to encourage and cheer them on. He truly had the students best interest at heart. He will be missed.

The Peluso Family

The Peluso's - July 09, 2018 at 04:41 PM

DC

Our sincere condolences go out to the entire Kline family. Steve Kline was a wonderful teacher and human being. His genuine love of knowledge and the kindness and interest showed to his school family was felt by all. . There will never be another Mr. Kline I am sure , and we were so fortunate to have him come to Cresskill so many years ago . He took such an interested in his students and knew them so well. Steve was a big part of our of our kids high school lives with all the years in the Latin program, and all the ongoing support he gave to the music and sports programs. We are so grateful to have known Steve, and he will always be in our hearts. With deepest sympathy, The Clark Family

Deedy Clark - July 09, 2018 at 10:29 PM