



Will Seward Keim

April 3, 1954 - June 1, 2016

Born on April 3, 1954, in Montebello, California, to Bettye Jeane Tobin and Will Seward Keim Jr. and also raised by his stepdad, Jack Wilhelm, Will passed away peacefully on June 1, 2016, after battling melanoma cancer for the last two years.

Will was a big man, both in stature and personality and would always do anything for anyone. He was an educator who has spoken to over 3,000 corporate and collegiate campuses to over 3 million people. He spoke in all 50 of the United States and Canada, on values and ethics in every spectrum of life. He was also an intercollegiate campus minister. People all over the country had him officiate their weddings, baptisms and memorial services.

Will is survived by his wife, Donna; mother-in-law Mary Basham; four children, Christa, Samantha, JJ and Hannah; two sons-in-law, Brandon and Steve; two grandchildren, Adeline and Harvey; and one grandchild soon to be born.

He has friends all over the world that loved Will's wit, wisdom, and great cooking! His family would like you to tell a favorite story to someone who did not know Will.

If you feel a need to give money in memory of Will, Donna has one more year of education for JJ, Hannah's Make A Wish Foundation for Chi Omega, Will's

Delta's Upsilon's Education Foundation, JJ's Sigma Alpha Epsilon Mario Pastega House in Corvallis, Christa's Corvallis High School leadership program, and Sami's Corvallis High School Softball team.

The family felt you needed to hear Will's message that he greatly believed in:

"My goal in speaking is to be precise in detail, persuasive in appeal, and passionate in delivery. I know that I am not the message but rather the messenger, in many way, I feel like the Wizard of Oz. That is, I cannot give you something you do not already have. You have a good brain, a caring heart, and ability to do great thing things. What I tried to do today was inspire you. Life is hard and it is ultimately worth living. Don't give up on yourself or others. If you get knocked down, get up. Let people help you. We are in this together. You have 25,000 days to live out your masterpiece. It is time to get busy."

Tribute Wall

CK

“ I've worked for Amtrak nearly 40 years and knew Will for many years. I was fortunate to be the Red Cap Will sought when he came to Portland Union Station to begin one of his many travels. He was great to talk to about my own family, marriage, divorce and raising three boys. The problem was, we never had enough time to talk. Will was fortunate to have such a wonderful family. I remember on one occasion when Will arrived in Portland I took him out front on the golf cart and he was met by a family member with the Beatles Birthday song blaring on the car stereo. Ironically Will passed away on my 57th birthday.
I was deeply saddened by Wills passing and to Wills family I am so sorry for your loss!!!!

Craig Kirkeby Amtrak Red Cap

Craig Kirkeby - September 06, 2016 at 12:44 PM

LV

“ We send our heart felt condolences, thoughts and prayers to the Keim family and the many friends who will grieve and miss this great man. We were truly blessed to have met Will when we did, and to have his friendship. He will be missed by so many.

Linda & John Vredenburg, from Iowa

linda vredenburg - June 08, 2016 at 07:49 AM

CB

“ Donna and family:

Know that Mary Beth and I will truly miss Will and saddened by his departure and please forgive me for not reaching out to you sooner. Quite frankly, since his passing I have found myself reminiscing. Recalling our first meeting in 88' at the AFA conference and the start of our friendship going back to your visit to Wellsboro several years later. Then there was the "Power of Caring...International Greek Life Teleconference", the weeklong PA tours (I thru IV) and the many hours of down time discussing family, politics, and drinking homemade Italian wine! Did he ever tell you about his one visit when we lived in Williamsport? He ate stuffed cheese shells and wine for three days running! The last time we talked was when he was sipping some wine I had sent.

I love and will miss the man.

I count myself a close friend, one in a legion of many who loved and enjoyed his laughter, reflections and humor. Donna, if I can be of service do not hesitate to call.

God speed my friend, peace and love...

