



Jay Karp

October 7, 1946 - August 13, 2024

JAY KARP

CINCINNATI-Karp, Jay, age 77, passed away August 13, 2024, beloved husband of Beth Karp, devoted father of Jonas Karp, Justin (Clare) Karp and the late Katy Karp, loving grandfather of Elizabeth, Oliver, Sawyer and Simon Karp. Services Weil Kahn Funeral Home, 8350 Cornell Road, Friday, August 16, 1:00 P.M. Visitation begins at 12:00 Noon. Friends may call on the family following the interment at the residence of Justin and Clare Karp at 2872 Lengel Road in Anderson Township. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions to Children's Hospital of Cincinnati would be appreciated.

Cemetery Details

Rest Haven Memorial Park

10209 Plainfield Road
Cincinnati, OH 45241

Previous Events

Funeral Service

AUG **16**. 1:00 PM - 1:30 PM (ET)

Weil Kahn Funeral Home
8350 Cornell Road
Cincinnati, OH 45249

Tribute Wall

BB

“*“Hold this, and don't drop it, it's worth \$10,000” were the first words spoken by Jay to me as I was perusing his auction house and he handed me a Salvador Dali sculpture. I was a young man with no money and worked around the corner at an office and stumbled into Main Street out of curiosity. Over the years I was enthralled with the art on his walls and would stare at it every week, often looking forward to his Tuesday lunchtime auctions. “Don't buy this shit, it's over priced!” He'd yell at me as I kept raising my hand to purchase “crap”. He taught me about art, letting me hold in my hands valuables that should be on the walls of museums, but were instead on the peg boards of his shop on 4th. He was a kind soul who had a heart of gold and a tongue as sharp as a sword. He'd yell at celebrities telling Chef Jean-Robert to leave and not come back without food and telling Johnny Bench “You owe me money from 1965”. I often would take out of towners into his store to meet the man, and he would always leave them wanting more.*

Today I walked into the shop with 2 of those out of towners and yelled at Justin “Where's the old man”. Justin said “He passed away back in August.” I've had tears in my eyes ever since. I loved Jay Karp, and his sons as well.

Cincinnati has lost a jewel in her crown that as where will never be replaced, we're better for having him here.

God speed Jay, thanks for being a friend.

Ben Baker - October 21, 2024 at 02:04 PM

DH

“ *Underneath his tough exterior was a heart of pure gold. He was a brilliant appraiser with impeccable taste among innumerable genres. Above all he was as loyal and kind a friend as I could ever have asked for. His life was not easy. May he now enjoy his rest.*

Daniel J. Hoffheimer - August 20, 2024 at 06:27 PM

As years passed, we fell into a deep friendship which I can proudly claim developed into Jay Karp becoming one of my dearest and most trusted friends. Through both good times and those of incredible pain, loss and despair, we knew how to bolster each other, the way best friends do without question or effort.

Following the Covid Pandemic and the extraordinary change it brought the entire world, Main Auction was forced to reimagine itself and its business model, in order to compete and survive, as newly minted internet auction giants emerged to dilute the market. It was an enormous challenge that Jonus, Justin, Ralphie, Patrick and Junior have championed. But the cessation of the in-person, Live Auctions stole a part of Jay's spirit, that he was reluctantly forced to accept. The dynamic of weekly auctions and the crowds they brought was no more BUT Jay would still come down 6 days a week to hold court with buyers and friends. To fill this void, we got into a wonderful habit of having tea together most mornings or afternoons to discuss politics, sports and family. It was during these last several years that it became evident, via my own observation, how important Jay was to SO MANY OTHERS too. From the Mailman to auctions clients and friends, Jay would just light up when they would cross his threshold. You know, some people enjoy traveling the world, yet I observed the extraordinary joy that Jay received by having the WORLD travel to HIS door! Not only the art and antiquities that he auctioned but also his friends and clients who would return from their own travels and adventures to share their experiences with Jay. The epitome of this dynamic was on display each Saturday morning, as Jay would host a recurring circle of friends for a weekly social. Rick, Venessa, Dan, Patrick, Louie, Terry, Frank and so many others would convene for these sessions which undoubtedly would result in riotous laughter. It was the best of times, and I am grateful to have so many fond memories of these Saturday sessions.

Without question, however, Jay's greatest love and pride was his FAMILY. He was always so quick to brag about the enormous talent of his wife, Beth, and the extraordinary gardens she would design and manifest for her clients and their own homes. Likewise, his three children, Jonus, Katy and Justin and his grandchildren, Elizabeth, Oliver, Sawyer and Simon were HIS EVERYTHING, without reservation. This love and pride of his family was always present.

