

A photograph of a brick house with a green roof and a white gazebo, with green plants in the foreground.

CU DENVER ENGLISH NEWSLETTER

December 2021, Issue 25

DECEMBER 2021, ISSUE 25

A LOT CAN HAPPEN IN A YEAR

And it has...

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Note From the Department Chair

What was life like in August 2021? That's a strange question to be asking about four months ago, but I find myself thinking about the differences between now and then in ways that remind me of how I used to imagine what life was like for previous generations of my family. So much has happened in four months, and so much that we could never have anticipated. In August, one of my major concerns was teaching in-person with a mask on. Would I be able to communicate effectively with students? That concern evaporated on the first day of class, to be replaced over the next months by a host of challenges and crises. When I think about this past semester, what stands out is the spirit of solidarity that drives our department. I have been moved by our togetherness and by a sense that people are genuinely motivated by care for others. I want to wish a warm welcome to Wayne Miller, who will be taking over as the next chair in Fall 2022 and will no doubt find the same qualities of care and collectivity defining our workplace community. Thanks to all of you for sustaining me through the last few months and years. The time has been unforgettable, not only for the challenges but for the tremendous support and commitment that you continue to show.



NEWS AND EVENTS



WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

CultureKlatsch, a Colorado Humanities CARES grant recipient, kicked off its second season on October 12, 2020 with an episode focused on racial violence, police brutality, and poet John Murillo's book, *Kontemporary Amerikan Poetry*. (More podcast updates on page nine.)

On October 29th, 2020, a monthly Student Open Mic Night organized by Toby Tegrotenhuis and Caleb Sanford held its first virtual reading. Open Mic Night has since been converted to an in-person event that's also accessible via Zoom, allowing participants to attend however they're most comfortable.

The department began offering a new Undergrad Certificate in Professional/Technical Writing, intended for students interested in English, communications, and scientific/technical writing. The certificate provides diverse experiential opportunities to undergraduate students.

A new Writing Coach program was established to help instructors provide quality feedback to freshmen whose writing may not have received as much attention as it might have received with in-person instruction. (More on page 11.)

A memorial service and celebration of life honoring Katherine Pivoda was held on November 16, 2021. Faculty and university leaders shared remembrances and readings, while Katherine's students read some of her own writing.

Faculty/TA News

Teaching Assistant Anthony Ballas published a paper in *Sinestesiaonline*, entitled "Violence in 'Titus Andronicus: A Benjaminian Approach," along with a second paper, "Film Theory after Copjec" in *Canadian Review of American Studies*.

Nicky Beer's book, *Real Phonies and Genuine Fakes* is forthcoming from Milkweed Editions in 2022. She also has an essay in *Cincinnati Review* titled, "My Brother Says 'What the Fuck.'"

Michelle Comstock's article, "Choreographing Climate Migration in the Wilderness/Rural Corridor: Yellowstone's Invisible Boundaries Exhibit," was published in *Enculturation: Rhetorics and Literacies of Climate Change*.

Jeffrey Franklin celebrated the launch of his new poetry collection, *Where We Lay Down*, with a reading beside Randall Mann and Wayne Miller. Franklin was also an invited keynote speaker at the 29th Annual ROC English and American Literature Association Conference in Taiwan, where he presented *Immaterialism*.

On November 7, Phil Joseph ran the New York City Marathon in a time of 3:50. The weekend was the culmination of a lot of pandemic running. Fun times with NYC family and friends!

Alexander Lumans's short story, "Amchitka: Three Tests" was honored as one of the Distinguished Stories of 2020 in the *2021 Best American Short Stories* anthology, edited by Jesmyn Ward. The anthology was published in October, and the story appeared in *Territory* last year, in its Alaska-themed issue.

Wayne Miller's poetry collection, *We the Jury*, was published by Milkweed Editions this year. The book has received glowing reviews, including one from *The Irish Independent* that hails Miller as "one of the most outstanding American poets of his generation."

Bradford Mudge has two essays on eighteenth-century British portraiture coming out in 2022: "Portraits and Satire in Rowlandson's Connoisseurs," forthcoming in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, and "Face Value: Towards a Theory of Eighteenth-Century Portraiture," forthcoming in *Eighteenth-Century Life*.

