

Kim von Hopffgarten

A Eulogy by Jeremy Steinberg

I just wanted to wish everyone here my sincerest condolences on your loss. We have all lost someone special and someone close and want thank you all for coming to pay tribute to such an amazing person who made a huge impact on so very many lives. To the Beardsley Family I want to say I am extremely humbled to be asked to speak about Kim and only hope that in doing so, I speak eloquently and give rightful honor to her memory. I and hope that in my own state of fatigue over the last few months what follows pays due respect to your family and to Kim's memory.

Death is a mysterious thing. Its timing is often hard to understand and who's justice never seems quite just. 5 years ago I stood in front of a large gathering of people, a lot of which are here with us this evening, and tried to offer solace to all who mourned the loss of Dietrich. I was asked by Kim and our friend Wendy Kristoff to talk at the service for Dietrich, which I very reluctantly agreed to do. My reluctance came from three insecurities. One, I am not a public speaker. I know it makes my voice shakes, my stomach upset and my knees feel week. I am one of those people that tremble at the thought of talking in front of large groups much the same way heights and snakes can cripple me to the core. The second thing was, I felt like there were far more qualified people to be speaking on Dietrich's behalf, who knew him better or knew him longer than I did. I felt like what I could voice would not give sufficient honor to Dietrich or those who loved him. The third thing was, that I had at the time, never had direct experience with death and thought my words would be trite and clichéd. I am not a writer, a speaker or a poet, nor am I an expert on grief and how to deal with it so I thought Kim and Wendy's choice in me was very poor. Who was I to give honor to such a great person and what did I know about death and how it affects people. I questioned my own maturity and sat for days staring at a blank computer screen trying to figure out what to write. It was Kim who I confided in at the time and expressed my concerns to. She asked me to come up to talk things over with her, so we had dinner here at the farm, in the house about 2 weeks after Dietrich's passing. We went through a lot of his old pictures, regaled in his old stories and got a history lesson in pre and post war Germany of which Dietrich used to openly share with me, but I never quite listened as well as I should have which I will always regret. Kim helped me fill pages and pages of information about Dietrich's life that night and talked about him like he was still with her. She never cried, she never faltered, she never wavered. She was so very strong that night and I don't honestly know how she did it. In the end, with all the information Kim passed on to me, she told me what matters more than all the dates and places was speaking from my heart. Speaking from your heart would seem like very simple advice, but was not as easy as first thought. My heart had a lot in it and sorting through those emotions was a struggle. In the end, having said that to me, Kim had a very profound impact on what I wrote once I was able to start putting the words to paper.

Death leaves open and vast voids in our souls as well as wounds in our heart. Over time what helps fill the voids and mend the wounds are the memories and stories we have from the people we've lost. Although we can never replace the people, we can share the stories with others who knew the departed and find comfort in the shared memories which then in turn helps as all with our grief. I started looking at speaking at Dietrich's memorial service as a cathartic and therapeutic experience that I know Dietrich would have wanted me to have. I started writing about the stories I remembered best and things thing about him that I loved. What I wrote for him started to take on a life of it's own and grew into this

weaving of words, thoughts and emotions I didn't know I had in me. The more I wrote, the more I got out and the more I expressed, the more I could comprehend how losing him affected me. With each word I wrote, the fog and haze left around me by his death started lifting little by little. I felt like being asked to speak at that service was one of Dietrich's final lessons he taught me and in doing so, was one of the greatest gifts he left me. Now, 5 years later, I find myself in the same position, with the same reluctance and the same worries. I don't know if I will do justice to the extraordinary life that was Kim's, but promise you all that I will do my best and what follows is from my heart and is so, because I know that is what Kim would want me to do. I hope Kim can hear me and I hope she is proud.

Kim Louise Beardsley von Hopffgarten was born in Seattle on October 4th 1956. Those of you who knew Kim well, knew she had a ravenous appetite for knowledge, which extended through all aspects of her life, both in the horse world and in her academic studies. Kim graduated Vashon High School valedictorian of her class, where she also played in the band and on the girls' basketball and tennis teams. From there, Kim continued her education at Washington State University, was a member of the Alpha Phi Society and graduated in 1980 with honors in her bachelor's program in mechanical engineering. Although I didn't know her then, I can imagine her, with her horse and her books, her style and her grace, her brains and her wit and like to think of her then as what I like refer lovingly to now as the epitome of geek chic. She was probably one of the coolest kids that anyone knew, but who never really knew it herself. I know for a fact, she was the role model of many many young women and girls of her generation and younger who speak of her teenage and college years like she was the girl they all wanted to be. They all looked up to her in pony club, watched her excel in school and seemed to have a family that everyone wanted to be a part of. After graduation WSU, she participated in the 1981 Insilco National Dressage Championship competition, which was the first East meets West head to head competition for dressage riders of it's kind in the United States and took place in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. There, on her-self trained and self-made horse Woodimix, she took top honors in the Grand Prix which helped her secure a spot the following year on the 1982 US Equestrian Team for the World Championships held in Lausanne, Switzerland. The following year, in 1983 she won the West Coast Regional Dressage Championship at the Grand Prix which took place in Southern California also on Woodimix.

