



Paul Vincent Kuntz

July 10, 2021

***Please click here to watch the slideshow. ***

Paul Vincent Kuntz, an award-winning documentary photographer and a gifted musician whose love of the arts was matched only by his love of family and friends, has died. He was 59.

Paul's death at Houston Hospice on July 10, 2021 four days shy of his 60th birthday, came after a courageous eight-year battle with cancer. His wife Ilianna was by his side.

Though Paul was a lifelong jazz fan who loved playing the piano, the camera was the instrument he chose to best express himself. It allowed him to share his life's adventures with those he loved - and to surprise himself with the discoveries made after each picture was taken. That's where the fun is, he often said.

He enjoyed a distinguished 28-year career as a photographer at Texas Children's Hospital where he captured countless special moments, from hospital milestones and landmark surgeries. He always did so with his signature sense of humor and a smile.

Paul's real passion was documentary photography, his beautiful black and white images of working-class people, in particular, are as startling in their simplicity as they are powerful in their eloquence.

For all his talent he seemed surprised sometimes at his own ability to capture special moments in people's lives. "I think there are angels waiting [for me] at photo shoots," Paul, a man of devout faith, said in a recent interview.

In the summer of 2020, he compiled a photo book that covered his 35-year career. Some of the most moving images are from his defining documentary series of Houston's Third Ward, one the city's historic black neighborhoods.

Some of his most prized images are in the collections of the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston and the Museet for Fotakunst in Odense, Denmark. In 2012, Kuntz marked a career-high when his work was featured in the exhibition "The Birth of Photography - Highlights of the Gernsheim Collection" at the Reiss-Englehorn Museum in Mannheim, Germany.

His pictures are in essence his biography. His passion, sense of humor and love of people can be found in each image. And, yet, he never allowed himself to get in the way of his work.

"Kuntz's eye for shape and form and his unerring ability to stop time never eclipse the importance of his subject matter," noted photographer and Rice University instructor Peter T. Brown wrote in Paul's book "35." "His open, charitable vision enriches us all."

The youngest of six siblings, Paul was born in Houston on July 14, 1961, the

proud son of Henry and Rosemary Kuntz. A Bellaire High School alum, he graduated with degrees in fine art photography and journalism from the University of Houston.

Though Paul was a man of many talents and passions - photography, music, country and western dancing (inspired by his parents' New Orleans roots he also made a miraculous bowl of gumbo stew stuffed with Texas-sized shrimp) - he will best be remembered for his unfailing kindness, sense of humor and his adventurous spirit.

He honored life through the magic of his art, which allowed others to see the world through his eyes and to enjoy the "great poetic moments" he captured, John Free, a Los Angeles-based documentary photographer, wrote in Paul's book. He showed us what could be achieved, Free said in summary, "with a simple camera and a love for humanity. Well done, Paul."

Paul is survived by his beloved wife of 20 years, Ilianna Reyna Kuntz; his beautiful daughter and aspiring filmmaker, Aria; and his siblings, Henry Kuntz, Jr. and his partner, Martha Winneker, David Kuntz, John Kuntz and his wife, Jacque Brazieal, Mary Mutz and her husband, Ray, and Celeste Kuntz. Paul will also be remembered by numerous extended family members and dear friends, including Carlos Valdez Lozano his best friend since childhood.

A visitation with the family will begin at 6:00 p.m., followed by a Rosary at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, July 15, 2021 at Joseph J. Earthman Generations, 234 Westcott Street in Houston, Texas. A Mass of the Resurrection will be celebrated at 11:00 a.m., Friday, July 16, 2021 at Corpus Christi Catholic Church, 9900 Stella Link in Houston, Texas.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to Texas Children's Hospital.

Tribute Wall

LR

“ Lisa Reyna lit a candle Paul was always a kind and good hearted person I knew him growing up as my brothers best friend and always saw him around the house and at all family gatherings .

He was always there for my family especially when my daughter got sick and was at TCH and he came by to check on her she still remembers that today . We will all miss you and cherish all the memories you were like another brother May you Rlp and May God be with Ilianna and Aria plus the Kuntz family love Lisa and family



Lisa Reyna - July 15, 2021 at 12:00 AM

CL

“ Carlos Valdez Lozano lit a candle I was privileged to have known Paul for more than 45 years and honored to call him my best friend. He was a man of enormous talents but his greatest gift of all was his kind and loving spirit. A true gentleman. I will never forget him. Rest in peace, my brother. All my blessings to Ilianna, Aria and the entire Kuntz family, Love, Carlos



Carlos Valdez Lozano - July 14, 2021 at 12:00 AM

MF

“ Melisa J. Lopez & Family lit a candle May God give your family comfort and peace during this difficult time.



Melisa J. Lopez & Family - July 14, 2021 at 12:00 AM

LS

“ *Linda and Derrick Steptoe lit a candle You have always been a part of our family, you will be missed dearly.*



Linda and Derrick Steptoe - July 13, 2021 at 12:00 AM