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**Sept 2021 NKJU® Bulletin**

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*This month has been one year since the passing of one of our legends in the Martial Arts, Kaicho Butch Velez of the AGK.*

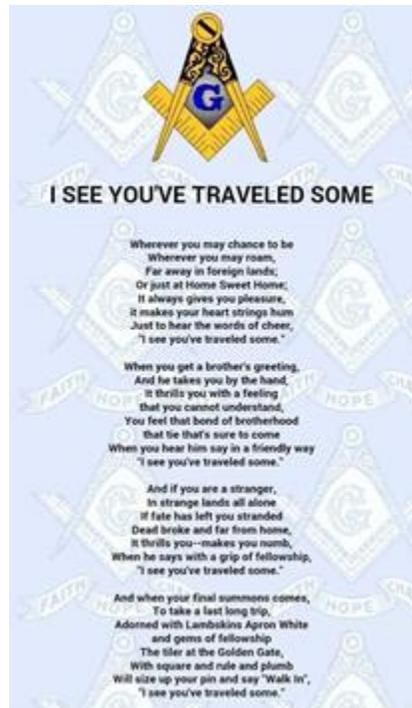


*Kaicho Velez was not only my Friend in Bushido but a brother Mason. He was a 32 degree and was loyal to his lodge. He*

*will be sorely missed by all that knew him and called him a friend.*



**I SEE YOU'VE TRAVELED SOME**  
was posted one year ago as a testament to my feelings. I am posting it again as I don't think I can say anything that would surpass what kind of man Kaicho Velez was and meant to others.



*This one-year Memorium will have personal statements from*

*some of Kaicho's closest friends. If I missed anyone, it was not intentional.*



**"Soshi Hugh Kelley"**

Andrew "Butch" Velez, 111, was a Farmer, a Healer, a Teacher, a Martial Arts Master, a Warrior, a Father, and a Husband. Most of all, to me, Butch Velez was my Friend. We were both students of Soke Shogo. Kuniba and sponsored his trips from Japan to the United States.

Butch and I knew each other for over 30 years. He loved Karate; he was a restless martial artist, always trying to perfect his Ryu Ha. Butch and I talked three or four times per month on different subjects. Although he telephoned me on many occasions asking for my advice, Butch was a very knowledgeable individual in his own right. He had a vast understanding concerning Martial Arts and related subjects. This frightened some

people, who were less in tune with what they taught and called "Martial Arts." However, he was open to anyone who wanted to increase their knowledge in any of the subjects in which he had become proficient. Butch would smile and say. *"Well. They don't know what they don't know."*

Butch proudly served our Country in the Viet Nam War as a member of the U.S. Army and, upon returning home to work the Family's Farm, he continued serving our Country as a welder for the Marine Corps.

Please remember that his wife Donna and daughter Andrea need your support and all of our help to do what is right for our Dear Friend. This is a time to show our loyalty and support as we, his Family, Friends, and Students, are in a mourning period. We are all fortunate to have been touched by Butch's remarkable life and will cherish our own personal memories of him.

Butch took a page from Walt Disney's philosophy. "The key is continuous improvement; by constantly trying to be better than you were yesterday, you have every chance of being the

best that you can be. Run your own race. The difference between winning and losing is most often not quitting." Butch knew his birthright was to live a life that would bring him joy. What brings us joy is to do what we love, what we are passionate about, and not live out someone else's expectations – that was exactly how Butch lived his life.

### **"I MISS YOU"**

**Andrew "Butch Velez 111**

### **"John Sliger"**

How do you, as a Student, truly express what your Teacher has done for you? Ever since Roy Davis asked me to write this, I have been struggling to answer that simple question. I could tell stories of how Kaicho Velez and I met in Reno, NV. How Butch cleared up with one hour of training, what years of studying Hakko Ryu and Karate could not. I could write about our Martial Arts Training or walks and talks around the Farm. I thought about writing about the beers we drank and the times we shared. I even thought about printing something about the healings I saw him perform or discuss his

profound faith. However, at this time, all I can think about is how much I miss my Friend. For those who knew Butch, you understand; for those who did not, you missed an opportunity to meet a truly unique individual.



### **"Bill Negron"**

I was a direct student of Shogo Kuniba for a little over eight years. After Soke Kuniba passed away in 1992, I became a self-described "Ronin." Around 2012 I found my new home in AGK. Ran by Kaicho Butch Velez and longtime personal Friend and student of Shogo Kuniba.

I miss Kaicho Velez every day. He had a lot of knowledge to share, especially how the body moves, energy, and Shiatsu. I miss the "Hey buddy" greeting whenever he saw me or called me on the phone.

I miss him smacking me playfully on the back of the neck whenever I messed up a kata or a technique. Soke

Kuniba would do the same to me; both men were so much alike. Most of all, I miss his catchphrase "collecting muscles" and his butt calls.

Little did we know that the last time we would see Kaicho Velez alive was at our training session in August 2020. Kaicho Velez passes away a month later, and I like to imagine Kaicho and Soke are now training together again.



**"JW Fox"**

Remembering Kaicho Velez, It's been one year since we lost our dear Friend. I miss our late Sunday evening talks. Kaicho wanted a picture that I had on one of the seminars that he had bought Joe Lewis to hold Asheville NC were I was training in 1983. He reminded me regularly of that picture, so I decided that I would make him a larger version than what I had and frame it, and present it to him the next time I went down

to see him. We were all visiting Mr. Mike Holme's place for a Saturday training session, and boy was he surprised when I pulled that picture out. I believe that he told everyone that was in there about it that day. I was so happy to see him light up full of joy and that he got to enjoy that picture as much as he did. Kaicho was a great friend, Teacher, and mentor. We will all meet one day again and pick up right where we left off.



**"Vikki Morrow"**

I started training under Kaicho Butch Velez in the early '90s. Soon after meeting him on the tournament circuit. I had moved from Greenville to Raleigh and opened a dojo there. I would travel to Jacksonville on occasions to train, and Butch would come to Raleigh to teach my students and me. It wasn't long that I became a member of the AGK.

It was such an honor in 1990 to be promoted to Shodan in Jiu-

Jitsu and Sandan in Karate by Kaicho. What an inspiration he was to all that met and trained with him. One of the highlights was when this Sensei Soke Kuniba came over from Japan and visited my dojo to train.

I moved to Wilmington in 1993 and lost contact for 24 years until I went to a tournament in Jacksonville, and he was there. We picked up right where we left off. Training! Had you lived to be 100, your passing would still be too soon! Miss you, Kaicho.



**As befitting a Masonic Brother.  
*You will be missed by many  
but will be remembered by  
those who loved you the most.***

***Freemasonry, like that of a true Martial Artist, unites men of good character who, though of different religious, ethnic, or social backgrounds, share a belief in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of mankind***

**Kaicho Roy D, Davis III, and the rest of my brothers in Bushido, we Miss you. "Kaicho Butch Velez 111." NKJU®/NKJUI®**