Horses have a way of shaping and changing our lives. Each horse carries with them their own individual character that we grow with over the years they reside in our guard. Often one particular horse comes into our lives that leaves an impact so deep, it is by that measure, that all other horses compared. I know for Kim, Woodi was a horse that shaped and changed her as a person and impacted her deeply. Her adventures and travels with him took her not just across the country, but around the world. It was an adventure that most of us only get to dream of having and Kim got to live it because of her wonderful partner Woody. Kim had many horses over the years in her time with us and all of them held a special place in her heart I know for sure, but Woodi was able to take her on was a journey that no other horse could replace and I know she held herself forever in his debt for showing her the world.

In 1984 as most of you know, Kim married Dietrich. I have heard stories from both Kim and from Dietrich about their courtship and marriage and the one thing that was common from story to story was their love for each other. I don't know what it was about Dietrich that Kim was first attracted to. In the early years I tended to spend more time mad at Dietrich than not and always wondered how anyone could love that man being the curmudgeon that he was. I do know however that Kim's love and affection for him never faded through the years of their marriage and even when his raven black hair

started turning grey she still adored him. As far as Kim goes, I don't think it's hard to guess what Dietrich saw in Her. She was an attractive, educated, smart, kind and quick-witted person with an amazing smile who could give him a run for his money both on a horse and off. Her wit was razor sharp and very fast which I attribute to her intellect and although often shy about some things, when it came to teasing you, making a joke, or making you laugh she never held back.

Dietrich and Kim's love for each other was ever apparent and I will always look fondly on seeing them holding hands, chasing each other down the barn aisle or cuddled up for their afternoon naps at Blackwood in the office...If you were ever at Blackwood during those years or worked for Kim or Dietrich, did you ever notice they never fully closed the office door after lunch when they turned in for their nap? I used to wonder why they never closed it all the way, but think it must have been Kim that used to leave the door ajar so she could keep Dietrich honest with all of us coming and going through the house. That thought always brings a smile to my face and makes me laugh a little. Dietrich could never keep his hands off her and looking back, think maybe that was one of the reasons he was always so impatient with Kim when it came to getting her in the house for lunch! She was always late for lunch during those Blackwood years and he always had to call out to the barn for her, very impatiently, like she wasn't going to come or forgot it was lunch time. Dietrich's booming voice calling your name over the intercom was never something you wanted to hear. It wasn't funny, it was never good and it definitely was not something you ever wanted to hear if you were an employee there, but when it came to calling out for Kim to come eat, that was one time everyone at Blackwood laughed and got a chance to tease Kim for a change. Not a day went by when he didn't have to yell at her to get into the house and come and eat lunch. I guess, in his eyes, the sooner she had lunch, the sooner she came in, the sooner they could snuggle and take their nap. In the later years here at Sanssouci it was breakfast she was always late for and he had to call out to the barn about... I think he eventually gave up on lunch, but know they never gave up on cuddling.

After Dietrich passed away, I took it on as a personal mission, that no matter what I had to do, I would help Kim get off the farm with her horses for a show or a clinic like she did in years past and support her in any way possible to make that a reality. I wanted to see her enjoying the adventure and know there was part of her that missed that aspect of her riding very much in recent years but because of this farm and it's responsibilities she always played host to it's burden and never saw it fit or possible to get away. Those of you that knew her well, knew that she was talking about showing again for the first time in years and had come to her own slightly ajar closure on Dietrich's death just enough to feel comfortable leaving the horses in the hands of those close to her and get away for a few days at a time. I think for Kim, being able to leave the farm with her horse again and have that independence was a chapter in her grief process that was one of the healthiest and most exciting things she could have done. Kim had also started bringing her horse Lois down to our farm in Kirkland over the last half a year for over night visits where she could test out her rusty trailer driving skills, have some eyes on the ground to help gauge her progress and check out Lois nerves in the hopes that a horse show lie in his near future. Being a part of that process and seeing Kim ride her horse off her property, with a smile on her face and what looked like no care in the world, is a vision of her I will never forget and one I am holding onto very dearly in these last few weeks. It is one of the things I am the most proud of in my entire life. Not the fact that I, myself, got Kim off the property, not that at all. Everyone in Kim's life was part of that and everyone was a support to that. I was just a cog in the wheel that helped push that machine and made it possible, there were many people in Kim's life that wanted to see her travel with her horses again. What I was

