

Landrin Kelly, father who turned anguish over son's murder into saving others, dies



Dan Rosenstrauch/Bay Area News Group archives

File photo: Landrin Kelly, of Suisun City, Calif., the father of De La Salle star Terrance Kelly, shows all the college offers his son had before he was killed Aug. 12, 2004, a day before he was to leave to play football for the University of Oregon, on Tuesday, July 22, 2014.

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When Landrin Kelly's 18-year-old son Terrance Kelly was murdered in Richmond two days before he was scheduled to leave for the University of Oregon on a football scholarship, the distraught father channeled his grief into community activism to help prevent other children from losing their lives to violence.

He founded the Terrance Kelly Youth Foundation, which provides tutoring, mentoring, life skills workshops and other programs for children ages 5 to 17. For his passionate commitment to kids growing up in neighborhoods plagued by the kind of violence that had cut short his son's life, Kelly became a beloved figure in the Richmond community and beyond.

On Tuesday, Kelly, 48, of Suisun City, died at John Muir Medical Center in Walnut Creek. His death was confirmed by the Contra Costa County Coroner, though no other official details of the circumstances were available. Kelly had been in the hospital at least

since Saturday. Rodney Alamo Brown said he found out Sunday afternoon that his longtime friend was in the hospital with a brain injury and rushed over.

“He had no consciousness,” he said. “It just didn’t look good at all.”

Brown said that there differing reports about what happened to cause the injury, including that there had been some sort of fight.

“I just can’t wrap my head around that a person who advocates for peace; this thing happens to him in this violent manner,” Brown said. “It’s strange.”

Tributes for Landrin poured in Tuesday as word of his death spread.

“He didn’t want Terrance’s death to be just another senseless act of violence, he wanted it to mean something,” said Bob Ladouceur, who coached Terrance at De La Salle High School in Concord. “He filled a need in Richmond that was woefully lacking in afterschool programs and he impacted a lot of kids. I feel the community is really going to miss him.”

Ladouceur is a board member for the Terrance Kelly Youth Foundation, and is the former coach of the legendary De La Salle team that had the best record in high school football history.

The 2014 film “When the Game Stands Tall” was an adaptation of Contra Costa Times Columnist Neil Hayes’ book about the impact of Terrance’s Aug. 12, 2004 murder on the team. At the time, Terrance was ranked one of the top high school linebackers in the country.

Kelly was set to join the University of Oregon Ducks when he was shot and killed in Richmond’s Iron Triangle neighborhood as he arrived to pick up his younger brother. Darren Pratcher, a 15-year-old who had feuded with Terrance during a basketball game, was convicted of Terrance’s murder.

Scott Hugo, an attorney with the city of Oakland’s neighborhood law corps, was a teammate of Terrance Kelly’s and is a board member of the foundation. He gave the keynote address at the foundation gala last August.

“It’s so surreal, I first heard (Landrin) was in the hospital in serious condition on Saturday or Sunday,” Hugo said. “It’s just so heart-breaking what this family has been through.”

Hugo said he had been inspired by Landrin’s work with the foundation over the years and joined the board when he relocated to the Bay Area in 2014.

“Here is someone who had every reason to respond to violence with more violence, but the fact that he and Mary set up this foundation that had such an incredible impact on the lives of so many young men and women, I can’t imagine a better testament to the best of human nature,” Hugo said. “The foundation mantra is rise above the violence and Landrin embodied that.”

Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia joined those paying tribute.

“Landrin endured the worst personal tragedy imaginable, losing a child in the prime of life to violence, and responded by working tirelessly to help save other families from similar tragedies,” Gioia said. “He had a huge heart, and he positively impacted many lives in our community through his youth foundation.”