



Anthony John "A.J." Kotich

July 30, 1946 - October 20, 2015

A.J. Kotich, 69, died peacefully at home surrounded by his family on October 20, 2015.

He was born on July 30, 1946, in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, the son of George Kotich and Anna Pardo Kotich.

A.J. was a Kansas lawyer for more than 42 years, a Judge Advocate and proud officer with the US Marine Corps, recipient of the Navy Achievement Medal, a long-time Kansas public servant, and a part-time Washburn business law and labor relations instructor from 1988 to 2015. He was selected by the Kansas Democratic Party as its nominee to be Attorney General of Kansas during the 2014 elections during which he campaigned on reducing the expensive outsourcing of legal services.

A.J. graduated from Northwestern Oklahoma State University where he met Linda Ybarra. They were married on June 24, 1972. He received his doctor of jurisprudence degree from Washburn Law School.

A.J. was an expert in employment law and the author of several primers on unemployment insurance and public employee relations. From 1975 through 2011 he was an advisor and counselor to every Secretary of the Kansas Department of Human Resources under three Republican and four

Democratic Governors. His longevity amid the turbulence of Kansas politics is testament to his honesty and integrity and the respect he was given by all who knew him. He was at his best when his sound legal advice was not what public officials wanted to hear but what they needed to know.

He was also appointed a Special Assistant Attorney General for more than a quarter of a century. In 2011 he was appointed Chief Counsel to the Secretary of the Kansas Department of Administration. He retired from public service in 2013 but continued to practice law and teach labor law, legal environment of business, and human resource management at Washburn until June 2015.

A.J. was a past president of the Knights of Columbus. He enjoyed coaching youth sports including AAU and Optimist basketball and Ken Berry and SCABA baseball and was famous for exhorting members of his teams, as well as his legal staff and friends to “finish”. It was his expectation that anything worth doing was worth doing well and fully. He lived the Marine Corps motto: Semper Fi. He was always faithful to his wife Linda, his five children, five grandchildren, and his clients, always providing legal advice with honesty and integrity.

A.J. was the consummate legal professional and a courtroom lawyer without peer. Out of court he could, at times, be gregariously competitive and was sometimes given to over-the-top observations, but he was also equally self-deprecating.

A. J. is survived by Linda, his wife of more than 43 years; and their five children, Victoria Kotich Carpenter (Matt), Merriam, Annie Kotich, Lenexa, Michael Kotich (Leza), Honolulu, Hawaii, Rachel Kotich-Verthein (Ryan), Topeka, and Mark Kotich (Amanda), Topeka; and five grandchildren Tristan, Ramona, Phoenix, Layla, and Carmen.

A parish rosary will be prayed at 5 p.m. Friday at Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home, 2801 SW Urish Road, Topeka KS 66614. Family will greet friends following until 7 p.m. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10 a.m. Saturday at Christ the King Catholic Church. Entobment will be 2 p.m. Saturday at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Kansas City KS.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Hire Heroes USA, 1360 Union Hill Road, Bldg. 2, Suite A, Alpharetta, GA 30004.

Cemetery Details

Gate of Heaven Cemetery

12600 Parallel Pkwy
Kansas City, KS 66109

Previous Events

Rosary

OCT **23**. 5:00 PM (CT)

Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home
2801 SW Urish Road
Topeka, KS 66614
(785) 272-7888
info@kevinbrennanfamily.com

Visitation

OCT **23**. 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home
2801 SW Urish Road
Topeka, KS 66614
(785) 272-7888
info@kevinbrennanfamily.com

Mass of Christian Burial

OCT **24**. 10:00 AM (CT)

Christ the King Catholic Church
5973 SW 25th Street
Topeka, KS 66614

Tribute Wall



“ Anthony John "A.J." Kotich

January 28, 2023 at 12:08 PM

AN

Yes A. J. was a pretty good guy. He did a good job at KDHR and was very employee oriented for staff especially when they were being treated poorly by Jeff Lewis and Mike Wilkerson. Funny hownwilkerson thought AJ was his friend.. thought it was a waste of taxpayers money..

