

Kenneth Jay Leap Jr.

Artist, and devoted husband and father, Kenneth Jay Leap Jr. passed away on Friday, November 13, 2009.

Ken was born on August 1, 1953 in Merced, California. He had fond memories of growing up in Merced and Fresno, California. His adventures in California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Aruba include numerous mule packing and backpacking trips in Yosemite and the Rockies, windsurfing, sailing, camping, cross country skiing, hang gliding, cycling, climbing, and a sailboat trip from Hawaii to San Francisco.

After earning his BS in meteorology (1976) and MS in electrical engineering (1980) from San Jose State, Ken worked for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration as a meteorologist/electronics engineer. Just after getting engaged to Regina, he began working as a senior product engineer for Relatix, where he designed medical electronics. The first couple of years in Portales, Ken taught for Clovis Community College and Eastern New Mexico University. After Ken and Regina decided to start a family, Ken began his education in art at Eastern New Mexico University. Since he graduated from ENMU in 1998, he has worked as a self employed artist. Ken also had a passion for teaching: over the years he taught mathematics, electronics engineering technology, and art as an adjunct faculty member for Metropolitan State College, Colorado School of Mines, Clovis Community College, and Eastern New Mexico University.

As an artist, he combined his engineering skills with imagination and creativity to develop glass and steel sculptures that subtly changed along with the source of light. His public art works are displayed in such diverse places as the ENMU and NMSU campuses in NM, the Bernalillo County Court House in Albuquerque, NM, City Hall in Yuma, AZ, and the 29th Street Mall in Boulder, CO.

From 1996-2002, while working on his BFA and beginning his art career, Ken was the primary care giver of his children during the day. He has continued to be the one that cared for them when they returned home from school.

He is survived by his wife, Regina Aragon, daughter, Jessica Leap, and son, Christopher Leap of Portales; mother, Barbara Dimock of Fresno, California; father and stepmother, Ken and Leola Leap of Merced, California; brother and sister-in-law, Jim Leap and Polly Goldman of Santa Cruz, California; half sister and brother, Emily Leap of San Francisco, California and Jerry Leap of Santa Clara, California; nieces Jenny Leap of Tacoma, Washington, and Becky Leap of Fresno, California; extended family in Arizona, California, Colorado, and Washington.

Many of you may feel moved to honor Ken with an offering of some kind. Consider, in lieu of flowers, making a donation in Ken's name to one of the organizations listed below. Each has carried on charitable works he long admired.

The American Civil Liberties Union
National Public Radio
Peace Action
The ENMU Foundation
St. Jude Children's Research Hospital
The United Way

A memorial service will be held in Ken's memory on Saturday, November 21, 2009 in the Zia Room of the Campus Union Building at Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, New Mexico.