

Individual Tributes to Wayne Goldstein

From David Rotenstein:

Every day was hearing day for Wayne, so it seemed. I first met him when I was appointed to the HPC in 2004 and I grew to admire his tenacity, energy, and devotion to making Montgomery County a better place to live. After hearing of his death I tried to find an appropriate way to describe Wayne to myself because he really didn't fit in any pigeonhole I could easily identify. While speaking with people at his visitation, I remembered my 1991 interview with blues musician Johnny Shines and how Johnny described fellow musician and 1930s traveling companion Robert Johnson:

Let me just say Robert was one of the first hippies. Because he didn't give a God dang about nothing. Every day was Sunday with him. Anything you wanted to do, he was for, if it pertained to his music. And he was a born musician. He was not a learned musician, he was a born musician.

The way I remember Wayne, every day was hearing day for him and from what I saw, he was a not a learned activist, he was a born activist.

From Caren Madsen:

Friends at MPI,

I am still in shock over losing our dear friend. There is so much anyone could say about Wayne Goldstein that embodies his spirit and the measure of his life. I have never seen anyone so selfless and tireless and intent on finding the truth, exposing hypocrisy and doing the right thing. His death leaves a gaping hole in the soul of this community.

We have to at least seek a way to fill the void. I will make a personal commitment to work against the Knapp amendment and will hope to work more with MPI in the future. I will do this in Wayne's honor and memory. I do not have Wayne's talent for unsurfacing layers and layers of detail through research, and because of family and work commitments am unable to spend the time Wayne spent on advocacy. But I hope others will join me in vigilance and help me keep an eye on the county government as Wayne did. Join me in calling them on the carpet when they propose things that are wrong-headed — like the Knapp amendment. And as Wayne would (and did at times), join me in praising our county leadership when they are on the right path.

Our first step in this process is to get letters on the county record before May 22nd to ask for an end to the Knapp amendment. I am asking Mr. Knapp to withdraw it altogether. Wayne expressed before his death that there should be no change to current law by way of this amendment. Let's support that view.

Wayne was more than an advocate for me. He was a good friend who shared my irreverent sense of humor. I loved Wayne and will miss him more than I can express in words.

Sadly,
Caren Madsen
Silver Spring

From Alan Bowser:

Wayne Goldstein, Civic Activist – A Tribute

Wayne Goldstein, a widely respected leader of the Montgomery County civic, environmental and historic preservation communities, is being mourned by his family and many friends and professional colleagues through the Washington metropolitan area following his unexpected death on April 27, 2009.

Goldstein, a resident of Kensington, served as President of the Montgomery County Civic Federation from 2006 to 2008 and was awarded the organization's Star Cup award for outstanding community service. He also served as President of the Kensington Heights Civic Association and was the President of Montgomery Preservation, Inc. at the time of his death.

Goldstein was a familiar figure in community meetings and public hearings throughout the County, providing hours of detailed testimony before the Montgomery County Council, the Planning Board, and Board of Special Appeals. Well known for wearing his distinctive hats, a pony tail and a kind smile, he regularly offered insightful and well-argued statements in support of individuals and communities who relied on his voluminous research on public policy issues.

Wayne Michael Goldstein was born in Montgomery County in 1952. He graduated from Bethesda Chevy Chase High School and Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts. An accomplished gardener and owner of a landscaping business, he had a passion for the environment and local history that became the foundation for a distinguished record of community service in the County.

As President of the Civic Federation, he worked hard to increase the participation of neighborhood and homeowner associations in the County's public life, effectively weighing in on a broad range of contentious planning and development issues. Caren Madsen, who worked with Goldstein for the past five years in her role as the chair of the MCCF Environment Committee, met him originally over a controversial land use issue in her Silver Spring neighborhood. Over time, their relationship morphed into a partnership to encourage the County to revise its forest and tree laws.

“Wayne was so much more than an activist,” said Madsen. “He was a prolific researcher who was meticulous and careful to stick to the facts of any issue. More than that, he was a true friend. Wayne did what he did for two reasons — he enjoyed helping people and he was passionate about having good government that represented the best interests of citizens.”

As President of Montgomery Preservation, Inc., Wayne was a key player in advocating for the preservation of historic structures and sites in the County, including the Silver Spring National Guard Armory, the Jessup Blair Park, the Silver Spring B&O Railway Station, the Watson House, Falkland Apartments, and the Comsat buildings, designed by internationally known architect, Cesar Pelli. Wayne’s energy, dedication and advocacy were clearly evident as he successfully brought Pelli to Montgomery County to participate in a Goldstein-led charette on the preservation of the Comsat buildings.

