



Bennett B. Kotok

January 21, 2024

It is with deep sadness we share the brightest of light, Bennett Kotok, passed away from natural causes on January 21, 2024, at just 19 years old. He is survived by his loving family, parents Larry and Susan, brothers Jack, Simon, dog George and Maddie Sura, his girlfriend of several years.

Bennett is survived by a loving extended family including grandmothers, Jane Gillen and Retta Kotok and amazing aunts and uncles that he adored including Kathy and Corey Melville, Steve and Kristal Gillen, Dave and Tamra Gillen, Jay and Marie Lackmann, Lori and Tom Anderson and Janice and Bob Krauth.

Loving cousins include Michael and McKenna Melville, Curran, Garrett (Kassidy), Gavin, Jordan (Joe) Gillen, Brooke and Nick Gillen and Samantha, Amanda and Joseph Lackmann.

Bennett is preceded in death by his grandfathers, Doug Gillen and Joe Kotok who played an important role in Bennett's life with lessons of hard work, determination, faith and the importance of education. Both loved the outdoors, and it was Bennett's favorite place to be largely due to their influence.

Friendships were vitally important to Bennett and lifelong friends Mark Rogalski and Sam Fulton were like family to him amongst many more, too numerous to count.

Bennett lived an accomplished life though cut too short. Bennett loved all competition and thrived playing sports of all kinds including intramural basketball, football, and baseball serving as the team captain. He was also the Class President of the Class of 2023. He was natural leader and thrived academically.. He was Student Council President, Model UN Captain, Peer Ministry leader and many other activities at Saint Thomas Academy, his beloved high school. He loved being a Cadet and being part of the Brotherhood and legacy of the school.

Bennett was a pre-med major at Creighton University and though extremely challenging, he excelled in his first year. He wanted to pursue medicine to help people live a better life and that's exactly who Bennett was. Bennett had a friend everywhere we went due to his engaging, genuine, manner. Bennett had a kindness about him, and he sought the good in everyone.

Bennett had high personal standards and he drove himself and others around him to continue to grow, evolve and challenge themselves to always be better. He was an inspiration to those who were close to him, especially his family.

Our Lady of Grace is where Bennett's faith journey began as a lifelong parishioner and that carried over to STA where he was part of Campus Ministry there under the guidance of Father Mark Pavlak who was an important person in Bennett's life. Faith was an integral part of his life and the foundation for his strong moral compass which was unwavering. He helped everyone around him to become a better version of themselves. Bennett brought joy to any room simply by just being in it, sharing his positive energy with those around him, especially his family and close friends whose hearts are broken today.

In lieu of flowers, family is requesting donations be made in his name to Saint

Thomas Academy to provide financial assistance to more families who desire a Catholic education. <https://www.cadets.com/giving>

A prayer vigil will be held at Saint Thomas Academy on Friday, January 26 at 7pm

NO FLOWERS AT THE VIGIL PLEASE

Mass of Christian Burial will be held at Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church on Saturday, January 27 at 11:30am with visitation starting at 10am.

When you see a beautiful sunset or sunrise, think of the goodness Bennett brought to this world and share it with others, just as he did with us, even if it was for too short of time.

Previous Events

Prayer Vigil

JAN **26**. 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Saint Thomas Academy
949 Mendota Heights Rd
Mendota Heights, MN 55120

A Mass of Resurrection

JAN **27**. 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM (CT)

Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church
5071 Eden Ave
Edina, MN 55436-2308
(952) 929-3317

Tribute Wall



“ *Bennett's senior speech by popular demand - a challenge to us all at the end!* ”



Washburn-McReavy - February 28, 2024 at 02:15 PM



“ *Amazing songs and eulogies from best friends Sam Fulton, Mark Rogalski and brother Jack Kotok* ”



Washburn-McReavy - February 28, 2024 at 02:07 PM

KB

“ *Dr. Kotok and family, an amazing tribute for such a inspirational young man. My thoughts and prayers are with you all as you grieve his loss. K. Ballinger* ”

Kathy Ballinger - December 02, 2024 at 11:29 AM

ST

“ *Thinking of the family. Hope you all are well.* ”

Student - November 13, 2024 at 01:04 AM

ST

“ Always thinking of Bennett. Wishing you guys the best.

