

Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library opens in Indianapolis

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Lindy Dobbins/WTHR

Indianapolis - When Indianapolis native Kurt Vonnegut wrote "Slaughterhouse Five" in 1969, he coined the term "so it goes."

Upon Vonnegut's death in 2007, friend and fan Morley Safer drew a cigarette balanced precariously on a typewriter sitting stagnant beside a pair of reading glasses. The caption read "and so he went," and the drawing now hangs in the [Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library](#) in downtown Indianapolis.

The KVML will open its doors Saturday following a Grand Opening Event at noon. John Lechleiter, CEO of Eli Lilly and Company, will lead the ribbon-cutting ceremony and a book signing and discussion will follow.

"It's a little bit overwhelming having everything from his past come together in one place," said daughter, Nanny Vonnegut. "Not overwhelming but wonderful; it's just paying him the tribute he deserves."

The small building, nestled modestly at the corner of Senate and Indiana Ave., will not only serve as a library but also as a cultural and educational resource facility, museum, art gallery, and reading room. The books lining the shelves were either written by Vonnegut himself or selected in accordance with his taste. The walls are lined with artwork chosen in a similar manner.

"He was a great sketch artist," said Kurt Vonnegut Scholar, Rodney Allen. "As a literary artist, I think that's where the real genius lay."

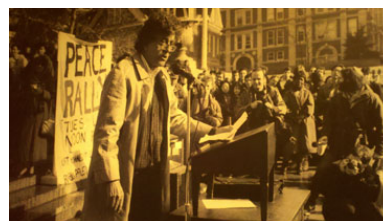
Vonnegut is best known for literary works such as "Slaughterhouse Five," "Breakfast of Champions," and "Slapstick." During his career, he wrote fiction, non-fiction, short stories and plays. His work was always controversial, quirky, and often political. His distinctive style gained attention starting at an early age.

"I wasn't surprised when he really got famous because he was always funny," said childhood friend, Majie Failey. "He was always mischievous and he was a little zany and he had funny ideas and he was a wonderful person to know."

Much of the humor Vonnegut incorporated into his work was inspired by his hometown of Indianapolis. One of his paintings reads, "I don't know what it is about Hoosiers. But wherever you go there is always a Hoosier doing something very important there."

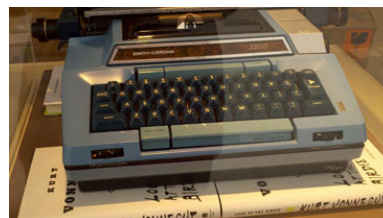
While Vonnegut joked about Indiana often, he was actually quite fond of the life he lived in a house designed and built by his father.

"Every time he would come back to Indianapolis, he would call the people living there



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One of the photos of Vonnegut on display in the library.



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and want to go visit and I went with him once," his daughter said. "He said, 'these are my happiest memories' and he said he feels like he was happy."

It was Vonnegut's fondness of his Indiana home that influenced the decision to build the KVML in Indianapolis. Now that it is here, volunteers, fans, family and friends, are adamant that Hoosiers not take the building for granted.

"I'd like all the people, especially in Indianapolis, to know that you have one of the major world authors of the 20th century," said Allen. "He was born here. He often wrote about Indianapolis and he called himself a Midwesterner all of his life as cosmopolitan as he was."



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