As I look at this gathering of humanity, here to celebrate the LIFE of Jay Karp, I am struck by the extraordinary impact this man had on so many lives in this City and World. God certainly broke the mold after SHE made Jay Karp, and I for one am grateful for the time we shared together on this Earth.

Jeffrey J. McClorey - August 20, 2024 at 11:17 AM

JM

“ I will be forever grateful for the 20 years of friendship I shared with Jay Karp. He was one of those unforgettable characters that one often discovers in novels or cinema but all of us in this room were blessed to experience his bigger-than-life personality in real time. He was a man of extraordinary wit who could effortlessly eviscerate a customer for over-bidding at an auction, yet leave everyone in the room roaring with laughter, including the recipient of his barbs. He was a man with a crusty veneer that shielded a heart of pure gold, who was generous to a fault. He was a true and trusted friend, a coach, a cheerleader and a nurturing example of integrity to all, especially his children and grandchildren, whom he adored with all his heart.

After purchasing the neighboring Bromwell's Fireplace business, on the same block as his multi-generational auction house, I quickly discovered what a unique treasure Jay, his family and his venerable business, Main Auction House, contributed to our neighborhood and City. The year was 2004, and as I embarked on my new venture of retooling the City's oldest business, I was full of confidence and optimism to be part of one of the greatest blocks of our City. Main Auction House and Bromwell's bookended a block with other icons, Jean Robert DeCavel with his Pigalls Restaurant and the last independent sporting goods retail powerhouse, Koch's Sporting Goods. They were heady times indeed and I couldn't have imagined a more robust neighborhood to reimagine my newly acquired business.

The first day I ventured into the Auction House to introduce myself, I was summoned up to the mezzanine by Jay's mother, Phyllis. Less than a minute into my introduction to Mrs. Karp, Jay emerged from the adjoining bathroom and bellowed, "who the F is this A-HOLE?!?". As uninitiated as I was to his, shall I say, "unique charm", I felt a rush of blood fill my face in a classic fight or flight reaction. Without missing a beat, Phyllis snapped back at Jay to behave himself and come meet their new neighbor! As he came closer to shake my hand, the twinkle in the eyes of this unexpected threat

diminished momentarily, until he aggressively questioned my intellect / judgement of buying an almost 200-year-old fireplace business. Without missing a beat, and much to Jay's surprise, Phyllis dismissed his boorish behavior and invited me to have a seat next to her and visit, knowing that this would certainly be the best way to shut him down. I later learned that her gracious, friendly and perhaps even protective behavior towards me was somewhat out of character, but for whatever reason, from that day on Phyllis was always pleased to see me, much to Jay's surprise. You see, for those of you who never met Mrs. Karp, she too had a gruff facade that was seldom pierced.

Following this initial meeting with The Family Karp, I became intrigued with not only their strong personalities and frequent bickering but also with their legacy business and the extraordinary treasures that were displayed and auctioned there every week. It didn't take long for me to develop the "Auction Bug", and until the Covid Pandemic when live sessions ceased, attending the Tuesday auction was an integral part of week. I loved the auctions that Jay called as much for the thrill of the bid as it was for the extraordinary entertainment and comedic banter that Jay provided as he wrangled bids. Jay was one of those rare birds who could somehow brutally insult someone and not end up with a bloodied nose. He was incapable of Political Correctness, and it didn't take long to realize that his Don Rickles style of insult was actually HIS language of LOVE. He relished nothing more than having guests quickly deflect and throw an equally off-color remark back at him, which I suspect is why we became so close, over the ensuing decades together, as we loved to verbally spar with each other until we'd cry with laughter....

1/2

MA

“ Jay will always be remembered by friends and his dear family first for his short lived career as a professional wrestler then as one of the most respected and knowledgeable antique auctioneers and art sellers in the United States . The Main Auction's big sales were for the record books and he took such pride in the quality and it's one of a kind items but he will most be remembered for his Tuesday sales . Bringing dealers , the general public and Cincinnati's who's who together buying and furnishing their homes and offices . Between his auction banter and his jabbing insults he held court and was the star of the show . His regulars adored his demeanor during each sale but every so offer a first timer would show up to bid on an item . He would yell out about their ability to buy and how bad their taste was , they would get mad and stand up yelling I'll never ever come back here again and storm out . The next Tuesday there they would be in a seat when you would ask " I thought you were never coming back here again" they responded " I don't want to miss the best show in town " and that was the deal . When people talk about a special person they will say " He was one of a kind , they broke the mold when they made him , there will never be another " and that was so true about Jay Louis Karp , a great friend and great family man .

