

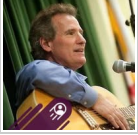


Stephen Robert Prince

September 13, 1955 - December 30, 2020

Stephen Robert Prince, age 65, of Blacksburg died, Wednesday, December 30, 2020. He is preceded in death by his mother, Jean Lummis Prince. He is survived by his father, Robert Emmett Prince, of Sykesville, MD., sister and brother-in-law, Cynthia Jean Prince Kazyak and John Christopher Kazyak, Sr., of Manila, AR., nieces and nephews, William Joseph Kazyak, John Christopher Kazyak, Jr., Marie Bernadette Kazyak, all of Manila, AR., girlfriend, Susan Mullins Sanders, of Blacksburg. Services will be held privately. Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

Tribute Wall



“ I was introduced to Steve shortly after I graduated college in 1977 and one of my film teachers at the University of Maryland said I should be his friend because he owned a copy of one of my favorite films: Sam Peckinpah’s “Ride the High Country.” This was years before blu-rays, dvds and videos, so having a copy of a favorite movie was one of the few ways to watch a film back then. Of course, anyone who shared a love of that film, would share a love of other Peckinpah films—and of Akira Kurosowa—and there were many nights when my wife and I would be invited to Steve’s Maryland apartment to have dinner and watch a favorite film. Those dinners were always accompanied by a bottle of wine and more than once I’d have to be elbowed awake halfway through the film. I kept in touch with Steve when he was getting an advanced degree in Philadelphia and visited him there; and would call from time to time once he settled in Virginia, usually after listening to one of his thoughtful commentaries on film or reading about one of his many books. I am delighted to have been gifted two of those books, which he signed. In fact, his inscription on “The Warrior’s Camera: The Cinema of Akira Kurosawa” still makes me smile: “To Barry—gunfighter, songwriter, samurai, poet.” As the years went by, we spoke with less frequency and it often took a horrific event like the shootings at Virginia Tech and my need to know he was okay, to prompt a call. Other times it was just to talk about a film I had seen and liked and to see what he thought about it; or just to talk about my own experiences having one of my old songs for kids used to open the film “Juno.” I always figured we’d meet again for dinner if I ventured down to Blacksburg.

I only today learned of his death and the discovery was fitting: I was reading a film review of the blu ray release of John Sturges “Last Train to Gun Hill” that singled out Stephen’s insightful commentary. That led me to find out more about this release and when I read how the commentary was recorded shortly before his death, my heart sunk. That brought me to this page. I don’t know if his family and friends are still reading these comments, a year after his untimely death, but if they are, please know that though we were not

in touch regularly, I always thought of him as a friend and have wonderful memories of those times.

Barry Louis Polisar, January 22, 2022

Barrylou@Barrylou.com

Barry Polisar - January 22, 2022 at 04:17 PM

LN

“ *I met Mr Prince through his amazing books about cinema. I'm finishing my master thesis and professor Prince was one of my biggest inspirations to write my work paper. He will always be in our hearts. My condolences for his family and loved ones. Leidy M. Nova*

Leidy M. Nova - March 06, 2021 at 04:04 PM

EP

“ *I've been listening to Mr Prince's thoughtful and fascinating commentary tracks and am saddened to hear of his passing. I want to wish his family and loved ones my condolences. I will continue to dive into his work and take lesson of his thoughtful devotion to the art of cinema.*

Eric Power - February 17, 2021 at 03:42 PM

PV

“ I'm listening to Stephen Prince's wonderful commentary tracks for Akira Kurosawa's films. I just watched *High and Low*, *Ikiru*, and *Yojimbo*, with Stephen's bright, humane and perceptive comments guiding my views. They are incredibly enriching.

I looked up information about Mr. Price, only to find this page. I am so sorry for this loss, and I count myself lucky that I am able to listen to Stephen's accompaniment to these films.

I can tell he was a wonderful and thoughtful man.