Nicole Piasecki interviewed essayist Sarah Curtis for the *Colorado Review* podcast in September 2021. The interview aired on September 16th.

Andy Scahill earned CU Denver's CLAS Award for Excellence in Teaching for Tenure-Track Faculty. He also delivered a lecture for NWU's "Nights of Horror" event on October 2, 2020, joining a lineup of speakers that included major scholars in horror genre studies, as well as *Lovecraft Country* author Matt Ruff. Additionally, Scahill was a special guest on *Horror Queer's 100th episode*, and appeared on *Random Number Generator Horror Podcast No. 9*. In November, Scahill was quoted in a *New York Times* article about films that aren't normally considered "horror," but utilize many of the style or narrative elements of the genre.

Julie Vick's humor book, *Babies Don't Make Small Talk (So Why Should I?)* was published by Countryman Press in August 2021.

Cynthia Wong completed two invited essays for UK presses on Kazuo Ishiguro (Manchester UP and Cambridge UP). Wong also delivered a remote presentation on Ishiguro's new 2021 novel, *Klara and the Sun*, at the University of Bristol and led a discussion on Ishiguro's novels with an undergraduate seminar on Artificial Intelligence in Literature at Swarthmore College.



Student and Alumni News



Joel Casavant, a former research assistant of Professor Cynthia Wong's, is in his second year at the University of Chicago working on his MA in Religious Studies.

Justin Chipman received the *summa cum laude* honor.

"Salvation Sonnet," a poem by alum and former *Copper Nickel* editor Steven Espada Dawson, appeared in *Best New Poets 2020*. The piece was originally published in *Adroit*. The former creative writing student also won a \$25,000 Ruth Lilly Fellowship from the Poetry Foundation—one of the biggest national awards an emerging poet can win.

Kayla Drummond, who is completing an MA degree, will be chairing a panel on "Folklore and Fairy Tale in Gothic Literature and Film" at the 2022 NEMLA conference, which will be held in Baltimore from March 10-13.

Creative Writing alum Taylor Kirby's essay, "The Scopophiliac's Gift Shop," is now listed as a Notable Essay in *Best American Essays 2021*. The essay was originally published in *Cream City Review*.

Alejandro Lucero has a poem in *The Susquehanna Review* titled "How To Disappoint Your Catholic Grandmother." His sestina, "Returning," won first place in the Iris N. Spencer Poetry Award through West Chester University.

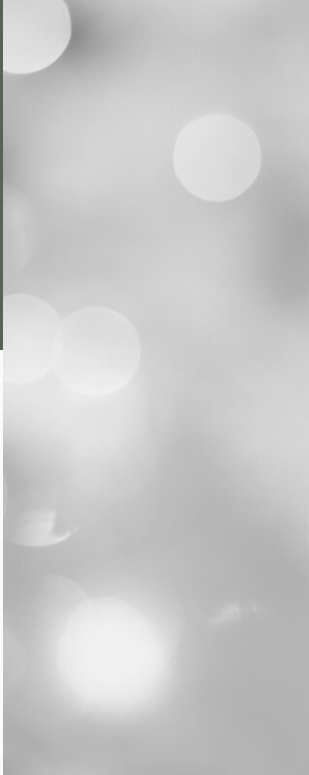
Creative Writing alum Lynn Renee Maxcy is now a successful film and television writer, working on hit shows like *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Covert Affairs*. In advance of the newest season of *The Handmaid's Tale*, Maxcy reflected on her work and offered advice for aspiring writers in CU Denver News.

Nate Novotny is in his second year of Medical Studies at Tulane University.

Alum and former *Copper Nickel* editor Kyra Scrimgeour received a "Best of the Net" nomination from *Porter House Review*, for her poem "Dylan."



2021 Award Winners



[Click to donate
to the Richard T.
Dillon
Scholarship Fund](#)

Congratulations to All!

The 2021 Rex Burns Award for best graduate student essay went to Caleb Sanford, for "The Echo of Ekphrasis: Affective Function from Aberrant Form in *House of Leaves*."

Sara Webster and James Watkins earned honorable mentions for the Rex Burns Award.

The winners of the 2020-2021 Michael S. Gorniak Scholarship in Creative Writing were Sang Dao, Alejandro Lucero, and Tobias Tegrotenhuis.