Carm

Carmen Bianco - June 07, 2016 at 02:14 PM

AR

“ I am so sorry for your loss. I have known Donna and Will since before kids. One of many warm memories that I have of Will was almost 23 years ago, I was on the stairmaster at Timberhill and Will came over and got on the stairmaster next to me. He was glowing and nervous. He said as he trudged along on the stairmaster, "We're having twins!" He was more amazed than anything else, but really excited. You had all just found out and he was bursting to tell everyone he saw. I can see him now! What a loss. I feel so lucky to have known him.
Love to you all,
Ann (Robinson)

ann robinson - June 07, 2016 at 12:00 AM

NM

“ I am very sad for your great loss. My heart goes out to all of you. I remember a kind, caring and supportive man who raised some wonderful kids, motivated many students and supported education and teachers. Thank you for sharing him with so many people. Special caring thoughts to you, JJ.

Nancy Matsumoto

Nancy Matsumoto - June 05, 2016 at 11:25 AM



“ I did not know Mr. Keim personally, but I was privileged to hear him speak at the University of Redlands three separate times. His optimistic wit and sharp humor was refreshing and inspiring to me each time. On his final appearance this past year, I finally went up to him to thank him personally for coming to campus each year and doing his speech. As a graduating senior, I was unsure of my future at the time and was struggling. On a whim I went to go see him talking at the chapel and what he said was eye opening to me. I shook his hand and thanked him. He motivated me to finally take the leap I had been scared of for years. It is because of him that I am pursuing my dreams.

I am thankful that such a genuinely caring man took his time to spread such great messages to students at the U of R.

Sky Ung - June 04, 2016 at 05:31 PM



“ As you grieve know that we are remembering you and honoring the memory of Will. As your next door neighbors, we will always remember seeing Will in his vegetable garden, walking over to the fence to tell us a story, and enjoying the delicious dinners he cooked.

*With caring thoughts,
Molly & Dennis Staats*

molly staats - June 04, 2016 at 01:05 PM



“ I first met Will Keim 25 years ago when the Greek organizations at Northern Michigan University brought him to campus to speak. Like virtually everyone who ever had the opportunity to hear Will speak, I was mesmerized by his message and the manner in which he delivered it. Bob Gonyea and I commandeered Will to speak to both sections of the leadership class for our fledging Student Leader Fellowship Program. This was not part of his itinerary, but Will being Will he was happy to do it.

Subsequently, will visited NMU every other year as a Leader in Residence, impacting hundreds of students who were in our leadership program, athletes, RA's, and the general student body. Through his visits, Will became a special friend, often staying at our house where on a number of evenings we had great conversations over a Jameson's or two. A special time was when Will visited and spent a night at "man camp," an annual gathering of my brothers, sons, nephews, etc. Having neglected to determine the location of the outhouse before going to bed, Will awoke during the middle of the night and needed to use the facility. Unable to locate it, Will wandered into the woods to take care of business.

In the fall of 2014 my wife Sandy and I along with 11 friends took a train trip West. Typical of Will and Donna's generosity and thoughtfulness, they first of all insisted we spend our days at Yosemite at their "cabin.' We then spent a weekend in Corvallis where, despite his on-going battle with cancer Will along with Donna and his entire family showed us incredible hospitality.

Will was such a wonderful person and an inspiration to so many. His legacy of course is the thousands of young people who he inspired to be their best selves and now are doing the same for many more.

David Bonsall - June 04, 2016 at 10:17 AM

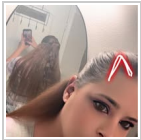
JH

Donna,

Will was one of the best speakers I ever heard speak, having only saw him in Salem, Oregon at the NAIA collegiate golf championship in 2013. I am just now seeing of his passing online. Though I didn't meet him personally, I frequently think of his impact he had on my team that night.

