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# In Memoriam: George Kindler, 1948-2006

John Huntington | [livedesignonline](#)

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George Kindler in 2004 on the Red Rock hike he led each year LDI was in Las Vegas; photo by Rutger vanDijk

Today, the word mentor is tossed around casually. However, according to the American Heritage Dictionary, the true definition is: "A wise and trusted counselor or teacher." In every sense of the word, George Kindler was truly a mentor to me and countless others throughout the entertainment technology industry. He was very wise; he was very trustworthy; and he taught many things to me and everyone fortunate enough to know him. Sadly, George died May 21, 2006, due to complications resulting from a series of heart surgeries. He was 57.

George spent many years in the Albany, New York area, after attending Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He began his professional career as a circuit design engineer and, in 1973, he co-founded the innovative and ahead-of-its-time arts company Electronic Body Arts. He toured with the Star Spangled Washboard Band, which eventually turned into Blotto, famous for its hit song "I Wanna Be a Lifeguard", which George produced. The video for this song was one of the few played on MTV's first day of operation. During this period, George also worked on a variety of projects with Specialized Audio-Visual Inc., including providing the house audio mix for the Miss America Pageant for over decade; doing sound for the Spoleto festival in Charleston, South Carolina for several years; and mixing major corporate meetings for GE and the Saratoga Performing Arts Newport-Kool Jazz festival.

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George moved to Las Vegas in 1986 to work as a Systems Engineer for the sound contractor Acromedia, and he arrived just in time to play a major role in the Las Vegas entertainment technology renaissance. In 1992, George founded his own design, consulting, and technology company, Thoughtful Designs, which provided innovative show control, A/V design and engineering work for numerous projects in and out of Las Vegas. George sold his company to PRG in 1997, and the Thoughtful Designs division was eventually absorbed into SPL Integrated Solutions, where George became the Director of Engineering in SPL's Las Vegas office. Once his contract with PRG expired in 2002, George went to work as senior consultant for PMK Consultants, and then, in 2004, he moved to Kelley Technologies to take on the position of director of design and engineering. At the time of his death, George had just finished work on a major and innovative sports book A/V project for Kelley at the brand new Red Rock Casino. This unique project is typical of George's work—to the layperson; it appears very simple and elegant, but it is, in fact, an enormously sophisticated system which takes live video sources, real-time betting data, and a variety of other signals, seamlessly assembles it all, and presents it on a massive 18x96' video wall.

George was involved, in one way or another, in just about every high-tech entertainment innovation in Las Vegas (and beyond) over the last 20 years, including:

- Sound system engineering for Siegfried and Roy at the Mirage hotel
- Audio automation system design for the Volcano at the Mirage hotel
- Audio and show control for the Buccaneer Bay attraction at the Treasure Island hotel
- Show control for the Fremont Street Experience
- Show control for the legendary and little-seen George Lucas Superlive Adventure, arena show, which toured Japan
- Show control for EFX at the MGM Grand hotel
- Show control for Stephen Spielberg's DIVE! themed restaurants in Los Angeles and Las Vegas
- Sound system engineering support for the Lance Burton Theatre at the Monte Carlo hotel
- Design and engineering for Imagine, A Theatrical Odyssey at the Luxor hotel and Casino Theatre
- Show control for the Masquerade Show in the Sky at the Rio hotel
- Sound system show control for the Fountains At Bellagio and the Bellagio clock tower
- Project management for Star Trek: The Experience at the Las Vegas Hilton
- Engineering for the A/V systems at Mandalay Bay convention Center
- Design for the music and paging systems for the New York, New York hotel
- Electro-acoustical system engineering for Cirque Du Soleil's KÀ at the MGM Grand hotel
- Clock automation and show control for Niketown New York
- Show control for The Millenium Smile at the '98 Kyongju World Culture EXPO in South Korea
- Home audio/video systems for the Al Khalidiah Farm in Saudi Arabia (for a member of the Saudi royal family)
- Show control for the Playdium entertainment centers in Canada



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- Presentations at more than a dozen LDI, USITT, and NSCA workshops and panel discussions
- Active participant in the ESTA Control Protocol Working Group
- Development of the LDI show control “case study” sessions, which started at LDI 2002, and will continue this October

I miss George terribly, but I don't mourn him. George lived a life full of professional challenge, while maintaining strong and close ties to his loving wife of 26 years, Elizabeth Irene Kindler, and with a large and loving family: his father, Ralph Kindler; two sisters, Elaine Marie Kindler and Amy Elizabeth Kindler; a brother, Warren Wheelock Kindler and his wife, Nancy L. Kindler, and all of their extended families.

At his funeral in New Hampshire over the Memorial Day weekend, I discovered that George's generous, honest, playful, and non-judgmental nature was appreciated and loved as much by his family as those in the professional world, who turned out in the hundreds for his earlier memorial service in Las Vegas.

George loved the outdoors, and each time LDI met in Las Vegas, he led an international group of show control and A/V experts on a hike into the Red Rock wilderness high above the Las Vegas strip. This coming October, our group will again be hiking Red Rock, but this year, we will have to find our own way. However, I feel confident we can find the right trail; after all, we had a great mentor.

*John Huntington first worked with George Kindler in 1993 on the Buccaneer Bay attraction at the Treasure Island hotel, and from 1997-1999, he headed up a Thoughtful Designs office in NYC. He can be reached through his website at [www.zircondesigns.com](http://www.zircondesigns.com). He wishes to thank Michael Cusick, Charlie Richmond, Kevin Ruud, and Warren Kindler for supplying information for this piece.*

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