



## Stephen Kanee

March 17, 1941 - January 18, 2013

Stephen Kanee died January 18, 2013, at the University of Minnesota Medical Center in Minneapolis. Stephen was born in Winnipeg on March 17, 1941, the only child of Sol and Florence Kanee. He grew up in a household devoted to the arts and was surrounded with love and nurtured by his aunts and uncles and grandparents, especially by his dear Bubba Rose Kanee.

His father introduced him to fishing at an early age. Stephen enjoyed happy childhood summers out in the boat at their cottage in Lake of the Woods, later becoming a fishing guide at remote fly-in lakes.

Stephen's mother, Florence, having early artistic aspirations of her own, ignited in her son his life-long, world wide passion for theater, art and music. Stephen often remarked that it was Florence, along with Bubba Rose, who gave him the inner strength to follow his heart into the dramatic arts.

His apprenticeship in the family flour milling business took him to London, where his interest in theater led to an internship at the avant-garde Royal Court Theatre. In 1974, now a student at the University of Minnesota Theater Department, he was awarded a McKnight Fellowship in Directing, which brought him to the Guthrie Theater.

While at the University, he met and fell in love with MaryAnn Lippay. They married in 1981, and their life together though the years became a celebration of love, wit, music, food, art, travel, family and friends. They were a truly devoted and joyous couple, and counted themselves lucky to find each other and the love they shared.

Stephen, who was mentored at the Guthrie by Michael Langham, scored his first success with his production of Harold Pinter's *The Caretaker*. It was followed by the first Guthrie production of *A Christmas Carol*, which brought together for the first time playwright Barbara Field, scenic designer Jack Barkla, lighting designer Duane Schuler, costume designer Jack Edwards, and composer Hiram Titus. It was a team which continued to work together in many productions. *A Christmas Carol*, became a perennial Minneapolis favorite over a 25 year run.

For the Guthrie, he also directed *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are*

Dead, Catsplay, Hamlet, Great Expectations, The Tavern, On the Razzle, The Birthday Party, and I.B. Singer's Teibele and Her Demon, which was later moved to Broadway. Elsewhere, he directed for the Cricket Theatre, the Houston Grand Opera, the Pittsburgh Public Theatre, Meadowbrook Theater, and Park Square Theatre, among others. Stephen was a gifted and adventurous director, highly theatrical in style, and aware of the music and nuances of his texts. His use of the challenging Guthrie thrust stage was masterful. Under his direction, there never was a bad seat in the house.

When in 1980 the opportunity arose to pursue his life long ambition, teaching, he accepted a faculty position at New Mexico State University, which he held for five years.. He then returned to the Guthrie to help steer the theater through a period of transition.

In 1986, he realized his dream to join the faculty of the University of Minnesota Department of Theater Arts and Dance. As an associate professor and Head of the Directing Program, he directed Old Times, Spring Awakening, Restoration, Mrozek's Tango, Two Gentlemen of Verona, The White Devil, Your Own Thing ,The Visit and The Dybbuk, among many others, at Rarig Center and on the Showboat. His theater wisdom and advice helped to guide and inspire theater professionals all over the country. He retired from the faculty in 2003. Stephen said the happiest, most stimulating times of his career were with his students.

Stephen and MaryAnn shared their time between their Minneapolis and Santa Fe homes. In Sante Fe they loved the Opera, the creative arts and the natural beauty of New Mexico. They supported and volunteered at the ↯Santa Fe Care Center.

In Winnipeg, Stephen carried on his family's support of community and in particular was his interest in the Arthur V. Mauro Centre for Peace and Justice, established at the University of Manitoba by Sol Kanee's close friend and colleague.

In addition to his beloved, MaryAnn Lippay Kanee, he is survived by brother-in-law Drew Lippay and wife, Renee of Portland OR, nieces and nephews, Chris and Julie Lippay (Ryan & Lucy) of Pullman WA, Matthew and Amy Lippay (Maia & Fiona) of Portland, Aletha Lippay & Adam Goyt and godson Xavier of Fargo. In Minneapolis he is also survived by surrogate sister Barbara Field, and his cousins Andrea and Stan Levich and family of Minneapolis, Brian Kanee of Winnipeg and family, Susan and Merle Reekers of Creve Couer MO and family, and in Toronto, Bonnie and Peter Druxerman and family, Danny and Anye Schachter and family, Robert and Judith Kanee and family, Allan Kanee and Thea Weisdorf and family, and Jeanette Delevie, with special thanks for the loving presence and comfort of Robert Kanee.

The family is grateful for the care and dedication of the nursing staff of the UMMC Cardiovascular ICU. Donations may be made to the U of M Dept. of Theater Arts and

Dance or charity of choice. A Memorial Celebration is planned for Sunday April 14, 2013 at 11 AM at the GUTHRIE THEATER, 818 South 2nd St., Minneapolis, MN 55415.

# Comments

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“ MaryAnn and Family:

My deepest condolences to you and yours in your bereavement.

In Sympathy - Murray Vint

**Murray Wm. Vint** - February 05, 2013 at 01:51 PM