



## Leonard Levon Kaprielian

March 18, 2020

Leonard Kaprielian, a magnificent human being and husband, passed away in the middle of the night on March 18, 2020, at home after an eleven year battle with Parkinson's disease and the complications the disease presented as the years wore on.

Leonard Levon Kaprielian entered the world as a bouncing 10 lb. baby, born at home to the delight of his parents Jake and Rose Kaprielian. He was the youngest of four children. Predeceased by Edward, Louise and Robert Kaprielian. Beloved and much adored son-in-law of the late John and Julia Dervishian who considered him their third son.

Leonard was an inquisitive and energetic child from a very young age and at time mischievous as well. As most children who lived on a farm do, he created his own fun and entertainment. One of the games he played as a child with family and friends was "sack sucker." A bag was placed in the middle of the street, tethered to a string. Then, Leonard and the culprits would hide in the vines while a driver would stop to inspect the "bounty in the bag." The bag would be quickly yanked away to the driver's dismay and the delight of the pranksters.

Leonard was graduated from Sanger High School where he was a regular on the football team as well as a band member and speech and drama club

member. His primary focus was football where he excelled as a left tackle. He was courted by the USC football program as well as the Stanford football program. Since he would be driving his sister's older car, he decided that might present mechanical problems driving over the grapevine (ridge route) which at that time was a two lane road with service stations few and far between. Water was available for an over-heated radiator at one spigot on the side of the road going south. So, he chose Stanford and never regretted it.

At Stanford, he was the biggest player on the team, weighing in at 258 pounds. When the coach asked him what he weighed, he said "about 2 and ½" and that became his nickname along with "Kappy." Leonard was remarkably gentle as well as hard hitting. After knocking down a team mate or opponent, he would help them up and say "I didn't hurt you did I."

It was an unusual lining up of the stars when five players of Armenian descent found them all on the football team – all from various parts of California. Members were, Chuck Essegian, Norm Manoogian, Harry Hugasian and Gary Krikorian. They remained friends for the rest of their lives. Chuck Essegian said that Leonard was "the sweetest man in the world." While at Stanford, he became a member of the Phi Delta Theta fraternity, often serving as Social Chairman which involved organizing parties at various Palo Alto venues as well as the frat house. A good time was had by all and this further honed his desire to be in the food and hospitality business, owning his own restaurant.

Following graduation from Stanford, Leonard entered the retail business as a member of the Firestone Tires "Riot Squad" that traveled throughout the state promoting Firestone Tires.

Along the way, while still living in Fresno, Leonard met Agnes Dervishian at a party and while the chemistry was instant, they remained friends until the friendship developed into courtship and marriage. Leonard put Agnes on a

pedestal from the time that they met and throughout their entire marriage. “A match made in heaven” is how family and friends described their marriage.

He returned to Fresno to be an Associate Tire Salesperson at Ace Firestone Sales and Service. He formed lifelong friendships with the people he worked with, yet always planning for his own future in the hospitality field. Nine years later he finally decided the time was right to learn the business from the ground up. He met Sam Zakessian, proprietor of Zack’s by the Bay in Sausalito. They became fast friends that melded into a lifelong journey of brotherhood. After several fruitless trips to Fresno, he decided to stay in Sausalito and in 1963 they opened the Jolly Friars in San Francisco. The Friars was fashioned after an old English pub. It soon caught on and became a gathering place for locals, and transplants from other areas.

Nine years after being a partner in the Jolly Friars Pub and Grille, Leonard took total ownership and continued to operate it until he decided to sell and retire in 1984. It was an end of an era. Many memorable occasions were regular happenings at the Friars. Birthday celebrations, anniversary parties, dance contests and Halloween costume competitions with prizes. Wedding receptions were also held at the Friars. The California swing band, met regularly with swing music aficionados jitterbugging the afternoon away. There was live music 7 nights a week. The Jolly Friars was a neighborhood gathering place for locals and transplants, and occasionally celebrity musicians, media types, and jam sessions with a large group of attorneys and stock brokers known as the “Full, Faith and Credit” band that just wanted to get together and play music.