proud of was, my rock, my steady guide, my friend and my guardian leaned on me for the first time in my life for help and support. It was an honor. I got to be HER rock. I got to be HER guiding light. I got to help her. It was with humility and Kim's usual quiet modesty that she once more added sun and water to my own growth as a human being and was a part of an experience that will forever shape who I am as a person. For me personally, her recent adventures and outreach make her passing that much harder. I feel like I was finally able to start to give back to Kim some of what she had given me in my life over the years I have known her. I try to find comfort in the fact that she was ready to make those steps and she was willing to lean on those around her for support. She was opening up and asking for help and I would have done anything for her. I resolve to make peace with the thought that she did it...and she was happy. She was ready for new adventures and ready to move on with life and everyone was excited for her. I feel a great comfort in the fact that she was ready for an adventure and know, that up there in heaven, she is only on another journey and setting out on new adventures.

It is one of the greatest of Bible stories that makes it known we are all descendants of a single person. It only makes sense in that case, that when a life is lost, we all lose something of ourselves. It would also make sense that because of that, in one person's life, we all have life and in one person's knowledge, we all have knowledge. Kim was part of all who knew her and she gave life and knowledge to all she encountered. She was a part of all of us and will always remain a part of us. In Dierich's Eulogy, I talked a little bit about Dietich's favorite student which everyone always joked about being, both seriously and not so seriously, but the truth was when it came to his favorite student; he couldn't have been more clear that it was, and will always be Kim. He always spoke of her with a twinkle in his eye and love in his heart that was as transparent as a freshly cleaned window. You could see right into his heart and know she was always his beloved. Not so well known is that Kim also had her own favorite, which she might have been quieter about expressing, but who was definitely the twinkle in her eye and to me, was just as transparent. I wanted to make special mention of Jesse Sabey and tell him how much Kim loved him. Jesse, I know you know that, but I feel I owe it to Kim make sure you hear and understand that. Kim loved you like a son and that love and bond that you two had can never be broken or replaced. Nothing will ever change that, not time, not Dali, not one single thing. Kim is a part of you and she is part of me. Your loss is my loss and I share that with you, but in having lost we have to remember how much we have both gained in having had her in our lives. I want you to hold onto her in your heart and I want you to know I will always be your brother and you can always call on me if you need. With Kim's death ending a certain chapter in our lives, you and I can both look on and know a new chapter is beginning. Where there is death, there is life and Kim would want you celebrating the new life that is about to unfold before you. Rejoice in that and know that Kim is watching over you, Mika and what is about to be your new family with love and guardianship.

To the Beardsley's I would like to say that Kim touched all of us very much. She was a huge part of many of our lives. We have all learned so much and come so far as people, as students, as horsemen and as horsewomen because of Kim's teachings, her gifts, her riding and her friendship. Kim is part of all of us here today which makes us all part of your family if you should have us. Everyone here cared for Kim more than words can express and now in Kim's passing share that love with you and your family. Our hearts are with you today and always and will proudly share the weight of grief that you are carrying. The people in this arena here with us today are only a small percentage of people that Kim touched and profoundly moved in some way. Everyone one of us is indebted to you for bringing Kim into our lives and in doing so, you helped shape and raise every one of us. That extended family, a gigantic melting

pot of people of all ages and all types, is beyond enormous. This melting pot you have helped create, not only shares your love for Kim, but also leaves a legacy that will last longer than the bonds of eternity. She affected all of us, which in turn affects those who we come in contact with, which in turn affects those who they come in contact with and so on. Your daughter, your sister, your aunt and our friend Kim lives on forever in our hearts and in our actions and all of us that knew her say thank you for your gift to us and we will stand side by side with you in your grief and want you to know we are here if you need us.

A few weeks ago, I wrote a little bit about Kim on our website and would like to share that with you now. I know some of you have read it, but would like to lend my voice to the words.