Rachel Davis, Lejla Muric, and Jonathan Prater were co-winners of the Richard T. Dillon Scholarship award, which recognizes undergraduate excellence in the English Department.



SPRING 2021 GRADUATES

Congratulations to the class
of 2021!

Undergrads

Shimma I Al-Mansoori; Rebekah Artman; Scott Edward Birndorf; Laura Taylor Breen; Giana Coggins; Stephanie Renee Dam; Demetra Delaat; Denis R. Dunlap Jr; Jackson George Finiol; Brynnah Adrienne Glas; Carter Allen Hawkins; Lindsay Hoard; Stacia Marie Johnson; Christna Kachanovsky; Lorraine Noel Kelly; Meina E. Lorenz; Samantha May McClain; Holly Christiana McCloskey; Veronica Lee Nation; Thanh Nguyen; Fayeth Pritchard; Ember-Reece Calvin Richardson; Anna Robertson; Elizabeth Rebeca Sanchez; Angela Marie Sapir; Kaige William-Gene Sellers; Catherine Tran; Sara Louise Tullius; Kristen Melanie Valladares; McKenzie Jane Wallace



GRAD STUDENTS

Spring 2021 Graduates



BEST OF LUCK TO OUR MA GRADUATES!

Dan Anderson; Marilyn Asmussen; Dustin Connis;
Alyssa Haskell; Kamesh Saba



Copper Nickel

News

Copper Nickel published a special double issue for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021. The issue featured work from Yusef Komunyakaa, Maxim Loskutoff, and Victoria Chang, among many other talented writers.

Brian Tierney won the 2020-2021 Jake Adam York Prize for his book, *Rise and Float*.

On December 4, 2020, *Copper Nickel* co-sponsored a virtual reading as part of the Unsung Masters Series. Eight nationally known poets read work from an unknown or under-appreciated poet.

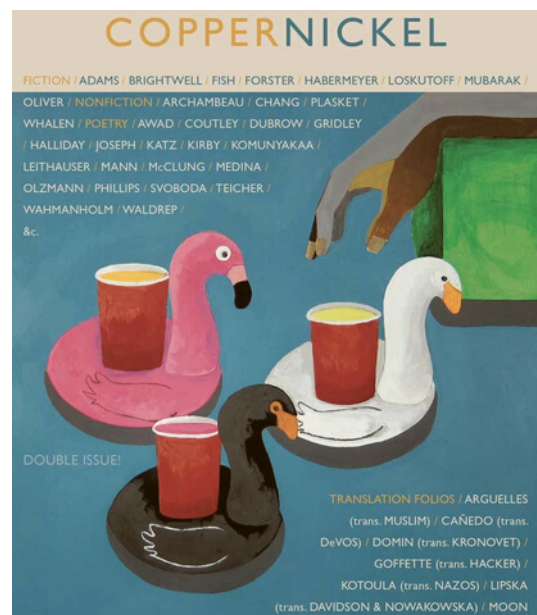
Editors' Prizes

2020, Issues 31 and 32:

The *Copper Nickel* Editors' Prize in Poetry was awarded to Michael Bazzett for his poem, "Inside the Trojan Horse." The Editor's Prize for Prose went to Aidan Forster for "The Husband Machine."

2021, Issue 33:

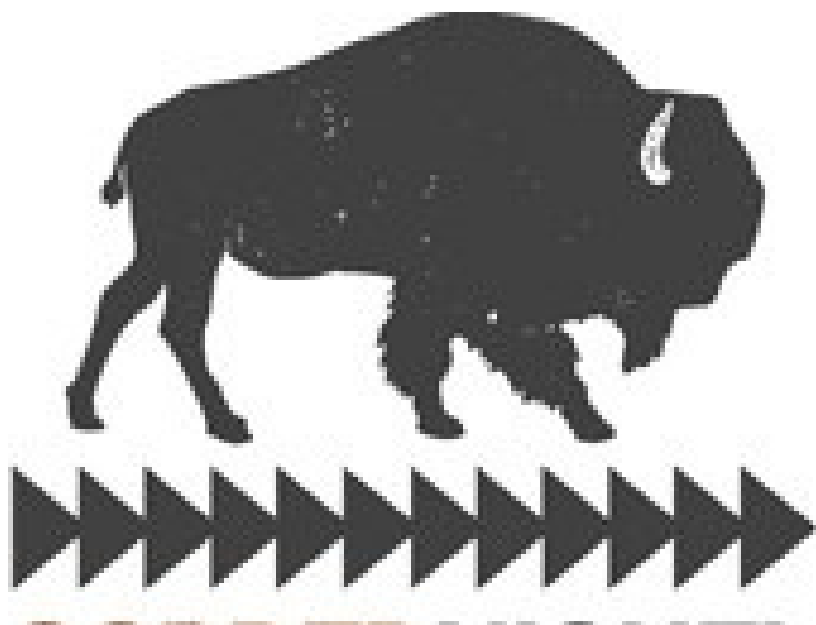
Dan Leach's story, "Wasp Queen," won the Editors' Prize in Prose. Natalie Tombasco won the Editors' Prize in Poetry for her poem, "Lolita's Dissection."



