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What an epitaph

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Sometimes when I am stumbling around cyberspace looking for some bit of information, I come across a story about something or someone that completely restores my faith in the innate goodness of human beings.

I don't know Joe Kuban of Fort Worth, Texas, a Catholic school teacher for some 30 years. But I wish I could have known him. I read his obituary online today: Longtime Fort Worth educator Joe Kuban inspired his students. He died June 4 from complications from Lou Gehrig's disease. He was 59.

The obit described him as "the popular, energetic educator who founded what is believed to be the nation's longest-running high school ecology program."

Mr. Kuban taught generations of students to be free thinkers, appreciate nature's beauty and become stewards of the land. ...

"He was definitely the real deal," said Nolan teacher Ellen Browning, who heads the ecology program Mr. Kuban started in 1974. "He was passionate about stewardship. Education. Music. His faith. He practiced what he preached. He touched so many lives."

But here's what struck me, made me pause and actually go back and read the whole story. The first comment in the readers' forum that follows the article reads: "I am a better man today because of Dr. Kuban."

What an epitaph. Could there be any higher praise than that?

I had to pause a minute. Had to send up a silent prayer of thanksgiving for Mr. Kuban and for the teachers who have inspired me and have made me better.

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