*Blessings,
Justin Hoagland, PGA
Herculaneum, MO*

justin hoagland - January 26 at 02:29 PM



“ *will was a very smart and funny guy. growing up will would always call my parents asking to crash for the night if they were passing thru. i will miss all the crazy fraternity stories he and my dad(wills fraternity brother at Uop) would always share when will was here or at get togethers. I know nothing negative about will he was always positive and crackin jokes left and right making you laugh so hard it hurts.....Will, you will be forever missed..love always, the woehl family*

Lyzzy Woehl - June 03, 2016 at 09:09 PM

JS

“ *I first met Will in the early 90's at the memorial service he officiated for a dear fishing friend George Perreard. Both Will and George have now left us too early.*

I have come to know Will's daughter Christa as a talented and charming ceramics teacher at Corvallis High.

Good job Will. We will remember you in your children and grandchildren.

*John Snelling
Corvallis*

John Snelling - June 03, 2016 at 07:17 PM

EP

Will's passing is a great loss, not only to his family but also to those thousands of people whose lives he positively impacted. I have known Will for over 25 years and have seen his impact on so many people, especially in our fraternity, Delta Upsilon.

Ed Porter, Oklahoma City

Ed Porter - June 06, 2016 at 01:20 PM

DB

“ *I met Will Keim 25 years ago when the Greek Council at Northern Michigan University brought him to campus. Upon hearing him speak to members of Greek organizations, Bob Gonyea and I commandeered him to speak to both sections of the Leadership Theory and Practice course for our fledging Student Leader Fellowship Program. Over the subsequent years Will visited campus every two years, speaking to our leadership students, RA's Greeks, athletes and the general student body. I never met a speaker before who could so captivate an audience for an hour without power point, without breaking into discussion groups- just speaking- and making it seem like 10 minutes had passed and everyone in the room hoping he would keep on speaking.*

Many times when will visited NMU he stayed at our house and we shared a late night Jameson's and talked- about everything. A special time was when he visited "man camp" in the wilds of Michigan's Upper Peninsula with my brothers, brothers-in-law, nephews, etc. Having to visit the outhouse in the middle of the night and neglecting to determine it's location earlier in the evening, Will ventured into the woods- and performed his duty the way people did before outhouses came to the fore.

I am going to miss Will terribly, but there are so many good memories that make me smile.

Dave Bonsall

David Bonsall - June 03, 2016 at 07:15 PM

JR

“ Sami and family - Kevin and I are so sorry for your loss. Your dad was and always will be one of a kind and the love and support he showed Rachelle will never be forgotten. Please know that you and your family will always be in our thoughts and prayers.
Kevin and Judy Ridout.

Judy Ridout - June 03, 2016 at 04:35 PM

SR

“ I was fortunate to hear Will speak a couple of times while an undergraduate and graduate student at Western Illinois University. He made quite an impression. As a higher education professional, I brought him to two different campuses. His message was and will ever be timeless in that leadership is about the education of character. I will remember him most for his genuine nature, passion for education and leadership, and willingness to challenge us and our organizations to become the best versions of ourselves.

- Shari Rich

Shari Rich - June 03, 2016 at 02:42 PM



“ Will and I met a number of years ago through his cousin, who was my Sergeant Major in the Army Reserve. Will quickly became a second father to me, giving me the same counseling, guidance, and insight that he gave to thousands of people throughout the world. He made me rethink some of my values and opinions, and made me a better person. I enjoyed meeting with his family, having coffee and meals with them, and listening to him speak to others. He has been a great blessing in my life! Rest in Peace, Will, and know that your message is still being spread!

RC Shokal - June 03, 2016 at 01:10 PM

AS

“ *The world lost an amazing and kind man when Will passed away this week. I have fond memories of being Will's travel agent for at least 15 years. Will would call me and tell me he'd be in to see me in an hour. I knew he would be an hour or two late, because he would always run into someone or get a phone call from one of his many, many friends that would delay him. When he appeared, he would have coffee and goodies in hand for everyone in the office. He would then proceed to tell all of us several jokes (sometimes crude ones) and we'd all have a good laugh with him. When he sat down with me, before we got down to business, he would want to know how I was and what was going on in my life. And I'd get to hear about Donna and the kids and how everyone was doing. He was so sincere, caring and compassionate. My heart goes out to the Keim clan as they grieve the loss of this wonderful man. With deepest sympathy, Alison Smith*