Fall 2020/Spring 2021 Double Issue

2021-2022 Jake Adam York Prize

Dana Levin, recipient of awards and fellowships from the NEA, PEN, The Library of Congress, and the Guggenheim Foundation (among others), will be the judge for the 2021-2022 Jake Adam York Prize. The winner will be announced in early March, 2022.



DENVER WRITING PROJECT



News and Events

A Sustainable Teaching workshop was held July 19 - 23, focusing on the mental and emotional well-being of educators.

The Summer Institute, held June 7 - 25, offered professional development for teachers.

The Advanced Institute took place June 7 - 11, helping educators develop their own writing as well as their teaching skills.

COLORADO YOUNG WRITERS CONTEST WINNERS, 2021

13 - 15 years old Non-Fiction: "This I Believe," by Audrey Rosen

13-15 years old Fiction: "Demon on the Mind," by Jacob Billings

13-15 years old Poetry: "Static," by Katie Kleinman

16-18 years old Non-Fiction: "The Music of Weather," by Chih Chen

16-18 years old Poetry: "King's Shadow," by Penny Duran

16-18 years old Fiction: "Wisteria Hill," by Anna Newton



CULTUREKLATSCH

Season 2



Photo Credit: Marcy's Jackson

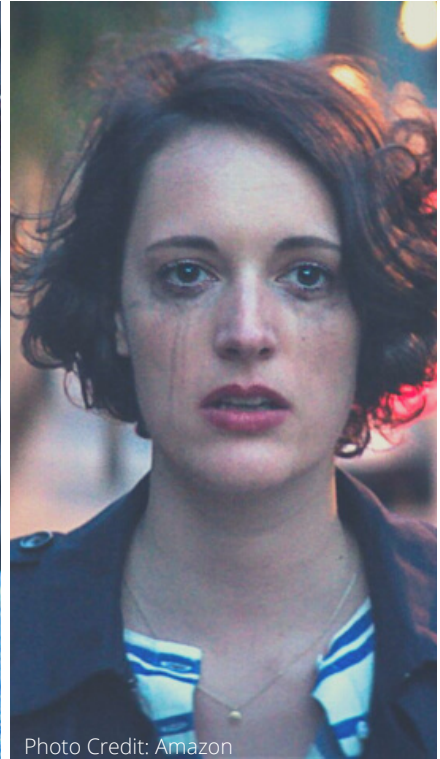


Photo Credit: Amazon



Alejandro G. Iñárritu

CARNEYARENA

(Virtually present, Physically invisible)

A groundbreaking and immersive
virtual reality experience



Photo Credit: Denver Center for the Performing Arts

Episode 1:
Poetry and
Action

Episode 2:
No, Thanks: The
Aimless Female
Antihero

Episode 3:
Framing Empathy:
Crossing Borders
Through Virtual
Reality

Episode 4:
The Portrait of
Britney Spears: On
Media Celebrity

A NEW ERA

CULTUREKLATSCH NOW PRODUCED BY ENGL 5190
STUDENTS

Season 3

Airing December 2021



CultureKlatsch Gets New Hosts and Producers

Three grad students in Michelle Comstock's ENGL 5190 Podcasting course (Katherine Allen, Joshua Voiles, and Natalie Waddington) are the new producers and hosts of the next episode of CultureKlatsch.

