

KEVIN GARVEY AWARD



Kevin Garvey was nicknamed “heart,” given after a family vacation because of his kindhearted nature. His mother Claudia said, “in the eighteen months that Kevin lived with his illness, that finally conquered even his stout heart, he served constantly as a model and an example for all of us.” Reflecting on the past 50 years, much has changed on campus, but the heart of our mission has always remained. As brother Hugh said, “Kevin was only with us here on Earth for 13 short years, but he has left a good and kind and everlasting footprint on our world. May Kevin Guest House continue to serve those, like Kevin, at their most needed time, with a place of comfort, love, and life. As sister Mary said, Kevin Guest House “shines through all of you who open his doors to all those in need”.

As the inspiration for the Kevin Guest House, he was known of his open heart and loving spirit. In that tradition, the Kevin Garvey Award is given to a unique individual or organization that opens their heart to our home, showing their support and devotion to our guests and to the mission of Kevin Guest House. Kevin’s siblings and family are asked to consider some of the most influential supporters of the house in recent history to honor with such an award. This year, they couldn’t think of any one more deserving to represent their brother than to honor the Durawa family, the late Kevin Durawa, his loving wife Karen, children Mari & Michael and immediate family for their unwavering support over the last two decades.

Tribute to Kevin Durawa

“I’m Exceptional! Just Hanging Out Acting Cool”

The Impact of President Emeritus Kevin Durawa keeps the house going...

If you had the privilege to meet Kevin Durawa, you couldn’t help but react to his positivity. If he didn’t convince you to donate within a few minutes, he would find a way the next day. The kind of person who brought all walks of life to our campus because you couldn’t help but have fun with Kevin.



Over nearly two decades, the Durawa family found unique ways to involve their circle of friends. Kevin was nominated as President Emeritus well before his diagnosis of ALS in 2020, an honor presented to him last year before he sadly passed in November 2021. Along with Dean Drew & Neil Farmelo, often attributed with saving the house from closing in the 90s, Kevin can be attributed as one of the single most important influences in our organization’s history.

Kevin’s served 11 years on the Board of Directors, with 6 as President. The capstone event in Kevin’s time with KGH was his leadership of the House’s first capital campaign during his time as President. It took a strong leader like Kevin to get constituents from all over the community to pull together to get us over the finish line of this transformational expansion. Kevin was the perfect person for this demanding job and the results laid a solid foundation for KGH to build upon in the decades to come. Even after he left the Board, and as he fought through his illness, he continued to work on moving the house forward by serving on our Buildings and Grounds, and Special Initiatives committees.



Countless community leaders have worked alongside him to raise funds for the house. Kevin founded our Blues & Brews event, competed for most tickets sold with Al Ryer at Oktoberfest, raised the most online during our Fallfest Family Fun Run, chaired our Celebrity Golf Tournament, convinced vendors to donate services ranging from IT Support to building water trenches on, he always found a way to connect everyone to KGH. The most significant connection during his career at RealtyUSA was the years of support from Merle Whitehead's family and employees, which continues today at Howard Hanna. As a past Kevin Garvey Award winner, there isn't one aspect of the house Kevin didn't have an influence on, but he and Karen never wanted recognition, always raising their hand when no one else could.

President, Jamie Scotland said "For many of us at KGH, Kevin was our leader, mentor, advocate, and cheerleader. I was privileged to call him my friend. KGH will miss the man who truly represents the heart & soul of Kevin Guest House."

The impact of the Durawa family & extending friendships

Even during his illness, Kevin and Karen considered his legacy to the house and his family, including kids Mari and Michael, how they would continue to support our guests. Over the years, while Kevin stood at the podium, Karen and immediate family often were the quiet influence that brought people back each year. All that he accomplished couldn't have been possible without them. Collectively, we can proudly say that with the help of Kevin & Karen's network, that our doors remained open during some of the most financial trying periods for KGH. All the "FUN"draisers they helped to organize and most especially, realizing the dream of over 20 years of expanding for the first time to serve double the number of guests. If you look around the room at our events, their influence is ever present, and we are certain many of you would raise your hand that you were first introduced in some way to our mission from their network of family.

While she doesn't feel worthy, Karen Durawa stood by her husband and impacted our successes more than she would ever recognize. While she prefers to stay out of the limelight, doing good deeds for our guests in the background, often the one out bidding you in our auctions, Karen continues to support the house and encourages her children Michael and Mari to continue to volunteer. Even A group of Checkers Club runners organized a run in Kevin's memory, where the family showed up in droves on a chilly December to show support. Yet most significantly, Kevin and Karen are the first to leave a legacy gift to our guests in Kevin's memory, an important gift to both to always have their family connected to the house.

The Garvey siblings have selected the Durawa family as our Kevin Garvey Awardee this year and will the entryway dedicated to the Durawa family that will welcome every guest to our Main House. We thank you for joining us in celebrating the many ways this incredible family has impacted our guests.

For now, as he would want it, let's raise a toast to Kevin & Karen and their extended family.