Anonymous - November 03, 2023 at 09:16 PM

JB

“ Linda, We send our love and condolences to all of you. You will all be in our prayers through this difficult time. Jan & Larry Budenz

Jan Budenz - November 08, 2015 at 03:22 PM

SB

“ Linda, Rachel and family, I am truly sorry for the loss of such a huge part of your life. God be with you as you journey through your sorrows. There will always signs from above watch for them, that will help. Prayers of peace. Stacey Bailey



Stacey Bailey - October 24, 2015 at 02:13 PM

BF

“ *Linda and family,
Please know that you are all in my thoughts
and prayers.
Beverly Fox-Williams*



Beverly Fox-Williams - October 24, 2015 at 11:59 AM

JS

“ A.J. was one of my favorite graduate school instructors. I also had the pleasure of working with him on a few projects within the State Government structure.

A.J. taught two of my graduate classes for business, and he was exceptionally smart, logical, and I admired him a great deal.



Every time I spoke with him, he always ask, "are you teaching yet?" ... he told me time and time again, he felt I had a gift to teach and should do it. He believed in me and my abilities. He told me so and I appreciated it, and admired him a great deal for such professional compassion.

I was stunned when I read his obituary in the newspaper the other day, and I think I still am stunned thinking he's gone. I so enjoyed his terrific sense of humor, his charm to get you to think logically through things ... the Attorney in him.

Rest in Peace dear friend and mentor ... you taught me well, and mentored me lifting my confidence.

You are one of the good ones, and always will be.

I already miss you.

Jeff Scott, Topeka, KS

Jeff Scott - October 23, 2015 at 05:19 PM

WV

“ I knew AJ through Linda when she was a teacher at French Middle School. AJ would frequently serve as a chaperon for our dances, and his terrifically witty sense of humor would help me survive those parties. I KNOW that AJ must have been a person of good judgment in that his selection of his wife, Linda, couldn't have been better. She was an OUTSTANDING teacher and person.

Wagner Van Vlack

Wagner Van Vlack - October 23, 2015 at 04:45 PM

JW

“ Several years ago, I had the honor of working with KDHR staff to present information. During these sessions AJ was the most popular presenter to the business owner in attendance. We enjoyed the energy and effort AJ lent to these sessions. He will be missed.

John Williamson - October 23, 2015 at 04:13 PM

BP

“ Dear Linda,
And all you twins, Michaels, Midgit men and mini midget men, all you fine exemplary young people,
Please accept my families condolences,
The mention of your Father brings a smile and fond memories flow.
We tried some state and federal cases, he was my boss, coached together, and
shared some great times. He was a man of principles, that were not static, but applicable to all seasons.
The Pauzauskie Family



bill Pauzauskie - October 23, 2015 at 02:22 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Anthony John "A.J." Kotich.*



October 23, 2015 at 02:02 PM

MW

“ To the Kotich family, you have my condolences.

I had the opportunity to work with A.J. at the Department of Labor and feel very privileged to have had that opportunity. Most of the opportunities we had to work together were rather tense contract disputes or labor associated issues. I always found A.J. to be exactly as described, "...the consummate legal professional...always providing legal advice with honesty and integrity..."

The first time I met A.J. was to discuss a potential legal issue that was brewing in our agency and, immediately after formal introductions, he began grilling with questions about the issue without any forewarning.

Finally, after evidently meeting the barrage of his questions to his satisfaction, he said, "OK, sounds like you have done your home work. I'd be more than happy to put you on the stand if it comes to that."

Despite feeling like I was the one on trial, I quickly learned to appreciate and respect his level of knowledge, his style, and his frankness. Over the years we worked together at Labor, I learned a great deal and believe we developed a great deal of mutual respect for one another. I was always glad to have him backing our organization when legal issues loomed.

