

## Gordon William Anthony

Gordon W. Anthony, age 57, died on October 8, 2012, with his family and friends by his side, in Los Angeles, California. Gordon was named in 1985 by the Jaycee's as one of the ten most outstanding men in America, an award that was given in other years to President Jack Kennedy and the Reverend Martin Luther King.



Gordon was born on December 6, 1954 in La Grange, Illinois, to Al and Nora Anthony. He was raised in Wayne, New Jersey with his brother, Lee Anthony. Gordon became a quadriplegic as a result of a car accident when he was a sixteen year old junior in high school. He missed a year of school but still managed to graduate with his senior class the following year. Gordon graduated from Ramapo College in 1976 and decided to work in the Disability Rights arena. He wrote a grant and received \$300,000 to start the non-profit organization called DIAL, (Disabled Information and Adult Learning). As Executive Director of DIAL, Gordon worked with people with disabilities to help them live independently and find employment, and he worked to help to pass legislation for disability rights and access. He also started a program to help illiterate adults learn to read. Gordon took New Jersey from 40th to 1st amongst all states in the United States of America in people living independently with disabilities, and 17th to 1st in the number of adults who learned to read after age 21.



Gordon traveled extensively. In his "wilding" years, between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two, Gordon was the life of the party, often going out until the morning light in his legendary blue Chevy van with a designated driver and his friends. Gordon loved travel, poker, good food, baseball, football, movies, and concerts. Bruce Springsteen was his favorite; Jimmy Buffett was not far behind. Throughout his life, Gordon never lost his sense of wonder, his sense of humor, or his love of a good time.



In 1984, Gordon moved from New Jersey to Los Angeles and worked at USC from 1985 to 1990 as the Director of the Annual Fund and the Editor of the Alumni News Letter. Gordon increased USC's private donations to the Annual Fund for Scholarships from eight to eighteen million dollars in four years.



Gordon began working for the County of Los Angeles after he left USC and retired as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance Officer in May 2011. During his tenure with the County, he made sure that LA County was first amongst all California counties in quality of performance, while keeping the County's per capita cost lower than almost every other county in the State. No other county was in the top quarter in performance and the bottom quarter in per capita cost.



Gordon's work as an advocate for people with disabilities was far-reaching and highly acclaimed. In 1991 he was recognized as one of the Four Hundred People Most Responsible for the ADA Passage, and named to the ADA Task Force. Some of his highlighted work included leadership roles for the following:

California Disability Leadership Forum  
Los Angeles Mayor's Office on Disability  
ADA Network  
Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities  
Los Angeles Human Resources Association  
Western Law Center for Disability Rights  
Pacific Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center  
Californians for Disability Rights  
Direct Marketing Club of Southern California  
Media Access Office  
Californians for Disability Rights  
National Council on Independent Living



Gordon also worked with the county to ensure that the Staples Center and Disney Concert Hall were built to accommodate people with all types of disabilities.



Because Gordon's quadriplegia was the result of a car accident more than 40 years ago, his relatively small accident settlement was gone before he finished college. Remarkably, Gordon lived his entire life without receiving a penny of State or Federal Aid. From his employment income, he personally paid for all of his living expenses including 24-hour attendant care, all of his medications, durable medical equipment and supplies. He was eligible for Medicare three years after he began Dialysis, but was able to maintain his own private medical insurance for his other healthcare needs. Having lived through all of his challenges, Gordon was a passionate advocate for the passing of the Obama Health Care Act.



Gordon was a true visionary who devoted his life to the equal treatment of all people, not only those with disabilities. His vision was of a world without discrimination, a world of tolerance. Gordon was quoted as saying "discrimination against anyone is discrimination against everyone; we must learn to value and appreciate our similarities as well as our differences." He will greatly be missed by many.



Gordon had an uncanny memory. He had hundreds of friends and acquaintances. He never forgot their birthdays, or their children's names. He sent out about one hundred and fifty birthday cards every year, each one carefully chosen.



Gordon is survived by his brother, Lee and sister in law Kathie Anthony, and nephew and niece, Erik and Kristen Anthony, of Brea, California. Gordon is also survived by extended family, and friends and attendants who were like family, and his long time roommate, Machiko Wakabayashi.



Services were held on Wednesday, October 17th with a viewing from 5 to 8pm, and a funeral was held on Thursday, October 18th at Cabot and Sons Funeral Home, 27 Chestnut Street, Pasadena, CA 91103. Family and friends stood up and spoke volumes, extending the service for two and one half hours.