The idea for the latest episode, airing December 14, came from the English department's Ninth Street Park location on the Auraria Campus and the history of those people who were displaced from the park in the 1970s, also known as the Displaced Aurarians.

The episode's focus has since evolved to include more recent practices of displacement at Auraria and in the wider Denver area.

The students interviewed academics from CU Denver who have done research on gentrification in Denver and Auraria, as well as non-profit leaders who are assisting displaced and unhoused people in the wider Denver area. The English department's office manager and program coordinator, Francine Olivas-Zarate, and her sister, Benita Olivas, were also interviewed about their family history on Ninth Street Park. Both women now work where members of their family once lived, so they offer a unique perspective on personal and professional effects of displacement.

NEW WRITING COACH PROGRAM



This year, student assistants were hired as Core Composition Writing Coaches to help first-year students receive focused, individualized attention to their writing.

The Writing Coach program, developed by Miranda Egger and Rodney Herring, was created to support incoming students who were not able to receive the quality of feedback on their high school writing as they would have during an in-person school year. Core Composition instructors worked with the coaches to meet the increased need for closely evaluated writing assignments. Through informal in-class feedback, small-group breakout sessions, and workshops, the coaches helped composition students develop their ideas and understand the revision process.

Working eight hours per week, each coach attended weekly meetings of their assigned ENGL 1020 sections, met with comp instructors to prepare for upcoming classes, and participated in regular "coordinating meetings" with fellow coaches and Core Composition administrators.

Most of this cohort of coaches want to be teachers, and have benefited from the program by participating in a series of Professional Development and Education lessons designed by Miranda Egger. The lessons encouraged all coaches to read about a particular topic and engage in a discussion or activity about that topic (and how it applies to their coaching role). These topics were designed and organized in response to a typical ENGL 1020 assignment line-up and common concerns among the coaches (gathered at the initial orientation).

With the implementation of professional development lessons, the coaching program has not only served our ENGL 1020 students, but has also helped prepare the coaches for their own future teaching careers.

MEET THE WRITING COACHES

GET TO KNOW A FEW OF THE STUDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN ASSISTING
CORE COMPOSITION INSTRUCTORS THIS YEAR

"My name is Robin Aguirre. I am a senior Poetry major here at CU Denver. My long-term goal in life is to be a poetry or art teacher at a secondary school or college. My experience as a writing coach has helped me expand my preconceived ideas of what it means to be a writing tutor. Being in this program has helped me solidify my dreams of becoming a schoolteacher."

"Hello! My name is Lejla Muric, and I am an English Major studying literature and creative writing in my third year at CU Denver. I was born and raised in Lakewood, Colorado. In my free time, you can find me typing away on my laptop or reading a heartbreaking romance novel. I became a Writing Coach this semester, and it has been one of the most educational experiences of my life. There is something so special about watching a professor teach and seeing how a student will respond while acting as a middle man for that information to pass through. It is fascinating building academic and professional relationships with instructors and being a helpful resource for students directly in the classroom. The whole experience has been eye-opening, and I'm thankful to have been given this exciting opportunity."

Susie Nyazi has been going to CU Denver since 2015 both for her undergrad and currently for her grad degree. She is currently working towards earning her Masters in English Literature. Susie writes, "I think being a writing coach is great. My favorite part is getting to be in the classroom and working with students on thinking through their ideas. The students in the Core Comp classes are amazing and intelligent, and they definitely get me thinking of things I would not have thought about on my own. It's also a joy to have students come to me and tell me the tools they've learned from me to improve their writing as helped them so much. I feel so blessed to be working in such a fulfilling job."

"My name is Craig Vogtsberger. I have a Bachelors in Administration of Justice and Sociology with a minor in History from the University of Wyoming. I took that degree and served in the military and in federal law enforcement. I retired early, due to injuries sustained while on duty. I have returned to college to get my second Bachelors in English Literature with a minor in Educational Studies. Upon graduation I will be pursuing my MAT + Teaching Licensure. I have enjoyed being a writing coach this semester and helping students improve."