Alison Smith - June 03, 2016 at 12:49 PM

BK

“ Will and I met over 20 years ago following one of his keynote speech a Greek conference. When I accepted a position at Oregon State, I was thrilled to live in the same community as Will. For the next fifteen years we enjoyed regular coffee and conversation and I was blessed to bring him to campus on multiple occasions. But the greatest memory is when Will agreed to officiate the wedding of my wife Carol and I on June 30, 2012. Like all weddings, the energy was positive and the assembled group was enjoying the outdoor setting. Will contributed his humor, insight and wisdom into the ceremony and elevated the hope and love of the ceremony. His words changed the wedding from a ceremony to a true celebration of life. My wife feels blessed to have known him and all the guests at the wedding are still talking about the humor and wisdom Will gave us that day. Most recently, Will was providing great mentorship on a book I am writing. His insight transformed the original work into something more meaningful. I still have the original manuscript with his comments; an item I will treasure forever. Will's family is an extension of his love, grace and generosity. It has been a treat to meet them and break bread with them on a couple of occasions. Carol and I miss him and know that he is with the angels now. God bless his family and grant them the peace and knowledge of his special gifts. Sincerely, Bob & Carol Kerr

Bob Kerr - June 03, 2016 at 12:08 PM

KL

“ We met Will only once, but he left an amazing impression with his generosity, sense of humor and hospitality. We wish we could have known him better and for a much longer time period. With deepest sympathy, Kurt & Judy Liebe.



Kurt Judy Liebe - June 03, 2016 at 09:58 AM

CS

“ *The Delta Upsilon Brotherhood deeply shares in your grief. Each and every one of my times with Will was special in its own way. I'll cherish my signed books, photos and other memories of our times together. Donna, kids, and family - my family is praying for God's comfort for all of you at this difficult time. As Will would always tell me.....Stay well. Craig Sowell, Houston '92*

Craig Sowell - June 03, 2016 at 08:15 AM

JP

“ *My thoughts and prayers go to the entire family as this huge space has left us all. Will's message he shared across the country changed lives. He was the master at making the crowd laugh, cry, and be thoughtful.*

I could not wait for my next visit from Will when he would be speaking in New England and make a visit to us in Maine. My kids are blessed to know this man and to know how special he was to me.

Love and prayers to you all.

Jim Peacock - June 03, 2016 at 05:56 AM

JM

“ *I am so sorry to hear of Will's passing. Will truly was one of the great speakers in the entire speaking profession who set a high standard!*

I will always remember and appreciate the example Will set for many to follow. Sending Will and all of his family prayers and blessings! Rest in peace Will! You were a true inspiration! You made a difference! You changed lives!

James Malinchak - June 02, 2016 at 11:46 PM

HL

“ *Helen Lodge lit a candle in memory of Will Seward Keim*



Helen Lodge - June 02, 2016 at 11:29 PM

HL

“ *Hugs to all from Cottey College. Will was a beloved friend and inspiration to many on our campus through the years. He will be missed, but his spirit lives on in those who knew and loved him. Rest in peace.*

Helen Lodge - June 02, 2016 at 11:28 PM

BA

“ *I loved to hear Will speak and read the books he had written. But as a kid, Will taught me how to wink. It seems small and may not be significant to others but from that day on he was "Winking Will". I loved his humor and that he shared his life with everyone. His door was always open and everyone was welcomed.*

Barb - June 02, 2016 at 08:32 PM

SH

I met Will Keim through a mutual friend in 1984 when I had just moved to Corvallis for graduate school. Over my 11 years in Corvallis, much at Oregon State University, I spent time with Will and his wonderful spouse Donna. Will was many things: educator, motivational speaker, minister, writer but above all I shall remember his tremendous sense of compassion. I remember the little things he did-putting his arm around me and walking me across campus during a very difficult time-far more than his scores of accomplishments. Will, you are missed.

Shannon Hodges

Shannon Hodges - July 14, 2016 at 02:27 PM