

Ken Kimmel, Class of 1988

Posted by [Lindy](#) on May 16, 2012 at 10:34am

I've started this four times and erased my thoughts.

I can't find the right words to do this justice. There are no right words.

The mid 80s to mid 90s Warrior community is still reeling with shock at the news of Ken Kimmel's passing. He is, after all, a beloved friend to a lot of people here.

Many of us are searching for answers to what happened and why such a beautiful soul was taken so quickly from us. We know from his facebook comments that he had a great lunch with a friend and hung out with people he cared about that night. Ken's final moments aren't really important - it's how we remember him that tells of his character and his life.

Of all the people in the Warrior community, it was *Ken* that I was most looking forward to telling, the moment we started planning 88's 30 year. I knew he'd get giddy with excitement and thrilled at the news; his Warrior family meant that much to him. Now, I keep thinking that when we finally do make it happen, he won't be there. I'm crushed by it.

I keep flashing back to the first time I reconnected with Ken shortly before the big Austin reunion in November of 2008. Several of us thought we'd be clever and beat everybody to it by having a small Okie Warrior gathering at a German restaurant in Choctaw, Oklahoma. Ken, Lorraine, Ami and I along with a few others gathered for dinner and gushed with excitement at the coming reunion. We were pleased with ourselves for having jumped the gun and genuinely enjoyed the evening.



Back row, Lindy's husband, Devon, Lindy, Ken, Lorraine, Ami. Front row, Lindy's girls, Obie and Lorraine's kiddos. What a great night that was...

I remember Ken looking up at me a few times and then finally bursting out with, 'I didn't remember you being so tall...' - that was Ken. He had to say what was on his mind, regardless of how it came out, though he always hoped it would be taken kindly or honestly. I laughed and took off my big shoes and showed him that I really wasn't much taller - we were almost eye-to-eye at about 5'8".

During dinner, we landed on some topic or other and discussed someone who had a habit of biting their nails back clear to the quick. As he shuddered and shook his head, I shoved my hands under his nose and said, 'You mean like this?!' (I've bitten my nails since the age of 5, thanks to a ton of excess energy) His eyes were big as saucers and after laughing my butt off, I had to assure him repeatedly that I wasn't offended in the slightest. That's Ken. He never wanted to offend anyone. And he was generally against speaking meanly about anyone. In fact, I'll take it a step farther and say that Ken was willing to be friends with people who weren't easy to be friends with - he humbled me in that respect.

Ken told me he remembered me as a great athlete back at HH Arnold. I took note of the bald-faced pride in his voice and it warmed my heart on the spot. I told him that many of us had crushes on him in high school. He was this kind-hearted, funny, European/Duran-Duran looking heart throb with a perpetual lollipop hanging out of his mouth.

His shyness as a teenager with people he didn't know that well came across as... respectful, but as an adult, it was pure sincerity.



When the gathering at Austin took place in 2008, Ken became the poster child for the event. His face showed what we were all feeling - that the incredible experience of Wiesbaden wasn't imagined - wasn't even exaggerated. There we were, many of us from the late 80s, early 90s, in the same room at the same time. It was surreal, it was mind-blowing and it was as if we'd stepped into a transporter and landed in the halls of HH Arnold. The pictures that circulated after the event show Ken glowing with happiness. It leaked all over us. I know he was looking forward to recapturing that magic, hence my eagerness to tell him when we were putting the plans in motion.

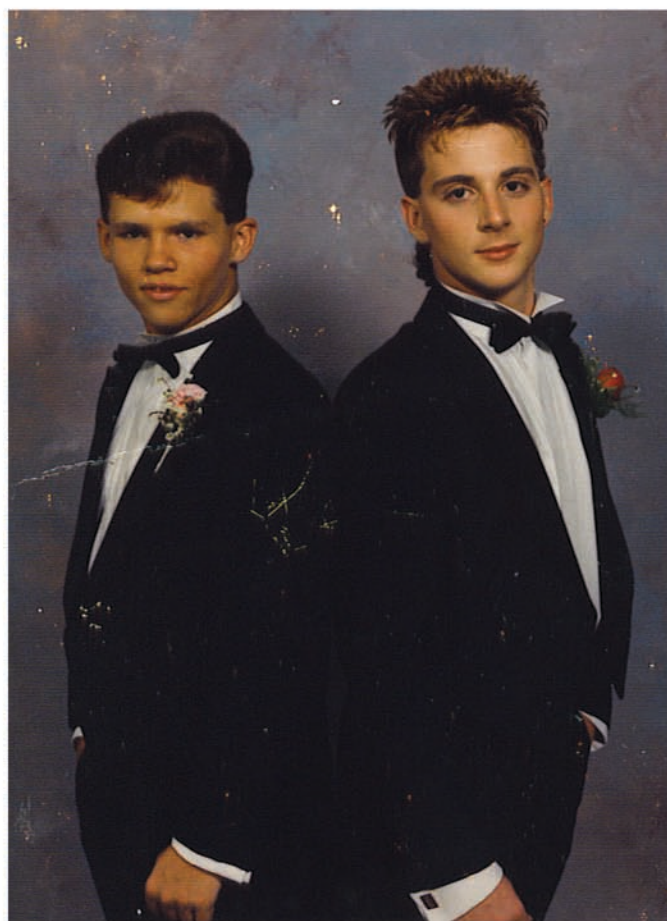
I remember us talking animatedly about how astounding it was that we managed to find Mike Brown and get him to the Austin event. Seemingly out of thin air, there he was. With a name like Mike Brown, we were quite blown away by the accomplishment. He told me of his first phone call from Mike and how he practically accused Mike of being a fraud - he was just that shocked. We had a good chuckle about it.