We all feel your loss, A.J. will be greatly missed. May he rest in peace.

Mike Wilkerson - October 23, 2015 at 01:07 PM

DE

“ *Linda and family,*

It was so sad to learn of AJ. We are so sorry for your loss. May God speed you peace and comfort.

Ping and Diana Dougan Enriquez

Diana Dougan Enriquez - October 23, 2015 at 10:59 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Anthony John "A.J." Kotich.*



October 23, 2015 at 10:44 AM

KP

“ *To A.J.'s family, I did not know A.J. personally, but through business. He was always very helpful, honest, professional and fun to talk to. I know he will be very much missed by all of you. He and my husband, who passed on last year, were in law school together.*
Kathy Prochazka

Kathy Prochazka - October 22, 2015 at 11:23 PM

JD

“ Linda and Family so sorry for your loss, AJ was a special person to me for many years when I was Executive Sec for the Kansas AFL-CIO. He helped a lot of People with their unemployment Problems, He holds a special spot in the hearts of working people in Kansas. He was a true friend that will be missed by me and those he has helped.

Jim DeHoff

Jim DeHoff - October 22, 2015 at 08:03 PM

 Jeffrey
McCollum

“ To the Kotich family. AJ was very special to myself and my family. His strong firm handshake, and the arm-shoulder hug I always received when met, will be missed. But always remember he is with us here every day.



Jeffrey McCollum - October 22, 2015 at 06:26 PM

 Jeffrey
McCollum

“ Jeffrey McCollum lit a candle in memory of Anthony John "A.J." Kotich



Jeffrey McCollum - October 22, 2015 at 06:22 PM

KS

“ I worked with AJ many years ago in the legal division of the KS Dept of Human Resources. I will always remember his kindness & humor. He was one of the good guys. My deepest sympathy to all of your family.

Kerry Storey

Kerry Storey - October 22, 2015 at 09:43 AM

BH

“ *What a great guy, and he will really be missed. I remember AJ for his enthusiasm, firm handshake, great coaching at youth baseball, and he was always well dressed. He was one of a kind, for sure. May AJ rest in peace with God forever*

Bob and Patty Hiller - October 22, 2015 at 08:39 AM

JT

“ *To the Kotich family, I am so sorry to learn of AJ's death. You have my sincerest sympathy. "Eternal rest grant unto him oh Lord and let the perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace."*

Jenny Tavares - October 22, 2015 at 08:26 AM

SU

“ *I will forever remember A.J. for his honesty, kindness, laughter, funny stories and above all his capacity for kindness no matter what. I am so blessed to have had him as my friend and my boss. What a gift that is.*

Susan - October 22, 2015 at 07:56 AM

LO

“ *Liz Ortega sent a virtual gift in memory of Anthony John "A.J." Kotich*



Liz Ortega - October 22, 2015 at 07:38 AM

LY

“ Aunt Linda, Annie, Tori, Michael, Rachel, Mark and families, My heart goes out to you all. AJ Kotich was one of a kind. i enjoyed him as our next door neighbor as a child, studied under him as my professor at Washburn and admired him professionally with a "Kotich for Kansas" sign in my yard last fall. We learned to laugh at ourselves through his many practical jokes as kids, but also knew the true meaning of loyalty and friendship by his example. Most of all, I will miss his smile. No matter how long between encounters, he greeted me with a big hug and a grin that said he was happy to see me and more. You saw the memories that came from your history with him in his big grin. I am forever grateful to you Aunt Linda for giving me my "Uncle Tony". Love to you all,
Lorrie

Lorrie Ybarra - October 21, 2015 at 08:17 PM

RS

“ We are praying for your family and wish we could be there to comfort you. Sending love from North Carolina to Aunt Linda and all my cousins.
Love,
Matt, Mona and boys

ramona Schiefelbein - October 21, 2015 at 08:01 PM



“ A New Sunrise Spray was purchased for the family of Anthony John "A.J." Kotich.



October 21, 2015 at 08:00 PM