Student - September 19, 2024 at 02:35 PM

IN

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Info - April 19, 2024 at 12:49 PM

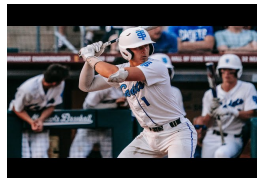
AC

“ Larry and family. We are so sorry to hear about the loss of your beautiful baby boy. Praying for peace for you all as you navigate this difficult journey.. watching his videos you all have shared.. what a wonderful man, son and friend. ❤️🙏❤️

Arlee and Ellen Carlson. - April 08, 2024 at 07:05 PM

IN

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Info - March 29, 2024 at 10:11 AM

SL

So wonderful to see. What a wonderful memory you have Retta of such a fantastic grandson. He certainly was a credit to the wonderful upbringing by his parents and grandparents.

Sharon Lutz - April 15, 2024 at 08:02 PM

KC

“ I am praying for the whole Kotok family. We are so very sorry for your loss.

Kris Caplinger - February 06, 2024 at 11:30 AM

MD

“ He rode his bike over to hartford commons we use ta sit talk on my steps what Humble pure kid I just always said to myself this guy is going places loved his Discipline and His demeanour USN/USMC vet 70..

Mike Daugherty - February 01, 2024 at 04:09 PM

CN

“ Bennett was in the same class that my son Miguel in OLG and I was lucky to met him there and, later to work with him at The Home Depot in Eden Prairie. Every person who interacted with him was always impress of how nice and kind young man he was. Light, love and blessings for you and your beautiful family.

Carolina Nunez-Mudoy - January 30, 2024 at 04:33 PM

LH

“ I've heard so many wonderful stories about Bennett from his Grandparents Joe and Retta, over the years . My sympathy and prayers to all. He is in a beautiful place with Grandpa Joe.

Lynette Haugen - January 28, 2024 at 07:39 AM

JO

“ I only met Bennett once at a Sura Christmas celebration. We were all so impressed by this young man as he fit in right away and didn't hesitate to talk and laughed with us all! We are a large family and this was his first time meeting all Maddie's Aunts, Uncles and Cousins. After that day, we all knew what a bright, smart, adorable guy Bennett truly was and we were all so happy to see the love between him and Maddie! Our hearts break for the family and our Maddie! I pray that God holds you ALL tight in his arms and gives you peace as you deal with trying to understand the Why? I am so sorry for your loss! RIP Bennett! Joni Sura Ramirez and Maddie's Ramirez Cousins ❤️

Joni - January 26, 2024 at 11:00 AM



“ To Larry and Susan, Tom and I are so sorry about the loss of your son.
We will keep you in our prayers and have comfort in your faith to help you.
Please know we are thinking about you and your beautiful family.

Leslie O'Meara - January 26, 2024 at 08:18 AM

KD

“ Susan, Larry and to the entire Kotok family - We send our deepest condolences, prayers and love. We are heartbroken and devastated for you. You are in our prayers and thoughts every day. There are no words to describe. We are so sorry. With all of our love, Steve & Kathy De Vries

Kathy DeVries - January 25, 2024 at 11:41 PM

MK

“ I will always consider myself lucky to have been able to go to school with Bennett since kindergarten and will always remember growing up with him. I'm thankful to have been able to get to know him so well for so long and cherish all of my time with him. I will always remember him as a kind thoughtful person who was always able to make you smile no matter how hard your day was. And while it may be difficult to understand now I know that he will be looking down everyday and making sure we are able to smile.

Thank you for everything Bennett you were truly one of a kind.

Michael King - January 25, 2024 at 01:11 AM

AK

“ At our graduation Bennett claimed our class was the greatest of all time. I would argue Bennett himself was. He was always a friend and a person to lean on. Someone who was always there for me when my own world fell apart. I will forever cherish my small interactions with him in the halls or during class. I trusted him and felt his presence even when he wasn't there. He was a professional in every aspect and knew how to be both funny and mature in a moments notice. He was wise beyond his years and left meaningful advice for everyone he interjected with to follow. Bennett was a blessing to everyone he met in this world. I am forever honored to always call Bennett my brother.

Austin Kalmes - January 25, 2024 at 12:55 AM

JT

“ Bennett was always such a positive and funny guy to be around. Everyone loved talking to him and being a brother with him. He was friends with everyone because he was a great all around guy and also because of how much people respected him. I enjoyed the sports conversations at our gym locker during the sophomore basketball season where he would never fail to get me excited and pumped up.