Another great moment was, again, during the Austin reunion when someone managed to capture some footage of a guy who lives in Austin and simply rides his bike stark naked through the city. Ken was just hooting with laughter and said, 'Welcome to Austin!' - the world provided a fascinating backdrop for Ken and he moved through it with the attitude of live-and-let-live.

I also remember Ken getting rattled when he was asked to tone down his hunting pictures on this site - that man loved to hunt and lived close to the land and had no qualms with calling out meat-eaters who acted like killing animals was disgusting. Being a vegetarian myself, he and I had some great discussions about it. He was never judgmental, just interested. That's Ken.

Others will be able to add to this picture of Ken. There are so many people who have treasured memories with him. One of those people is Roger Owens. Roger is one of the first people to break the news of Ken's passing. Roger and Ken were inseparable for many years. It seems fitting to add a couple of shots as a tribute to their friendship and that speak volumes to many others...

Ken, we love you and continue to hold you close in our hearts.





[Josi Williams Amaral](#) on May 16, 2012 at 11:01am

Beautiful, Lindy! My heart break for all of us left behind, but I know heaven has just become a nicer place!

[adrienne allen \(howell\)](#) on May 16, 2012 at 12:53pm

I still can't believe he is is gone. I am so sad for all that he left behind but I too know that he is in a better place and that he is happy. I know that he and all the other fallen Warrior are having party up heaven.

[Meredith \(Bohm\) Kopp](#) on May 16, 2012 at 1:14pm

I sure wish I'd gotten to meet Ken in real life. I sure liked the guy I knew from the computer. It's tragic to lose someone so loved at such a young age. My heart goes out to all of you who are aching today with the loss of a true friend. I'll miss his presence here and in our Fb community.

[Kristanne Heaton \(Bohner\)](#) on May 16, 2012 at 1:15pm

Thank you, Lindy.... I remember Ken so fondly. He was such a kind person... and funny. We had some special times back when I was a manager for the Wrestling team. So sad that I never got to see him again. Thanks again, Lindy.

[Michele Korver](#) on May 16, 2012 at 1:46pm

Thanks for this Lindy. This is so upsetting. He was one of my favorite fb friends as his fairly frequent posts always made me laugh or think. We must all make the most of the time we have here.....

[Shannon](#) on May 16, 2012 at 2:15pm

Beautifully written Lindy.. just beautiful.. this certainly has been a very sad year, but we'll get thru it knowing that our warrior family is always there to hold us up... no hesitation... whatever is needed is given freely.

[Sven Waclawski](#) on May 16, 2012 at 2:17pm

LINDY- Very nicely done. All you said is so true and Ken was as true as they come. I, for one, so appreciate the work you have done to get everybody re-connected and the continued efforts to keep us that way. God bless. Ken- i often look to the heavens and every time I do you will be in my mind and heart alongside Phillip, and recently Rachelle with glowing smiles looking over the rest of us. You will be missed brother.

[Cheryl Middlebrooks](#) on May 16, 2012 at 5:26pm

Thanks Lindy!!! I am still in a kind of disbelief....I just can't believe that he is gone....I still have a school picture of him from his freshman year but I look at it now and just break down in tears. He was such a wonderful soul and my prayers and thoughts go out for Obie and the rest of the Kimmel family. The Warrior love runs strong in all of us!!!!

[Robbin Pitman-Furtado](#) on May 16, 2012 at 7:14pm

I am absolutely heartbroken.

by [Tony Boner](#) on May 16, 2012 at 8:27pm

Thanks again Lindy!

It still hasn't really hit me! Not sure if my brain just doesn't want to accept it but it's not registering yet. Ken was all you said and more. A simple calmness that he had! Going to miss you my double dawg!!

[Lindy](#) on May 17, 2012 at 11:33am

I think it's going to hit home hard when we faithful 88ers and surrounding class years gather once again and he's not there. :(It's a real sore spot for me because I know how much it meant to him.

[Dora Trevino \(Conde\)](#) on May 16, 2012 at 11:41pm

This was beautiful Lindy. I am so heartbroken over the loss of Ken. It does not seem fair that someone so sweet and compassionate should go so young. I hope his son will keep the good memories of his dad in his heart and know that Ken was so wild about him, thought Obie hung the moon. Thank you for your words, they mean a lot for myself and Ken's many friends who are struggling with his loss. xoxo

[Sheri K Bairrington-Lewin](#) on May 17, 2012 at 3:25pm

All I can say is I L <3 VE this!!!

[James vGrof](#) on May 17, 2012 at 10:27pm

Thank you, Lindy.

[Josi Williams Amaral](#) on May 18, 2012 at 8:20am

Fellow Warrior Angie Pope Rinehart, class of '83, is visiting Wiesbaden today.....she lit a candle for Ken and said this prayer.

"Ken, you will always be remembered and missed. You touched so many lives. We continue to pray for your entire family and for your friends. We especially lift up your precious Obie. Lighting a candle in your honor and memory at the St. Bonifatius Kirche in Wiesbaden."

[Jessica Carosella](#) on May 18, 2012 at 10:20am

Thank you Lindy! Well said.

Gene and Donna Kimmell via [Jason Kimmel](#) on May 20, 2012 at 10:59pm

Thank you Lindy for wonderful thoughts and comments of our Son. Ken loved his time in Germany and was quite upset when Mom and Dad told him it was time to get himself home. We came home the end of June 88 and he stayed and traveled with Scott and Mike on a euro rail pass. Called 3rd of Aug. claiming he missed his plane so was home soon after. He cherished all his warrior friends and always was excited when someone would connect or come visit. Words really won't come for me to express how much all your thoughts and support mean to us.
Love Gene and Donna Kimmel