Mark & Missy Fisk / Mainly Art - August 18, 2024 at 05:14 PM

RS

“ I am always hesitant to write about a friend that has passed away but in Jay's case I felt compelled to write about him. Our friendship began over 60 years ago before I entered the collectable field. Jay became a friend and mentor to me as we both began our life long careers. He was certainly a friendly competitor and if the items he sought were not coming his way he would magnanimously head them to me.

If you had met Jay even once you had a story. Gruff on the outside but sweet and kind inside. Generous almost to a fault as can be seen in the many comments left on these pages. He helped us begin and build our Rookwood Auctions and became one our extended family participating as our lead auctioneer for over 20 years.

When I look at the photo on this page I have to smile as I see the twinkle in his eye and know that Jay is still with us in one way or another. He will be missed by all that had the good fortune to know him.

Randy Sandler

Randy Sandler - August 17, 2024 at 09:11 AM

HT

“ I first met Jay 50 years ago. I walked into the auction house and look at a piece of furniture. Jay walked up and asked if I knew what it was. I said that I was not sure. He told me it was a Captain's Sea Chest. Then he asked if I had money and if I could afford it! I eventually ended up working specialty auction.

My family and I send our Condolences to Jay's family. We will miss him, he was a great friend to all of us.

Hans Tandrup

Hans Tandrup - August 16, 2024 at 04:46 PM

MM

“ I'll always remember the good times at Clinton Hills Swim Club when our kids had a swim meet back in the '80's. We'd be cooking hot dogs and flipping burgers at the concession, while Jay jokingly encouraged the other swim team members to eat lots of food before their swim! He also taught me how to bid at an auction, and made sure my bid on a beautiful mirror was the winning bid! Jay had a zest of life that was infectious!! My condolences to all his family, friends and the many lives he touched.

Mike McNamara - August 16, 2024 at 11:09 AM

OT

“ The few times that i was around Jay you felt like you knew him for life. Completely unfiltered....just like i like people to be. You really knew that Jay listened and cataloged everything you told him. I knew this because when i first met him he knew everything about me. The only way he could have known all these things about me is because he listened to my father talk about me. Unfiltered and quick wit is hard to come by these days. You never ever have to wonder what was on their mind. Jays quick wit and jokes will never be forgotten by me and the few stories i do have about him will be told to my children and my childrens children. I hope the family realizes just how blessed they are to have all the stories that this amazing man must have provided.

Owen Tackett

Owen Tackett - August 16, 2024 at 09:53 AM

SW

“ My heartfelt sympathy to J's family. For around 25 years I had the pleasure of working with J on many estates while I worked at a local bank. J's knowledge in his field was absolutely amazing. Whenever I doubted that, I would find myself proven wrong. I always felt like we had a great mutual respect for one another professionally and I am sure J had many relationships like that. But it was J's personality that is the most memorable. His demeanor spanned the spectrum depending on the situation. From professionally respectful to cracking jokes mostly at the right moment. Some of the most hilarious and entertaining times in my career were spent with J in someone's basement or attic sifting through the accumulations of various lifetimes. Main Auction Gallery was a special place and I am fortunate to have been able to witness it while his Dad, Mom and J (along with David and Ralph) made it that way. I wish Jonas and Justin success in keeping that tradition alive. Thanks for the memories J. -Steve Wilhelm

Steven Wilhelm - August 16, 2024 at 09:02 AM

MH

“ Jay and I spent great times together what a special human being i had the special privilege to have spent many hours with Jay. Jay has a special place in my heart and I miss him. Go in peace my brother you have touched those people who were lucky enough to have had the Jay Karp experience.As you would say sold!!!

Michael Hodesh - August 15, 2024 at 11:56 PM

SP

“ J. Louis Karp. My beloved friend. A beautiful, ornery, sweetheart of a man. I grew up in the Main Auction Galleries. In 1976 Tommy Casanova and Ron Carpenter of the Bengals took their rookie teammate down to 137 W 4th St. They introduced me to this auction house and to this auctioneer named J. Louis Karp. I never left. I'd sit up front with the dealers every Tuesday morning and listen to Jay and Phyllis banter back and forth. Whenever I raised my hand to place a bid on something, Jay would peer at me over the top of his glasses (with a mischievous smile) and say “What are you doin’ Scott? You don’t need that. What’s wrong with you?”. Over time I outfitted my entire house and wardrobe from the auction house. I kept coming back and I grew proud to call myself a “regular”. The Main Auction Galleries was my home away from home. I found love there. I love J. Louis Karp. He will live forever in my heart. All my love and condolences to his wonderful family.