Pavan Vangipuram - February 15, 2021 at 09:42 PM

PF

“ I knew Steve because he lived in our neighborhood. He was outwardly quiet but he had some very enthusiastic interests! He loved his cigars and we could smell the smoke wafting about--and it was his calling card because then we would call out: "Hey Steve" and commence with a lovely discussion about whatever. He really was a nice man. He loved his motor cycles and built a motorcycle garage! And of course film. We had the pleasure of going into his house where he had a mini theater actually incorporated with awesome chairs and sound system--not to mention fine taste in wines! It was a treat to watch a film with Steve! He adored his beautiful and enormous dogs. For many years he walked his dogs with an elderly women (now since passed) and they become very good and yet unlikely friends. He really was a very kind and gentle spirit. We will miss him in our lives and in our neighborhood. Our sincere condolences to Susan and his family.

Pam Forsyth - February 01, 2021 at 05:51 PM

KS

“ I just knew Steve when we would meet to smoke a cigar and have a drink at Cigar Club. I enjoyed his company immensely. While we didn't meet often, I must say that he was one of the nicest guys I had ever met. I knew he taught film at VT, but I didn't know the level of his expertise or how influential he was on so many people's lives until I have read some of the comments on this wall. He is missed.

Kevin Sullivan - January 29, 2021 at 12:47 PM

DN

“ I had the pleasure of working with Steve a few times and knew him to be a steady and shrewd colleague and a lovely man. He was a prolific and highly respected figure in Film Studies and no doubt he had many more contributions to make. My condolences to Steve's family.

Diane Negra - January 27, 2021 at 01:58 PM

CT

“ I've had the honor and pleasure to work with Stephen on a number of projects at the Criterion Collection, and whenever I would bring him to record an "audio commentary" -- a track which would accompany a film as it played for the viewer -- his scholarship, attention to detail, and meticulous preparation all came through. His observations and thoughts or tidbits of historical detail would illuminate on-screen material beautifully, and I always felt I learned something new while recording him. I'm sure our viewers felt the same way. It was always a pleasure to see him, and I'm saddened that I won't have that opportunity again, but I know his work will live on.

Curtis Tsui - January 27, 2021 at 10:48 AM

DS

“ Steve was an excellent scholar, a great guy, and a fine friend, He will be truly and deeply missed.

David Sterritt

David Sterritt - January 23, 2021 at 10:49 PM

EL

“ I had an intro to cinema class with Mr. Prince last semester. I really enjoyed his class and his passion showed so much in what he did. I had a wonderful conversation once during office hours with him, he was so kind and sincere. I a so thankful to have gotten to meet him and learn from him. My most sincere condolences to his family.

Ella - January 20, 2021 at 05:26 PM

“ I met Stephen Prince in 2003 as an undergraduate in Intro to Film. Three years and several film courses later, I started my M.A. in Communication and became the TA for Prince. He even let me cover his lecture for a few weeks while he attended a conference in Denmark.

I could always count on Prince to be impeccably prepared, to be ardently engaged with the course material and to speak with acumen, eloquence, and conviction. It's a comfort to know his voice is still accessible through many brilliant audio commentaries. I loved our 10 minute walks, twice a week, from Hancock to Shanks Hall. One day I asked about a dedication from one of his books. "Who's Kate?" "She's a Great Dane" he replied.

Prince and I were also from the same place. He went to high school where my grandfather was a history teacher, my grandma the librarian, and my mom and aunties teens alongside him. At my grandparents one Christmas, I leafed through old yearbooks and found his senior photo and intent to be a film critic. Surely you exceeded your own expectations Prince, becoming one of the most renowned film scholars in the world!

We also experienced horrific times together- the shootings of April 16, 2007- but strangely, this heinous act and aftermath led to a new level of tenderness between us.

I then moved to Baltimore and taught a few film courses of my own. But city life wasn't for me, and in 2013 I applied for a position at the new VT arts center. I really wanted the job and asked Prince to send a note on my behalf to the search chair. It turns out the recipient- my current supervisor- was also a former Prince student! Needless to say, I got the job.

