Keven Johansen

July 30, 1955 ~ February 23, 2018

Keven William Johansen, 62, of Salt Lake City, Utah, passed away February 23, 2018 after a long, brave, battle with cancer. He was born in Salt Lake City, to Kurt and Patsy (Phillips) Johansen. He graduated from West High School in SLC in 1972, and entered the University of Utah jazz program, studying guitar with J.D. Moffat and jazz studies with Henry Wolking. He married the love of his life, Elaine S. (Fleming) Johansen, in 1980 after the Telluride Jazz Festival in Colorado. He then became a caring stepfather of four daughters and one son.

Keven's passion in life was music and playing the guitar. He built his first guitar at age two out of a tennis racket and rubber bands. He later purchased a ukulele at age eight and his first guitar when he was ten. He loved playing percussion in middle school while the family lived in California. He was passionate about big band jazz, and loved playing in the West High Jazz Band. He was influenced early in life by his mom's love of the Great American Songbook. He had a deep knowledge of jazz history and was a fixture in the Salt Lake jazz community and an inspiration to many, whether he played guitars, banjo or mandolin. He was a long-time member of the board of Jazz Arts of the Mountain West (JAM), producer of the SLC Jazz Festival.

Keven has been an artist and educator for forty-four years. As an Adjunct Associate Professor of Music at the University of Utah, he has directed ensembles, instructed classes, and taught privately during the past thirty-three years, as well as performing in numerous faculty and student recitals. He has had the privilege of performing with international jazz greats such as Clark Terry, Roy Hargrove, Phil Woods, Stanley Turrentine, David "Fathead" Newman, Grover Washington Jr., Al Grey, Carl Fontana, Bill Watrous, Milt Jackson, Joey DeFrancesco, Brian Bromberg, Louie Bellson, and Utah jazz luminary, Joe McQueen.

As banjoist for the Great Basin Street Band, he was invited to perform at the 1999 Umbria Jazz Festival in Perugia, Italy. The band was so well received that they were invited back for Umbria\s Millennium Winterfest in Orvieto, Italy.

He also performed at Salt Lake City International Jazz Festival, The Sun Valley Jazz Jamboree, the Telluride Jazz Festival, and has appeared often at the Jazz at the Hilton Series (now GAM Foundation/JazzSLC), the Fidelity Investments Park City International Jazz Festival, the Utah Jazz and Blues Festival, the Utah Arts Festival, the Park City Arts Festival, the Salt Lake Arts Council's Brown Bag series, and at concerts and clinics for the Utah Performing Arts Tour (UPAT).

Keven has performed with the Utah Symphony, the Sun Valley Summer Symphony, and often in pit orchestras in SLC at the Capital Theater, the Pioneer Memorial Theater (Pioneer Theater Co.), Kingsbury Hall, the Grand Theater, and the Egyptian Theater in Park City. Keven started playing at the Alta Lodge Sunday Brunch in 1985, and for the last twenty-four years, with his life long friend of forty years, guitarist Tully Cathey. Most recently he played with the Mark Chaney Trio.

Keven was preceded in death by his stepdaughters Diana, Judy and Barrie. He is survived by wife Elaine; stepdaughter Jill and stepson Greg; grandchildren Christopher, Corrine, Michael, Melisa, Kylie and McKenzie; great grandchildren Ben, Allie, Marcus, Jayden, Yescenia and Ariana; parents Kurt and Pat Johansen; and siblings Aaron, Shawna, Linda, and Scott.

Keven will be remembered as a compassionate, caring, kind-hearted individual with an incredible sense of humor. Aside from his love of music, he enjoyed skiing with his dad Kurt and siblings, going to baseball games with Elaine, and reading mystery novels. He was delighted by his pet dogs and watching hummingbirds, and was a generous supporter of numerous NGOs such as Southern Poverty Law Center, the Humane Society, and Defenders of Wildlife. A Celebration of Life will be heldon Sunday, July 1st, 2018 from 4-7 pm at the Alta Lodge (up Little Cottonwood Canyon).

The family would like to extend gratitude to the Huntsman Cancer Institute, Woodland Park Care Facility, friends (too many to list) and family.