

This donation is being given in loving memory of Kathleen Apuzzo Krasniewicz. She lost her life due to the carelessness of a drunk driver a little over a year ago. Many of you knew her as Mrs. K, the Children's Librarian for Perrot Library, in Old Greenwich. I knew her as my best, best lifetime friend. I was two and a half and she was three when her family moved into the house across the street from mine. She died at the age of 54.

She was Kathy to me at first, then Kathleen in the preteen years, and finally Katie (because her mother started calling her Katydid). She was in love with books right from the start. I still remember clearly sitting on towels by her pool and working our way through "Dick and Jane" books. She had older siblings, so there were shelves of books for us to move onto. "House at Pooh Corner" and all of the Beatrix Potter books came a little later (I had the full set that we worked our way through). I was a slower reader than Katie, so when we started sharing "Stuart Little" and "The Borrowers" she would read chapters out loud to me. We were often taken to our local bookstore (Womrath's in Bronxville is still standing) and would come home with new additions to our collection. Somewhere along the line we started reading the "Nancy Drew" mysteries. Both sets of parents considered them to be almost as bad as comic books, but those stories were keeping us interested in reading. We devoured them and counted the months until a new one was in the store. We usually only needed one copy at a time, because she would whip through it and hand it over, and read "The Little Princess" in the meantime!

We did eventually start to read comic books like “Archie and Veronica”, much to the complete consternation of our mothers. Just think... a whole generation getting their socialization cues from those sources!!! And “Tiger Beat” magazine was a favorite. We had to keep up with the latest music trends and have photos of the most handsome “Monkey” or “Beatle”. We would roll Sweet Tarts up in sticks of Juicy Fruit gum and lounge on her bedroom floor (her house was usually the preferred place to crash, since I had 2 younger sisters). “Seventeen” magazine was the height of maturity (way more tame back then) and we felt triumphant if we could sneak one of those into the house before we were actually 17!

Our taste in books veered away from each other in those later teen years, as I became a huge fan of Stephen King and she didn’t like anything “creepy”. We still spent endless time together, but were no longer comparing notes on our latest books.

Katie gained an amazing vocabulary through her reading. She always used what I called “25 cent words”. I would have to look up most of the time. She was a master at “Mad Libs”, which I learned on an overnight train trip with her to camp in Vermont. Her “fill in the blank” choices were hilarious, even if we didn’t know what the words meant. They just sounded so good.

She always retained a passion for children’s literature. While the books next to my bed were piles of Barbara Kingsolver and Jodi Picoult, her bedside piles were all books aimed at very young children. Her reading choices were spot on as my children were growing up. I

had “a reader” and a “non-reader” and she always knew what I should try for them. I remember one time when I thought I had something to contribute to her potential list of “terrific books for kids”. I handed her a copy of “Harry Potter and The Sorcerer’s Stone” with the delight of a child finding a treasure map. She smiled and said that she had already met the author!

Katie managed to obtain a Master’s Degree in Children’s Literature while working fulltime at Perrot and raising 3 beautiful daughters. She was an inspiration on so many levels. This world has lost one of it’s finest gifts.

I give this contribution in the name of someone who has done so much to foster the love of books. She was beloved by all and would be proud of the job you are doing to help children discover the world that is available to them in books.

Thank you for your wonderful efforts. I hope this will help you continue to fund the creative avenues you are shaping.

Sincerely,
Leigh Barbour-Deehan