I happily settled back into Blacksburg, joined Prince for dinner at his home, and invited him to be my guest at the Moss Arts Center. For the last several years, we have judged the Progeny Film Fest

together.

It's the start of a new term, a time when I usually bop over to Henderson to visit my friend and mentor. I wish we had more time together, but I will treasure what we shared for the rest of my days.

Kacy McAllister - January 18, 2021 at 04:04 PM

DP

“ *I could not be more indebted to Steve for his kindness in welcoming me, a perfect stranger, into his class for the mere price of an occasional coffee which he only reluctantly accepted. On the occasions we broke bread, Steve was a well of knowledge and a generous raconteur. I owed him a review of his commentaries on Rio Grande and High Noon and can think of no tribute greater than to say here, as I would have said to him, that they were enlightening, amusing, and captured as much of the spirit of the films as of their commentator. What a spirit his is. I send you my deepest condolences. To be as supremely gracious and giving an educator as Steve is my highest aspiration. I will carry his memory with me always.*

Dustin Prisley - January 16, 2021 at 02:24 AM

JT

“ *Dr. Stephen R Prince is my cousin. My Dad and his Mom are brother and sister. All my life I have admired, appreciated, and respected Steve's humility, intelligence, and example. Well, when he spoke, all listened. My brothers, Max and David, and I are honored to be in Steve's family. What a legacy he leaves. Steve is truly the best of the best.*

Jennifer Travis - January 15, 2021 at 12:57 PM

BW

“ Steve, my old colleague and friend, my thoughts go back to years ago when we were young and eager faculty, each building a career and a department. Your path was so stellar and internationally respected, but I remember those Friday evenings when several of us would gather at your house to watch some film, always with a Great Dane nearby, and you’d teach us to see it in a new way. More than once, I’d pester you with film questions and proposals, including that I guest lecture on the significance of Godzilla in Japanese cinema. You humored me/us through it all. I will remember you as a kind, thoughtful, and rigorous academic. You enriched thousands of students’ cinematic knowledge. You loved your dogs unconditionally. You were a colleague of my youth, and your sudden loss leaves a void. Godspeed.

Beth M. Waggenpack - January 12, 2021 at 10:45 PM

MZ

“ My sincere condolences on the loss of Stephen Prince, who embodied the spirit of scholarship in his generosity, calm, balanced knowledge, and intelligence. Although I only had the pleasure of meeting him a few times, I remember his work as an external examiner for a PhD defence, where he modelled how to channel passion for film and art into constructive critical inquiry. He will be greatly missed.

Michael Zryd - January 12, 2021 at 07:35 AM

CB

“ I am deeply moved by the death of Stephen Prince. I have never met him in person, only did we communicate through emails, around the career of Masaki Kobayashi. I will remember him as a scholar, passionate in his quest, and taking into account the sensibility of his correspondent. His book on Kobayashi is masterful in its combination of acute observations and insights on the meanings emanating from the films analysed. He was graceful in his reaction to my comments and thorough in his wish to research fully the aspects he choose to focus on. My condolences to his kin and his colleagues and students.

Claude R. Blouin

Claude R. Blouin - January 11, 2021 at 10:32 PM

SM

“ I never had the pleasure of meeting Stephen Prince, but I am a deep admirer of his scholarship. My condolences to his family and friends.

Stu Minnis - January 09, 2021 at 07:54 PM

DB

“ Stephen Prince was a guiding light in many areas of Film Studies. He was an independent thinker, taking what he thought was valuable from many intellectual traditions while offering fair, subtle critiques of problematic arguments. All of us who care about film theory, film history, and the social impact of film are in his debt. Unlike many scholars, he was an adept administrator, serving as president of two most wide-ranging professional associations. He also proved a sensitive editor of our SCSMI professional journal, bringing to it the same high standards he demanded in his own scholarship.

As a person, he showed that you can be both calm and lively: his gentle demeanor and courteous conversational style did not prevent him from having a riotous sense of humor.

We already miss him greatly.