Leonard treasured his relationship with his Armenian-American brothers of the Triple X Fraternity, a non-profit charitable organization. He first became a Trexman in 1948 when he joined the newly-formed Selma junior chapter,

which received its charter in 1949. He was instrumental in the growth of the chapter from eight charter members to twenty-five brothers. After college, Leonard transferred to the Selma senior chapter, then to the Golden Gate chapter when he moved to Sausalito in 1963. He maintained his proud membership in the Golden Gate chapter through his many years of illness. His brothers will always revere and remember him.

After retirement Leonard became involved with his community. While he had a set of golf clubs, he never had the time to play. He was asked to be on the chamber of commerce which he found to be fun and creative. One year he single-handedly cleaned up and restored the vacant police station to be used as a chamber office while the town was planning to build a new police station in the same location. He also served on the waste and recycling committee as the town began recycling in earnest.

Perhaps his greatest and most enjoyed involvement was the Sausalito Arts Festival, held every Labor Day weekend. He was in charge of all beverage booths and under his direction and hard work he increased the number of booths from 5 to over a dozen. As the festival grew, a formal board was formed and in recognition of his hard work and involvement, Leonard was invited to be a board member as well as Beverage Chair.

Leonard was honored with the Volunteer of the Year award as well as the Spirit of Marin Award in 1999, a county wide recognition of those who gave back to their community. He was selected to be the Grand Marshall in the 4th of July parade as well in recognition of his outstanding service to the community. He would receive the Volunteer of the Year Award twice. As a means of funding projects for local (501 c3)'s, Leonard chaired the committee that was tasked with making decisions for grants following the art festival. In 2005, the grant committee honored Leonard by naming the grants, the Leonard Kaprielian Community Grants in recognition of his efforts and

devotion to the Sausalito Art Festival Foundation and the community.

Along with retirement came fun perks – season tickets to Stanford football games. Having been a car/racing enthusiast from an early age, Leonard and Agnes would be annual attendees at “Hot August Nights” in Reno. Enjoying viewing custom cars, unusual cars and by-gone era cars. Retirement also enabled travel to international countries: France, Italy, Portugal, and Spain were enjoyed, as well as Asia and the Caribbean countries.

Leonard was very much a “people person” and struck up a conversation with complete strangers. He was definitely a team player - a carryover from football days. He was kind, caring, charming and had a great zest for life.

Leonard was a quintessential gentleman. He revered and respected his elders, especially his parents and his mother and father in law. Rules of etiquette and gentlemanly behavior came easily for him and he was always ready and willing to step in and help anyone who needed assistance, whether it was someone who had fallen in the street, or a neighbor who needed help with a chore. He enjoyed mentoring others as well, getting them involved in community activities. He always enjoyed playing the host whether he was at work or at their home where they entertained friends over many years. He had a presence and a voice that filled the room when he entered. Everyone who met him wanted to be his friend. His phone greeting was transferred to Agnes’ phone and answering machine so that it would not be “lost.”

His love and adoration for his wife was evident to all who knew them. They were the light in each other’s eyes.

The last valentine card Agnes gave him read:

You are what an answered prayer looks like,

the moment I met you, it's like God whispered  
"this is the one you've been waiting for."

I've loved you ever since.... And I always will.

Agnes

Leonard is survived by his wife of 49 and a half years, Agnes; sister-in-law Miriam Kaprielian, brother-in-law Bill Dervishian, sister-in-law Nancy Petrillo and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

Visitation will be held at Chapel of the Light Funeral Home, 1620 W. Belmont Avenue, Fresno, CA 93728, on April 10, 2020, Good Friday, from 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

A Memorial Service and lunch for family and friends will be scheduled when the current virus crisis is over and things return to normal, at the Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church in Fresno where Leonard and Agnes were married.

A Celebration of his Life will be held at the Spinnaker Restaurant in Sausalito, also when the current crisis is over.

Leonard will be entombed in the Garden of Solace Mausoleum at the historic Chapel of the Light Mausoleum in Fresno, California.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in memory of Leonard may be sent to: Leonard Kaprielian Grant Fund c/o the Marin Community Foundation:

5 Hamilton Landing #200, Novato, CA 94949 or Leonard Kaprielian Football Program Endowment Fund, Dept. of Athletics (Checks payable to Stanford University) 641 campus drive Stanford, CA 94305, or Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church 3673 N. First Street, Fresno, CA 93726 or to the

California Armenian Home 6694 E. Kings Canyon Rd., Fresno, CA 93727.

