

Remembering David Kinsey, Peter Kitchell

11/5/99



BY
MICHAEL GREENEBAUM

SUNDAY, Oct. 10 was a day for thinking on first things. The gentle rain that fell on the garden being dedicated to the memory of David Kinsey at the Jones Library in the early afternoon continued to nourish Peter Kitchell's garden two hours later during his memorial service. For some, the rain may have symbolized tears, as we contemplate what is missing in our lives with the loss of David and Peter. For others, though, the rain reminded us of the cyclical nature of life and death; for gardeners, rain is life, and David and Peter were both gardeners.

The metaphor is so elemental that it hardly needs translating, but as I think of these two men I want to think about gardens more concretely. I am not a gardener; I have neither the visual imagination nor the love of soil that must

inspire real gardeners. At the Kinsey dedication, Ellen Goodwin remarked that gardening is the slowest of the performing arts.

I love the statement, but realize that I lack the patience. Maybe I lack a certain decisiveness that gardeners must practice. I take months to decide to pull a weed. My gardening friends are ruthless not only with weeds but with thriving plants. Beautiful gardens require nipping blooms in the bud. Gardening is not for sissies.

Beautiful gardens depend upon what is not there, the empty spaces that offer themselves to the gardener's imagination. Gardeners look at a plot of ground that is scruffy and dull and see what it might become; this, of course, is what teachers and architects do as well. This kind of imagination is so intimately wrapped up with knowledge and

experience, with judgment and intuition that those who exercise it hardly know they are doing so.

I have been thinking a lot about imagination recently, and somehow David and Peter seem emblems of this precious and undervalued intellectual gift. Both have been properly eulogized for their rare personal qualities and strong humane values, but I am grateful that their work was so animated by imagination and vision. David Kinsey looked at individuals and villages, saw vividly what they might become while preserving what is central and valuable in what they already were.

Change unfolds best in the midst of the familiar and the secure. Peter Kitchell's architecture was similarly impelled by the capacity to envision what might be and simultaneously honoring and valuing tradition and the centrality of enduring values. Villages, as much as stones or even shapes, informed his work.

The extended saga of the parking garage is a romantic (and to some, ironic, to others, infuriating) testament to Peter's unwavering sense of a village center. From the point of view of his adversaries, Peter may have wavered all

over the place, but his imagination was steadfast and visionary. It was centered on the idea of the center. I have come to feel that David's and Peter's kind of vision is primarily aesthetic, that they sought "good fit" as a fundamental value. I admire the clarity of imagination tempered by discipline that "good fit" exemplifies.

"Center" and "clarity," oh my. It is easy for an essay such as this to cross the boundary from sentiment to sentimentality. Thinking about David and Peter is a sad pleasure. That we admire them is, perhaps, one of their great gifts to us, since we live in a world not overburdened with exemplars. But, of course, that really won't do; David and Peter had no interest in being admired or being examples; there was always too much work to do.

So that is why we have the memorial garden and stone wall, creations of beauty and strength and tough fragility. It is safe and ennobling and inspiring to admire them, and to feel, in their presence, the opportunity and the desire to be our best selves.

Michael Greenebaum, who is retired, was principal of Mark's Meadow School for 20 years.

She would have been alive! When utopia is achieved, let me v. Then, a restraining order be meaningful; then, a restraining order won't be neces-

en there, and survived.
Judith Cary-Glover
Amherst

ipari handled
dy fans well

ie Bulletin:
as appalled to read about the

behavior of some fans during the recent Amherst homecoming game with South Hadley. Even more disturbing was the reaction of the Amherst coaches and league officials who did nothing to stop the abuses.

I will always remember a UMass basketball game at the Mullins Center when a student threw an ice cube on the court during a heated moment. Coach John Calipari immediately stopped the game and went to the scorer's table. He picked up the microphone and announced to the fans that the game would not continue and would be forfeited if such

