

Kenny Goldstein 1927-1995



It is with sadness that the Ceili Group notes the death on November 11th, 1995 of Kenny Goldstein, a long-time friend and consultant to the group. Recognized around the world as a collector and scholar of folklore and folksong, he was known by many for his

generosity of spirit and strong support of traditional singers in particular.

Ed Licinit asked me to say a few words about Kenny Goldstein and his contributions to the world of traditional music and song. From his obituary you have a good description of his considerable professional achievements. I would like to speak from a more personal perspective.

Kenny deeply loved Irish Music and song. From this love he was motivated to change careers and become a folklorist. He used to say with a laugh that because he was born on St. Patrick's Day he had half a claim on being Irish. More seriously, when collecting traditional songs he felt that having the name Goldstein was an advantage. An outsider who loved traditional singing was welcome at all hearths, regardless of political or religious persuasion.

Well known for his generosity Kenny actively supported and encouraged many Irish musicians and

singers. He often provided accommodations and honorarium at his classes for traveling musicians. Among those he brought to Philadelphia included Joe Heaney, Liam O'Flynn, Delores Keane, Cathal McConnell and Mick Moloney. He traveled frequently in Ireland collecting books and songs and shared his extensive song collection with prominent Irish folklorists.

More recently, Kenny was a strong proactive supporter of the Philadelphia Ceili Group. As our consultant he provided guidance and advice on the fall festival. Through his efforts we were able to present storytellers Eddie Lenihan and Alice Kane and singer Paddy Berry in 1988. As an advocate, it was through his efforts that the Library of Congress accepted the Ceili Group's tape collection after seven years of negotiation. This year the Ceili Group officially recognized and thanked Kenny at the Fall festival for his life-long contribution to the support and preservation of Irish and Celtic culture. I will miss him terribly, as a friend and mentor, and as a person always generous, quick with an opinion, and always ready for a good song. His legacy is strong, both in the hearts of his many friends and in the collection of songs, books and tapes he has left for all of us – to make our lives richer and filled with song.

– Robin Hiteshew

The Ceili Group has permanently renamed the Meadow stage to the Kenny Goldstein Meadow Stage in honor of Kenny's lifelong and significant support of traditional music and song. As is fitting of Kenny's love of folksong, there will always be singing presented on this stage.