

We have gathered here to give tribute to Dr. John Karajanis, educator, mentor and friend.

I first met Dr. K, when I enrolled in his physics class at West Haven High School. **He was truly an inspirational and gifted teacher.** He had an ability that allowed his students to enjoy looking into the conceptual and mathematical depths of understanding a subject, that was suppose to be hard. My classmates and I loved every minute that we spent in his **sanctuary of learning.**

I remember a small sign on the right side of Dr.Karajanis' board that read **'The aim of a great teacher is to inspire leaders, not followers. The mark of a great teacher is for his students to surpass him.'**

Dr. K, you have inspired countless leaders, but I fear that none of us have surpassed you. I hope that you are not too disappointed.

Years after I graduated from West Haven High, I was privileged to teach physics in that very same classroom. One of my students wrote in his yearbook that his goal was to be half the man that his father was. **Well Chief John Karajanis Jr., you can check that goal off your list.**

Of his many accomplishments, Dr. K. is most proud of his **family.** His wife Dorthy, of 57 years. Their son Tony. Their daughter Debbie and son-in-law Paul Tortora. Along with their children Paul, Jonathon and Matthew. The oldest son John Karajanis Jr. and his wife Jill, along with their children Carly, Triston and Melina.

If you have spent time with Dr. K, you may have noticed that no other place exists while you are in his company. Hours are transformed to minutes. It seems that somehow, the **entire space-time continuum has been distorted.**

It seems that **Don Quixote**, The 'mad knight', who would sally forth to right all wrongs. To reach the unreachable stars and to dream the impossible dream, has some special powers.

How is it possible that, Janni, as his mother Catherine called the former 8 year old shoeshine boy, has grown to be a man that shines so brightly? **Stardust.**

It is well know that the elements that we are made of, were born in stars. During a process known as nuclear fusion, the elements up to iron are created. As some stars age, they explode in a super nova, creating elements that are heavier than iron. Eventually, gravity pulled the remnants together, creating a new star, our sun, the planets and us. **You can say that we are literally made of stardust.**

What is not so well known, is that a few individuals receive extra stardust that allows them to touch others in special ways. They become a beacon for others.

One expression of Newton's 3<sup>rd</sup> law of motion states that you can't touch, without being touched. So you see, every time Dr. K. guided us with his light, we touched him back. As

he transferred stardust to us, we transferred it back to him, and he would shine even brighter.

Now I am going to ask you two questions. Just in case any of you have test anxiety, I am going to give you the correct answer. The answer is I have. Let's practice. What is the correct answer? 'I have'.

Ok, star wands or other light source at the ready.

How many of you have been guided by his light?

How many of you have guided others?

**Star wands** on.

Dr. Karajanis, thank you for the light.