It's been a long journey with my friends Dietrich and Kim, but as many journeys and adventures go nowhere near as long as I would have liked. Dietrich's passing in 2006 tore through my heart like a steel blade and Kim's now too does the same. I have missed Dietrich terribly over the last few years and Kim has always helped ease that pain. She's listened to me cry, listened to me yell, helped ease my anger and always consoled me. She comforted me like MY loss was larger than her's and gave me someone to lean on in my grief. In the days following Dietrich's death, Kim was far stronger than me, which gave me comfort and strength more than any one person could imagine. I don't know how she did it and commend her for that. She treated me like the son Dietrich always did and worried about Jesse and me far more than it seemed she worried about herself. She gave me the comfort and attention a child seeks as if I was the only one affected by Dietrich's death and put herself above the tragedy for my betterment and ease. She was amazing.

Now I find myself mourning for Kim and am saddened by the suddenness of her passing. I feel overcome with emotion and wish she was here to help me deal with it. Dietrich's death prepared me for many things and made me grow up in many ways, but it never occurred to me that Kim's passing would be one of them. Kim has been a staple of my life for 20 years. She has always quietly been there and always quietly been herself. No pretense, no nonsense, just Kim. Time changes people like the wind changes the sands of a desert. You never know what it will do, how hard it will blow or what things will look like next. Kim however was my rock and the wind never seemed to touch her. Never changed, never swayed, never moved. Always the same and in being such offered someone like me solace and resolution and helped stay my heart and wanderlust. I am forever grateful for her calm. I've heard it said about Kim that she lived in Dietrich's shadow, but to those who knew her, knew that she was for him, like she was for me, his rock. Dietrich would never have been all that he was without Kim's quiet guidance and forever calm. To me that is not living in the shadow, it is being the sun, the moon and the stars. She was that and more to not only Dietrich and myself, but to many who knew her.

Kim's horses were always her first priority and I will never forgive her, but will always thank her for instilling that in me also. Horses are a burden and a gift and Kim taught me that to enjoy the gift, you must be willing to carry the burden. I will always proudly carry that burden and am honored to do so.

Kim and I talked many times over the last few years about many things. She always goaded me that I don't answer my phone enough, but was always proud of how busy I was. My success was her success. She never relented at teasing me, but always understood how life has a way of keeping you from connecting and keeps one busy. I wish I would have picked up that bloody phone more often, but don't know how to turn back time and make that so. It will be a regret I will own for the rest of my life.

I wrote this to Kim in an email just before the anniversary of Dietrich's death this year;

"...I miss him a lot sometimes and keep that quiet. I also worry about you a lot but never say it. Life has a funny way of moving with or without us in it for better or worse, and find I keep getting left behind and never say what I should. I can't believe it's been 5 years next month. I get so mad sometimes and always stop and feel like it is selfish of me, but still can't help feeling that way. I don't know why I am saying this... maybe it's because it's late, I can't sleep and I'm wide awake...I should probably be in bed. I guess the long and short of it is, you are in my thoughts more often than not, even though I don't always express that. I was really proud that you came down with Louis last month for a visit and something about you coming down again is making me feel very nostalgic. Anyway, my point being I know I miss him, but I know I love that I still have you! "

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I wish I could talk to her one more time. I wish I could, I wish I could, I wish I could...

Kim's passing is a sudden and terrible thing. The reality of which is only just starting to sink in. I am not direct family to Kim and can only imagine what it feels like to be so. Kim is however part of my family and like Dietrich her death cuts very deep. My heart goes out to the Beardsleys and wish them my sincerest condolences.

I know Kim meant many things to many people and everyone will mourn in their own way. Keep Kim in your heart and think of her often. Remember ALL the people in your life that mean something to you and tell them often. I love my dad Bob, I love my mom Donna and I love my wonderful partner Shauntel. They are everything to me and I don't tell them that enough...

Kim, I will miss you, but know you've found Dietrich. He will have been lost without you these last few years, so kick him in the butt and get him back on the straight and narrow. He has missed you so very much and will be happy to see you! We will take care of your horses, please don't worry about them! I will help keep an eye on Jesse, but he is wonderful and fine, we will both make you proud and live up to everything you thought we could be! Your support and friendship will always be cherished. Your friends miss you, but know you are safe. Say hi to Dietrich and tell him he owes me a phone call and I will wait forever if that's what it takes.

I will always share your burden. I will always be your friend, Jeremy