Scott Perry - August 15, 2024 at 11:45 PM

SG

“ I remember him so wellmy daughter Chloe swam with his children ...at swim meets he was the best parent ever...maning the grill and it was such a great experience...lots of fun swim parties too ...thanks Jay for your smile and laughter...Honoring your Journey....condolences to all you will be missed...Sally (Chloe’s mom)

sally gehlert - August 15, 2024 at 09:26 PM

MG

Jay and I grew up together on Glenwood Avenue in Avondale south Avondale Elementary school Rest easy, my friend

Michael Gerson - August 16, 2024 at 10:19 AM

DD

“ Jonas and I met through St. Mary School. I soon grew to know the Karp family. I would soon see how generous the Karp family was. I will never forget our 8th grade year. We were getting confirmed in faith one evening. Jonas was there, of course, to support his fellow friends and classmates. After the mass and service, Mr. Karp took our entire class to Zinos in Hyde Park and treated all 50 of us to dinner that night. Jonas of course was not being confirmed, but that didn't stop Mr. And Mrs. Karp and family from showing all of us how much they cared about us. The first of many encounters that I learned just how special, kind and thoughtful the Karp family are. Mr. Karp was a class act!!! Hugs and prayers to you all.

Dana Van Dyke - August 15, 2024 at 06:46 PM

JM

“ I am sorry to hear this. I enjoyed talking to Jay at Glohio and Golden Glow events. A great guy!

Joe Meyers - August 15, 2024 at 12:59 PM

GB

My condolences to those who knew and loved Jay. I started going to his auctions in 1984. And 10 o'clock every Tuesday was something to look forward to. In those earlier times, Jay's mother was present, sitting at her desk on the balcony towards the back of the auction. We always knew that when Jay let loose one of his "unfiltered" remarks we would hear a loud one-word admonition from his mother: Jay!!
Gary Blakeman

Gary Blakeman - August 15, 2024 at 02:45 PM

JT

“*Condolences to Jonas and family. Jay was truly a unique character. When I would visit the auction house in advance of an up coming auction, I always hoped he would be in so we could engage in one of his "unfiltered" chats...guaranteed entertainment! He will be missed.*

John Tepe

John Tepe - August 15, 2024 at 11:34 AM

BB

“ I first met Jay shortly after my father had passed away. I was, at the time, working for his son, Justin, in the landscape business. That week, for whatever reason, Justin asked me if I wouldn't mind working down at the auction for the week to help get ready for a rather large antique auction that was taking place that upcoming weekend. The first couple days or so, Jay and I had limited conversation due to his work up in the office and my needed help moving 2,000 pound armoires out of basement and rather tricky areas throughout the building. (SMH). My 3rd day working down at the auction I ended up needing a ride home. Jay volunteered. On the way home Jay started inquiring about my father's passing and how I was holding up. He showed me so much empathy. He was even able to make me laugh and feel at ease. When we pulled up to the house and I was about to get out Jay stopped me, looked me in my eyes and said you are the man of your family now. You need to step up and take care of your mother. Then he proceeded to hand me \$3,500 in cash to give to my mom to help with whatever was needed. I tried to deny the offer but he insisted over and over. He did, however, make me promise that I would say a word to Justin or Jonas. This is the first time I ever spoke of it. A man who barely knew me cared enough to give me empathy and to help my mother and I in a time a need. He didn't have to do any of that. He just saw a young man in need of some help and didn't think twice. Jay was a amazing man and will forever be missed.

Bill 'Phil' Back - August 15, 2024 at 06:25 AM

SH

“ Beth, Jonas & Justin,
There are no words that I can express to ease your pain. So please accept, “I am sorry.”
If you are lucky in your lifetime you will meet a “Jay Karp.” There is no way to describe Jay. Black or White , no Gray. An answer to your question or solution to your problem. Good times or bad you could count on Jay.
Rest in peace Jay and thanks for sharing.

Stuart Hodesh

Stuart Hodesh - August 14, 2024 at 10:30 PM