Services entrusted unto the care and guidance of Chapel of the Light Funeral Home and Cemetery.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

APR **10**. 4:00 PM - 9:00 PM (PT)

Chapel of the Light  
1620 W. Belmont Avenue  
Fresno, CA 93728  
michael@chapelofthelight.com  
<http://www.chapelofthelight.com>

# Tribute Wall



“ *Leonard Levon Kaprielian*

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September 15, 2022 at 09:34 PM



“ I've just heard about Leonard's passing, and I'm heartbroken. Leonard was like family to me during my years in San Francisco, and the Jolly Friars was more than a bar; it was a second home. I first met Leonard when he walked into Sound Genesis in the Mission District, maybe 1980, where I was a sound system designer and he was looking for a music system for the Friars that 'really rocked.' We became fast friends, despite our 22 year age difference. I still have his voice on old answering machine messages, where "Pops" would be calling me to come over to the club to see the latest project he had going.

At least twice a week at night I'd ride my motorcycle over to the Friars to hang out, talk to Lenny, drink a beer and make sure everything in the ever-expanding music system was 'up to snuff.' When he bought the club across the street to clean up the neighborhood, we designed and built a long sub-woofer bench - (who knew he was such a good woodworker?) - a big thump-thump box that the girls used to love to sit on for some reason (!).

Sometimes I'd go over to the Friars in the afternoons just to talk with Lenny, while he was cleaning up or taking deliveries. His manager Bobby would be there, and there would always be something going on, like testing the latest electric bar stool racer, or checking out the latest car or motorcycle.

On occasion, I'd visit the house on Central in Sausalito to share a cup of coffee with Lenny and Agnes. The view out the back windows overlooking Angel's Island and the Bay were breathtaking. And thanks to Lenny, I met and did club audio work for Sam at Zack's and his other place across the street. It helped pay my rent!

My 30th and 31st birthdays were held at the Friars, with multiple bands, comedians and lots of musical luminaries from around town. Later parties were held at one of Sam's places. Lenny was always warm and giving, and I still hear his voice booming out a greeting. Many many fond memories from those years in the Eighties.

*I left SF in '88, although I'd arrange business trips back there and make it a point to look Lenny up and share a cup of coffee. His enthusiasm about everything he touched was always infectious. The last time I saw Agnes and Lenny was at their house, probably right before his illness began.*

*Rest in Peace, my old friend. You were much loved by everyone who knew you, and you will be sorely missed. We'll meet again, someday, somewhere...*

*- Mike Joseph (mike.joseph@sbcglobal.net)*

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**MA Joseph** - September 02, 2020 at 01:59 AM

DT

*“ I met Mr.Kaprielian at a golden gate trex meeting,and struck up a conversation of cars at hot August nights in Reno and of course Selma trex stuff!What a great inspiring words of wisdom from a true gentleman!Rest in peace brother trexman, and thank you Mrs Kaprielian for sharing him with us.*

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**Dan Boyajian past master Selma Trex** - April 12, 2020 at 03:33 PM

JK

“ As Grand Master of the Trex Fraternity of California I send our heartfelt condolences to Leonard's family for their loss of our fallen brother. I became friends with Leonard fifty years ago through his cousin, the late Dennis Hamamjian who was my best friend. As college students at Fresno State we would go to the City for ball games and always stopped in the Jolly Friars to see Leonard and enjoy his hospitality.. One night Leonard was hosting a dance contest and selected Dennis who he nicknamed "Denny Hammy" to dance with the prettiest girl in the Place. Unbeknownst to Denny, Leonard rigged the contest and his cousin won' A night of laughter and celebration ensued. Leonard was a fun loving outstanding Trexmen who set an outstanding example for young Armenian men. R.I.P BROTHER!

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**JACK J Kayajanian** - April 06, 2020 at 11:52 AM

SH

“ Leonard was a Prince of a man. I knew him for a long time. His heart shined through his speech and presence. My condolences to Agnes. He will be missed.

*Sisvan Der Harootunian*

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**Sisvan Der Harootunian** - March 30, 2020 at 10:12 PM