

In Praise of Former AP Reporter Quane Kenyon

By Dean Miller

The death of Quane Kenyon is a good moment for AP staff, globally, to learn that one person makes an important difference.

Yes, Boise, Idaho is a punchline to snarky New York comedians: far from the center of the universe, his stories may not often have set off alarm bells in newsrooms outside the AP region served through Salt Lake City.

But for all those years, the AP's reputation for solid reporting and dispassionate observation was safe in his hands. Editors relied on him and readers who never knew his name were well-served by him. That was implicit in his craftsmanship: never flashy, always reliable.

Quane's expertise in state government and state history made him an important resource to generations of reporters who passed through Idaho. His ability to keep his cool when politicians tried to intimidate him set a valuable example. And he intuited the danger of over-praise. You only heard kind words from Quane when you had done a seriously kick-ass job.

He would be deeply embarrassed by all the remembrances being published today in Idaho, but if you multiply that by the number of AP staffers laboring far from the Manhattan mother ship, each of those newswomen and newsmen can perhaps understand how the value of the AP is the result of their thousands of daily decisions to do the right thing, especially when no one is looking. In this time of change in journalism, Quane's life is a good reminder that there is no substitute for fearless, careful reporting.