“Wayne Goldstein was quite a character,” said Elizabeth Merritt, Deputy General Counsel for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. “People would see that hat of his across the room at a public meeting, and they would know that historic preservation interests would be eloquently represented. He was a relentless and passionate advocate for preservation, and there are many places in Montgomery County that would have been lost if it weren’t for his tireless efforts.”

As a member of the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board’s Neighborhoods Committee, Goldstein frequently offered his insightful analysis of housing, transportation, and planning issues in Silver Spring. During my tenure as Chair of the Neighborhoods Committee, Wayne was a very active participant in our discussions of urban development, environmental protection, and affordable housing. Aware of his busy County-wide schedule of meetings, we appreciated that he would join our committee meetings on a regular basis. With his support and guidance, we were able to significantly raise the level of our civic discussion of community issues to a very sophisticated and productive level.

Following his death, there has been a wonderful outpouring of community expressions of loss, remembrance and affection for an extraordinarily talented individual who labored tirelessly for the benefit of all Montgomery County. Wayne Goldstein was funny, he was smart, he was courageous, he was cool. His loss is immeasurable, his work irreplaceable, he was our friend, and we will miss him very much.

Alan S. Bowser

The writer is a member of the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board

What Friends Are Saying...

“Wayne was someone who really lived out what it means to be fully dedicated to what we love most and his fierce love for the history of our neighborhoods was a gift to all of us.” *Kathy Staudt*

“I’m new to the neighborhood but his passion and enthusiasm was allied to a different drum from all of us that he alone heard. Together it made quite a tenacious combination! His care and attention to the meaning and importance of history of the landscape, the beauty of built space, the way the past interacts with the future, and the living environment of plants and trees, will seriously be missed in our group” *Mark Farr, Wilbur House*

“Wayne’s passing is a great loss to all of us. I came to know him a bit over the last several years as we struggled to save the memorable House and its setting. Wayne’s passion and dedication to preservation were unique. He would show up at meeting after meeting in our neighborhood as our long and drawn-out efforts continued despite rejection. And Wayne always had another idea or plan or tactic to suggest. So it is this fierce love of what he did that I will always remember, and, of course, the Cheshire Cat smile. Sadly, Wayne still had so much more to give. But those who knew him and worked with him will treasure his legacy.” *Jim Cassell*

“Wayne was the model of a true and devoted activist. Our neighborhood and in fact the entire County is poorer as a result of his passing.” *Ted Power*

From John Doherty:

Dear Judy,

The list of Montgomery County historic places preserved in part by the efforts of Wayne Goldstein (already listed above by Alan Bowser and others) is impressive and astonishing by any measure. For one man to be associated with such a list is a mark of the true soul of the man, which was as large as the oak trees he fought so diligently to save.

The fact that Wayne did so out of the pure goodness of his heart, and his love for the community as his only reward, is even more astounding. We all give lip service to saving our natural environment and the historic resources of our community—Wayne walked the walk and lived the life. He was the Johnny Appleseed of Montgomery County, the Horacio at the Gate of Kensington, the Betsy Ross of his town. People like Wayne come along only once in a civic generation, and the places he saved will long stand (literally) as memorials to his life. Who can ever forget the sight of Wayne rushing to the rescue of an historic building or majestic tree, his pigtail flying and his hat flopping, crying “this shall not be allowed to vanish from our living world!”

Please add to the list of accomplishments of Wayne Goldstein: The saving of the historic Warner Circle Manor and Legacy Open Space Park in the heart of Kensington. Wayne stood with us in full regalia, eloquent as always, as we petitioned the Parks and Planning Commission to spare that wonderful 110-year-old building, carriage house and grove of hardwood trees planted by Brainard Warner as the emblem of our town. And it was saved!

What more can you say to honor the faithful fireman of our endangered past, except:
“Thank you Wayne, for being there when it counted!”

From your grateful neighbors,

John Doherty, Historic Preservation Chair,
Kensington Historical Society
Chair, Citizens United to Save the Circle

From Nancy Urban:

Wayne was absolutely one of a kind. I always appreciated and admired the way he could disagree without being disagreeable—always with that big, wide, beautiful smile on his face.

His life is an inspiration and example to all of us.