

In Memoriam: Eric Bare (1963-2017)

Eric Bare was born on August 23, 1963, in Bridgeport, CT, the second child of Kate Jones and her first husband, John Bare. Kate and John separated in 1966, and John moved overseas with their three children – Mike, Eric, Sue. A British nanny, Irene, looked after them and eventually became their stepmother, with a daughter of her own added.



Here is a rare get-together of the entire Bare family circa 1996, from left: Eric's son, Dustin; Eric, Sue (holding Kinsey), Mike in back; and Shari, Irene and John at right. The little girl in front is Sandy, Eric's then-girlfriend Debbie's daughter. Sue's second child, Oakley, was born in 1997. Eric had no further contact with his ex-wife, Kim, nor with his son, thereafter. His work and lifestyle also precluded relations with the rest of his family, far-flung to California, Alabama, and Texas, except for Sue, who remained in St. Paul.



Eric liked to cook. At left, grilling at the family reunion.

Eric loved dogs, worked with them in the military, and had several golden retrievers for many years. Here he is with three of them when he lived in Minnesota. Only his last one, Duchess, accompanied him when he moved to Florida.



It was 1994 in Minnesota when Kate and Eric accidentally found each other again, in a joyous reunion after 25 years of separation. Their lives connected up and continued happily for the next 23 years.



Eric had been in the music business most of his life, and for over two decades was the stage manager for The Commodores, a career that took him to their concerts from China to Africa and anywhere in between. The stage was his home (left). Sound, light, pyro were all part of the game.



Eric was a late-comer to the gamepuzzles scene but took to it with unbounded enthusiasm for the last ten years of his life. His initiative and energy were fantastic.

His expertise in setting up shows in any weather (below left) and being an all-around roadie came in handy in helping Kate to redesign her new booth and to assist at her exhibits in art shows when he was not on the road at Commodore gigs. His natural showmanship, his quick grasp of the puzzle concepts and skill at explaining them made him a great asset with visitors to the booth.

Between music gigs, Eric got more deeply involved in the gamepuzzles adventure, helping not only at shows and at the Maryland Renaissance Festival but also in the laser shop, the wood shop, remodeling the basement warehouse, and developing video clips about the various puzzles (a project still under construction and awaiting a new producer). For relaxation Eric would play his guitar and write songs and poems. He was even inspired to create abstract art and design gameboards. It was understood that when the Commodores retired, Eric would build a new career with Kadon and carry on the family business. For his 50th birthday, he became an official shareholder of the company.



Eric had an amazing capacity for original thinking, philosophy, technical savvy and awesome street smarts gained from a stint in the military and from having lived in Mexico, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands and being in the high-tension creative atmosphere of the music business. He knew how to fix and solve anything, the right guy to have along in any emergency. He even remodeled the Kadon basement into an efficient warehouse, with well-built shelves and proper lighting. And he was the most compassionate, soulful and caring individual, going far out of his way to help in any situation.



During the winters Kate would do weekly street art fairs, January through April, based in her Florida duplex with two apartments for rent, and Eric and his girlfriend, Meshele, eventually moved into one apartment when it became available, helping at the shows. Since Eric's job flew him to gigs all over the world, any home base location was fine, and Florida winters are far easier to take than his former Minnesota address.



Tragedy struck just when life was at its best. In early 2017, Eric started to have symptoms of blacking out and dizziness, but with his habit of hard work he kept up with the travels and concert management until he finally collapsed on stage in Seattle on July 2. Rushed to the hospital (left), Eric was diagnosed after an MRI with a large, virulent brain tumor, a glioblastoma so advanced that nothing could be done, just to keep him comfortable, to assure a "quality of life" for as long as possible, with no desperate measures. Kate flew out to bring him home to Maryland.

Eric well understood the situation and stoically accepted the inevitable, with a strength and dignity that can only be called heroic. He and Meshele decided to get married while there was still time, and a beautiful, poignant wedding with about 24 close friends and relatives

took place on July 16 in the large ballroom of Kadon's headquarters. Many were in Renaissance garb at Meshele's request. Each guest received a souvenir pamphlet about Eric and Meshele. Eric's sister, Susan, flew in from Minnesota, and his half-sister, Shari, arrived from Texas. It would be Shari's last time to see her brother. Shari, a career photographer, took most of the wedding pictures.



Sue flew back and forth every two weeks to help with Eric's advancing need for care. A local hospice provided support with brief visits from a nurse once a week and a nurse technician three times a week. Meshele took on the biggest part of his care, administering medicines, preparing food, bathing him, amusing him with books and pictures and watching movies as long as he was able to participate. His two medications were for anti-inflammation and anti-seizure. He was not in pain.

On his 54th birthday, August 23, Cirque du Soleil was in town with their new show, OVO, and we were able to arrange for Eric's attendance with help of a wheelchair, accompanied by Meshele, Susan, Kate and her husband, Dick Jones, and Kadon's office manager and friend, Josiane Smith.

The Maryland Renaissance Festival had also just started its 9-weekend run, and Meshele thought it would be nice to visit it two more times while he was still able. As walking and talking had become a problem, the visits were made via wheelchair, with the kind assistance of a friend with caretaker experience, France Zeve, who had taken on helping out for several hours a day. As we were preparing to leave for the Festival and Eric was in his wheelchair, Kate told him how brave he was, how proud she was of him, and he answered, in a rare moment of vocalizing, "It's all part of the game."



One day later in August a busload of the Commodores' stars and crew stopped by to visit (at left), except for the lead Commodore, Clyde, who was himself recovering from heart surgery.



Clyde and his son (above right) were able to stop by a few weeks later, by which time Eric was bedbound and not able to talk at all. Only his eyes showed recognition and pleasure, and an occasional thumbs up.

It was heart-breaking to see Eric's decline, from being able to walk and make his way up steps for dinner, to losing the strength to walk, falling frequently and needing strong help to get up, to eventually not being able to stand or walk even with a walker or to get into the wheelchair.

Accepting the inevitable helped us through these tragic times, with love holding it all together. There was no one and nothing to blame. It just was.

Eric passed away peacefully in his sleep on the morning of October 4, 2017. He was cremated two days later, with the widow selecting the urn and taking possession of the ashes. It was good to see that there are efficient and considerate professionals, invisible among us most of the time, to attend to these matters when such times arrive.



Eric lives on in our hearts and memories. All around us are the artifacts of his accomplishments from his radiant and vigorous days. The show must go on.

More about Eric:

- www.gamepuzzles.com/eric-art.htm |
- www.gamepuzzles.com/eric-poems.htm |
- www.gamepuzzles.com/wedding-souvenir.pdf |
- www.gamepuzzles.com/wedding.pdf