David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson

David Bordwell - January 09, 2021 at 04:38 PM

MT

“ Stephen was my professor, advisor, and mentor when I was an undergraduate back in 1998. He ignited my love of Westerns and shaped both my personal taste in film and how I teach it as a professor now. I was so happy to meet up with him again when he came to speak to the class of my colleague last year. I am so glad I got to see him again after more than 20 years. He was, as always, gracious and generous. I will miss him, but I take comfort that his influence will continue to be felt by future generations of students.

Matthew R Turner - January 07, 2021 at 06:34 PM

TM

“ *The SCSMI board, fellows, and members purchased the Blue & White Sympathy Floor Basket for the family of Stephen Robert Prince.*



The SCSMI board, fellows, and members - January 06, 2021 at 01:06 PM

RS

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Rikke Schubart - January 06, 2021 at 03:50 AM

RS

Stephen was not only a great film scholar and wonderful person. He was also über cool and had an ease about him that I admired. I think he was the only professor I know who would arrive at a conference on a bike and wearing a leather jacket. He was kind, fun, clever, and extremely generous. I will miss him. A lot.

Rikke Schubart - January 06, 2021 at 04:01 AM

LS

“ *I'll remember Stephen for his great scholarship on Japanese film, his generous attitude to younger colleagues and for being extremely good company - someone with whom I am grateful to have had the chance to share my passion for big drinks, big cigars, big British motorcycles and great Japanese directors.*

A true Prince!

Lars-Martin Sørensen - January 05, 2021 at 11:27 AM



“ I will forever be grateful for each time that I have been fortunate enough to have Stephen as a respondent or reviewer, A master of the art of posing questions that will serve to develop the work of a younger colleague, his generosity is exemplary, At University of Copenhagen, we were proud each time he accepted invitations to give a talk to our students or at a symposium. Since his first visit in 1999, his curiosity, clarity, and range of expertise stood out on many occasions. His kindness extended to all areas of life and he never let others' admiration for his work get in the way of building trust. I'm grateful that he, in November 2005, listened to my frustrations about single life only to offer, on the very next day, advice on how to pair food with wine. Stephen has left an indelible mark. He will be greatly missed.

Johannes Riis - January 05, 2021 at 09:35 AM

TB

“ Stephen was a brilliant and prolific scholar, who wrote insightfully and innovatively on a such a wide range of subjects that his work could represent the output of many film scholars combined. He never settled on one approach or topic in film studies, preferring instead to exercise his wide-ranging interests and intellect. I was one of the many colleagues he helped in early career, as well as afterward. He was always generous with his time, his learning and his support, and I hoped I would have many years with which to return some of that generosity.

Todd Berliner - January 05, 2021 at 08:46 AM

CP

“ Stephen was a great colleague and friend. When we lived in Roanoke, Virginia, Cindy and I would regularly share meals with Steve. When the meals were at his place, they were invariably accompanied by fine wine and the presence of a Great Dane. Steve loved these dogs.

I learned a lot from Steve as a colleague. His interests were wide-ranging and when he chose to study something, he soon knew more about it than just about anyone else. He was also generous in providing his assistance to younger scholars, as many of them will attest.

He will be missed.

Carl Plantinga - January 05, 2021 at 07:42 AM

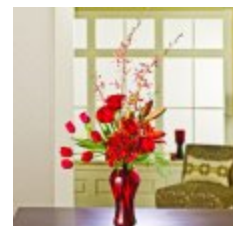
NA

“ He was a man who dared his students to look at the world (both physical and cinematic) through a different lens. I will forever be grateful for getting the chance to be taught by him. I know many other students and myself will always cherish those moments that we spent with him on campus. I truly hope he's found peace now. A thousand thanks to his family and loved ones.

Nadia - January 04, 2021 at 06:02 PM

FC

“ From the current and recent MFA graduate cohort purchased the *In Remembrance* for the family of Stephen Robert Prince.



From the current and recent MFA graduate cohort - January 04, 2021 at 04:08 PM