

Feb 25, 2008

John Kostanecki, former Darien resident, competitor in sailing

John Kostanecki of Charlottesville, Va., who led a full life despite an automobile accident that left him paralyzed, died Thursday Feb. 21, from a heart attack resulting from internal injuries and an infection for which he was hospitalized on Monday, Feb. 18.

Mr. Kostanecki was a consultant in the field of alternative energy and a real estate developer. He received his bachelor's degree from Georgetown University and a master's degree from New York University.

Above all, he served as an inspiration to all who knew him. He was "optimistic, caring and open," said his family. He became a paraplegic in 1977 following a disabling automobile accident. However, he led a full life, skiing, sailing and living life to the fullest with his family and friends, blaming no one, showing malice toward none and cheerfully accepting his life in a wheelchair.



During the 1970s, he was a top junior sailor in Long Island Sound. In 2000, he placed second in the Paralympic Sailing Trials, narrowly missing the right to compete in Sydney, Australia, as a representative of the United States. He competed in several wheelchair marathon races, fly fished, camped and danced. He was looking forward to an adventure trip to Scotland this summer with his friend, Mark Andrews, the founder of Therapeutic Adventures, Inc. (a charitable foundation).

Mr. Kostanecki is survived by his wife, Barbara; his daughters, Paige and Emily, of Charlottesville.; his brother, Chris of Ross, Calif.; his sister, Andrea Kostanecki, of Rowayton; his father, Andrew Kostanecki, of Orchid, Fla., and Woodstock, Vt.; and his mother, the former Caroline Wolfe of Houston.

A memorial service was held at 1 on Saturday, Feb. 23, at Christ Episcopal Church in Charlottesville, with the Rev. Dave Johnson officiating.

A memorial celebration of his life will be held at a future date in Darien. Friends may send condolences to the family at hillandwood.com.

Memorial contributions may be made to Therapeutic Adventures, Inc., P.O. Box 4668, Charlottesville, VA 22905

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