

The following article was written by **Nancy Cannon** (SUNY—Oneonta) for the local UUP newsletter in memory of **Dan Kissane**. Dan had been active in SUNYLA including service as Oneonta delegate, Chair of the Library Automation Committee, and a presenter at several SUNYLA conferences.

Danny/ Mr. Kissane / Hey, Dude!

Daniel Ferdinand Kissane (May 23, 1963 - November 19, 2004) was an original.

Dan died suddenly and unexpectedly of a heart attack after playing in the College at Oneonta noon basketball league. Dan grew up in Delhi and attended Delaware Academy. His natural athletic ability, in combination with plenty of practice, led him to excel in basketball, baseball, and football. Sports were a major theme in Dan's life. He often applied analogies from sports to life in general. Dan's other passions, in no particular order, were teaching, music (preferably live, preferably rock, preferably LOUD), literature, writing, his cat, reading, his family, camping, and his dog Ali.

Dan loved to tell a story, often about himself. One story relates to his first semester in college in California. Dan's parents gave him a motorcycle to drive to school. The beach was only a few miles further. Anyone who knew Danny can guess the outcome of that semester. This incident was very typical of Dan: he sometimes struck out, but he always devised a new game plan and came back to play another inning.

A college education was not an entitlement for Dan; he had to earn it. He worked at an assortment of jobs (dishwasher, chef, bartender) to work his way through college. He ultimately received a B. A. in English Literature from Sonoma State University, a secondary school teaching certificate from Eastern Oregon State College, an M. L. S. in Library and Information Science from Louisiana State University and an M. A. in Educational Technology from McNeese State University.



In Dan's career as a Reference and Instruction Librarian at the College at Oneonta, teaching was his forte. One colleague commented, "Dan was the first SUNYLA presenter I ever saw and I was taken with his quirky, off-hand teaching style... which I found to be natural, relaxed and for lack of a better description, endearing. It was the sincerity of his delivery, free of any boastful careerism that struck me." Dan did not fit into the mold sanctioned by "authority". Some may view this as an imperfection (like maybe traditionalists?). Yet this characteristic, in combination with his wit and intelli-

gence, helped make him an outstanding teacher. His genuineness and lack of affectation made him an educator to whom students could easily relate. Student evaluations of his teaching were always excellent and reflected the time and energy he spent both in preparation and in one-on-one consultations. The influence he had on his students will be part of his legacy.

The memorial service for Dan was one of the most memorable I have attended. The service was emblematic of his life: friends told stories that brought laughter and tears. Like an Irish wake, Dan's good-bye was bittersweet and visceral. Danny was a rebel against authoritarian pomposity and a sensitive champion of the underdog. One chronicler told of a raucous high school party at Dan's house replete with a less-than-endearing phone call to the high school principal, which brought said administrator and the police chief (sans invitation) to the celebration, prompting Dan to faint. A SUNY Oneonta co-ed, who once lived next door to Dan, surrendered to tears and called him "a saint" recalling how he rescued her from a stalker. One of his co-workers affectionately described The Dan as a force of nature, "like a hurricane with its wild winds and central calm; a potent helix of contrasts. Once you met him, you didn't forget him". Four of Dan's friends performed one of his favorite songs, "Spirit in the Sky" by Norman Greenbaum:

"When I die and they lay me to rest
Gonna go to the place that's best
When they lay me down to die
Goin' up to the spirit in the sky"

Danny always liked to have the last word.

Night fell and I found myself alone on the College at Oneonta quad. A tall, athletically built man suddenly appeared by my side. A voice, familiar and exuberant, asked "Hey! Who will they ever find to replace me?"

Contributions in Dan's memory can be made to:

Humane Society of Central Delaware County, P.O. Box 88, NY 13753

or

Checks can be written to the College at Oneonta Foundation, 308 Netzer,
with a note specifying they are for the Friends of Milne account in memory of Dan Kissane.
(Books will be purchased to reflect Dan's interest in promoting reading.)