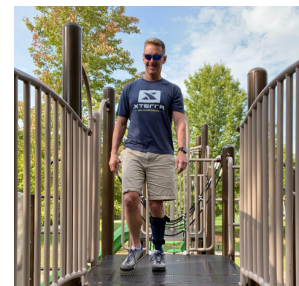
ROBIN AGUIRRE



LEJLA MURIC



SUSIE NYAZI



CRAIG VOGTSBERGER

THANK YOU

BIG THANKS TO EMILIO MARQUEZ

From the English Department

Emilio Marquez, a recently graduated EFILM student, filled in for the department's administrative assistant for six months while she was on parental leave. Emilio worked closely with the department chair and office manager to help the department run smoothly during the COVID-19 pandemic. He maintained advising files and schedules, updated the department's website, assisted with supply orders and mailings, and gathered important documents.

We'd like to thank Emilio for all of his hard work, and for being so flexible during a year of tough transitions. He had to learn quite a bit in a short period of time, and he did so with eagerness and spirit.

Thank you, Emilio!



Emilio Marquez

New Additions

TO THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

Assistant Professor Kari Campeau and her family--husband Nathan and daughter Addie--welcomed a new baby to their family. Jack Campeau was born on July 30, 2021.



Jack

Professor Jeff Franklin and Judy Lucas's daughter, Emma, brought a new daughter and granddaughter into the world on September 30, 2021. According to Professor Franklin, Aurora Adelaide Smith ("Rori") "started life as a lightweight but is well on the way to being a substantial citizen." All are healthy and happy!



Aurora



Aspen

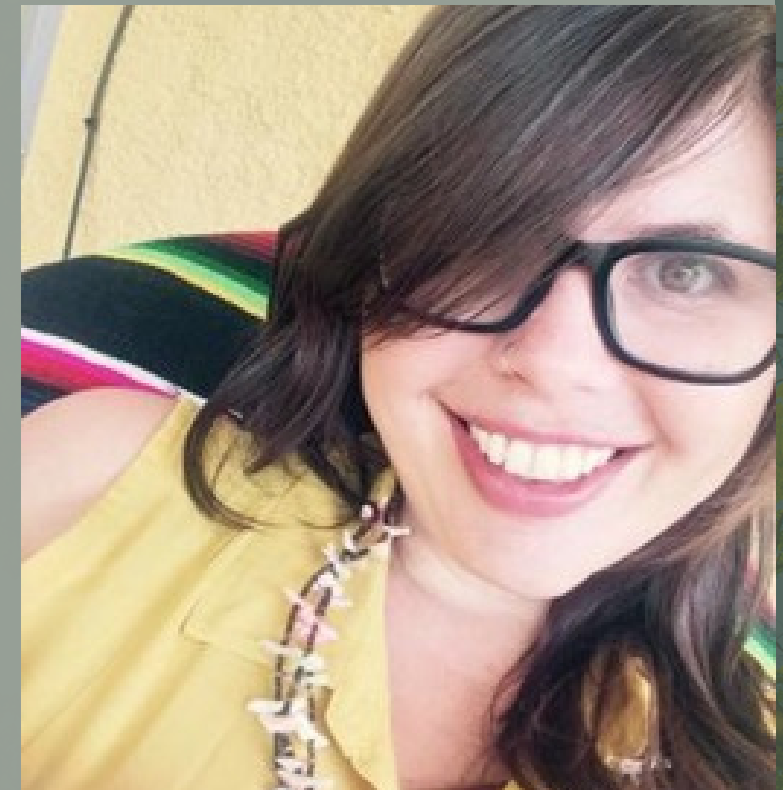
On April 13, 2021, Administrative Assistant Jenny Dunnington and her husband James met their daughter, Aspen Fiona. Aspen loves nothing more than the family's golden retriever, Dave, who has never missed a dropped Cheerio.

*Welcome,
little ones!*

IN MEMORY OF KATHERINE PIVODA

Student, Instructor, Colleague, and Friend

The English department will always remember Katherine (Katy) Pivoda. We first knew Katy as a student who completed her MA in 2015. Following completion of her degree, she spent two years as the Associate Program Chair for the English program at the International College in Beijing, working with English Language Learners whose writing she supported with enthusiasm and dedication. Upon return from Beijing, she taught nine sections of composition each year as a dedicated and highly successful writing instructor on the Denver campus. She was a respected colleague, an inspiring mentor, and a beloved friend who will be deeply missed.



[GoFundMe Supporting Katy's Children](#)