You are my brother forever Bennett. ❤️

John Thompson - January 24, 2024 at 10:53 PM

JC

“ Susan, Larry and family, I have no words. Colby and I have been praying for all of you as you navigate through this painful time. Continued prayers and love being sent to all of you. I pray you feel the love and prayers and that so many are praying for you. What amazing young man you raised.

Jamie Colbjornsen - January 24, 2024 at 09:29 PM

EH

“ I wasn't very close with Bennett, but every interaction I had with him was a good one. He was a brother to me and many others. I'll miss you brother 💙☐

Ethan Horton - January 24, 2024 at 07:30 PM

LA

“ Love you forever Bennett 💙🥹

Love Adebayo - January 24, 2024 at 06:59 PM

LD

“ All though, I never personally got to meet you or Bennett, he was a great friend to my son at Creighton. Austin enjoyed getting to go out to eat with your family on one of your visits. The friendship they had was true and impactful. I know Austin thought the world of Bennett and will greatly miss him. Prayers for your and your family during this difficult time.

Brent and Leslie Davidson

leslie davidson - January 24, 2024 at 02:24 PM

HM

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Hudson J Matthew - January 24, 2024 at 01:22 PM

JP

“ Our thoughts and prayers are with your entire family, Susan and Larry. We can't imagine the heartbreak you're dealing with, but we know that the Lord will help you walk this difficult path. What an incredible blessing Bennett was to those who knew him.

Jeff and Lynn Pluff - January 24, 2024 at 10:52 AM

PM

“ Was never the closest with Bennett, but I’d known him through mutual connections in the past. In our few interactions with each other it always had stuck out to me how positive and “smiley” he was, it was hard to find a time where he wasn’t smiling. He always seemed like a friend or teammate that you always wanted on your side, and this was proven in such by his numerous academic and athletic accomplishments and leadership positions. My heart breaks for him and his family, sending prayers and love.

Peter McGivern - January 24, 2024 at 03:23 AM

AD

“Bennett and I met each other for the first time 5 months ago. We sat next to each other in chemistry. I’ve always been bad with remembering the names of new people, so his water bottle with a sticker saying “Hello my name is Bennett” helped with that. After our first chemistry class, we soon found out that we had several other courses in common. As we got to know one another better, we both knew there would be a great friendship between us. After the first week or two, it wasn’t uncommon for us to grab meals at Brandeis together 5+ times a week. Neither Bennett nor I were interested in staying out late or partying, so we hung out by taking walks downtown, playing Madden in a friend’s dorm room, watching STA football livestreams, and more. Some of our most cherished moments that I’ll hold dear forever were the ones made during the never-ending study sessions in the after-hours empty classrooms of the Eppley Building. I’ve always seen myself as an outlier who didn’t quite fit in with the rest of the crowd, and I’ve never met someone who I had so much in common with like Bennett. I’m sure plenty of people around Omaha thought we were two pretty weird dudes. We publicly expressed great passions for medium-rare steaks, Spencer’s apple pie, reverse osmosis water filters, aspartame-free chewing gum, omelets from Brandeis prior to an exam, and a general divergence from common college culture. He was just such a pure, innocent person who always wanted the best for his friends and others. All of our inside jokes and late night philosophical discussions will forever be special to our relationship. He took care of me when I wasn’t feeling well and gave me the best advice when I needed it most. Simple text messages and frequent phone calls let me know how much of a friend he was to me. We talked about so many things together, but his family was something he never failed to mention. He loved his family more than anything. I remember several accounts of studying with Bennett while he was on FaceTime with one of his brothers, or one of the many times I tried calling him but he’d decline and text me that he was on the phone with his parents. He cared about them so much, and he let them know that. I loved Bennett like a brother, and I’m gonna miss him forever. A day won’t go by where I don’t think of him. I’m sorry this

happened to his family and everyone who knew him. They know how special he was and how much he was going to accomplish in his life. May he rest in peace.

