

WHAT I WISH TO SAY ABOUT H. KEITH HUNT

Douglas B. Grisaffe
University of Texas, Arlington

Many years back now, Keith befriended me with great kindness when I was a marketing research practitioner. I had a Ph.D. and went directly into industry, but I still had somewhat of an academic mindset and curiosity about my work. Because the firm I worked for specialized in measuring, modeling, and managing customer satisfaction, I came across the CS/D&CB journal, and then found out about the conference. I decided to attend the conference to hear the papers and advance my knowledge. I met Keith in person. I loved the guy right off the bat. He was so kind, friendly, funny, and warm that we struck up an initial friendship. I would quickly learn that Keith's personal style influenced the entire culture of the conference. It felt like a set of people whose respect for each other transcended their shared interests in academic topics, creating almost a sense of family. I appreciated the incredible openness to people of all stripes, from all kinds of places, with all kinds of different viewpoints, substantive interests, methodological approaches, etc., etc.

It would have been difficult for any outsider like myself not to feel "at home" in the culture Keith helped to create. I also was not used to a conference that included things like bus trips to national parks. On just such a bus trip, I happened to be intensely reading a book central to my personal faith. Keith sat down and began a conversation with me. What a joy. Despite differences of perspectives in our traditions, I instantly came to love Keith Hunt on a personal level. I love a deep conversation, and Keith seemed to find similar joy in going there. Over the following years, he was very gracious in helping advise me about some papers I would write that ultimately made it into the Journal. And, more than that, as a certain gravity seemed to be pulling me toward a calling in university teaching and research, Keith became one of my most trusted advisors. He gave me invaluable counsel and help. I was truly green and needed a voice with solid mentor-level advice. Keith was just such a voice. I don't know how many people he has helped. It seemed very natural to him to take interest and to want to do whatever he could. I'm guessing I was somewhere in the middle of a very long line of people he has gone well out of his way to help.

Fast forward to recent days, I just made full professor at my school and am years out from those wonderful interactions with Keith. But I know his sincere guidance at the beginning absolutely impacted the angle of my trajectory. That trajectory led to a wonderful life in an academic setting that I am still enjoying to this day, and Keith helped to make it happen. Perhaps some would focus only on where they have arrived, and possibly "forget" people who helped set them on the path that got them there. For me personally, I will not forget my friend Keith and his extraordinary kindness toward me. The advice, counsel, empathy, friendship, wisdom he shared with me has continued to produce dividends in my life across a span greater than two decades now. Keith is that kind of person to me. I owe him much. He is truly a rare individual, a person of character and insight who always seems to find a way to come along side and advance causes and efforts that produce good for others. You can't really repay something like that. What you can do is to be grateful, and to say thank you. So, Keith Hunt, I am grateful for you. I thank you sincerely for the many ways you impacted and helped me. May richest blessings always be yours.