Austin Davidson - January 24, 2024 at 01:42 AM



“ *Kotok family,*

Bennet was a shining part of our RSP class at Creighton. He was lively right off the bat, always engaging everyone in conversation, humorously poking fun at us keeping him up late during welcome week, and no one will soon forget the newfound passion and energy for dance he suddenly had during our lip sync battle! He never once failed to say hi to me when he saw me on campus even if I was on the other side of the building just barely in sight... but he did that for everyone because that's what he did... he always made people feel that they were special and deserved attention. While his accomplishments were great what I will always remember him for was the incredibly contagious energy, optimism, and kindness he had in this life. I am so sorry for your loss. He was an incredible kid.



Shayla Edwards - January 24, 2024 at 12:33 AM

JG

“ *I'm Sean Burns grandmother and Heath shared with me that Sean is dealing with a heavy heart for the loss for his dear Tommie friend. Though I don't know you personally my prayers are with you to deal with the greatest loss of any parents and their family. Jeri Ganz 🙏*

Jeri Ganz - January 23, 2024 at 10:31 PM



“ *Kotok family- My heart aches for you all during this time. Although I never got the chance to meet Bennett, I know how amazing and inspiring he was. So much love and prayers.*

Alexandra Malone - January 23, 2024 at 09:59 PM

EG

“ *Susan, Larry, Jack and Simon, our hearts are breaking for you at this time of sadness and loss. Bennett was an amazing young man and he will be greatly missed. Sending our love and prayers, the Gorman Family*

Elizabeth Gorman - January 23, 2024 at 09:09 PM



“ *A sympathy card was purchased for the family of Bennett B. Kotok.*



January 23, 2024 at 08:50 PM



“ *Kotok Family, I will always remember Bennett's energy, love for his brothers, and passion for sports. The OLG bus rides would not have been half as fun without his giggle coming from a few rows in front of me. Your family is in my thoughts and prayers.*

- *Samantha Burke*

Samantha Burke - January 23, 2024 at 05:24 PM

PE

“ Count on the prayers of all the Sisters, who met Bennett through Confirmation at OLG. We remember Bennett very dearly and keep him and all his family in our prayers. May the Lord grant faith and peace of heart at this time . 🙏
PES-Sisters

PES-Sisters - January 23, 2024 at 04:20 PM

LB

“ Kotok Family~ We are so very sorry for your loss. Bennett is an amazing young man. So glad we connected through STA and got to know your family- May God wrap his loving arms around you and comfort you all~
Love, The Bugni's ~ Mark, LeAnn, Antonio and Marco

LeAnn Bugni - January 23, 2024 at 04:16 PM

BH

“ Thinking of you at this most difficult time. You have our deepest condolences.

Brad and Ronda Hahn - January 23, 2024 at 01:22 PM

CK

“ Bob and I are So very sorry for your loss. You are in our prayers.

christine. kilar - January 23, 2024 at 01:09 PM



“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



Washburn-McReavy - January 23, 2024 at 10:37 AM

PK

We are so deeply sorry for your loss and will keep you and your family in our thoughts and prayers 🙏

Paul and Maria Kilar - January 23, 2024 at 04:31 PM

MA

*God love you brother,
Mike Assad
1966*

michael v assad - January 23, 2024 at 10:34 PM

AH

From OLG I knew Bennett as the most positive, friendly person. He would never fail to give you a smile, or help make your day better. Hearing the beautiful reflections on his person from STA and Creighton there is no doubt that this spirit of his from OLG only grew ten-fold. While I wasn't in his immediate friend circle, he still treated everyone like his friend, and never ceased to share his goodness with those around him. We are sending him and your family so many prayers during this time. So much love and thoughts and prayers to you all during this unimaginably sad time.

Alanna Halloran

Alanna Fettig Halloran - January 24, 2024 at 11:15 AM

JR

I only met Bennett once at a Sura Christmas celebration. We were all so impressed by this young man as he fit in right away and didn't hesitate to talk and laughed with us all! We are a large family and this was his first time meeting all Maddie's Aunts, Uncles and Cousins. After that day, we all knew what a bright, smart, adorable guy Bennett truly was and we were all so happy to see the love between him and Maddie! Our hearts break for the family and our Maddie! I pray that God holds you ALL tight in his arms and gives you peace as you deal with trying to understand the Why? I am so sorry for your loss! RIP Bennett! Joni Sura Ramirez and Maddie's Ramirez Cousins❤️

Joni Sura Ramirez - January 25, 2024 at 10:44 PM