In Memory of Abbie Hoffman 1936-1989

So many ask how Abbie died. How he died, however, is not what's important—it's how he lived. At least this is where I find strength.

Much has been written about the "clown prince", the radical, the patriot, the master media manipulator, and the activist. It is unfortunate that only after his death do we learn more about the man.

Abbie was a brilliant organizer and had the most astute political mind I have ever encountered. He was serious, skilled, energetic, committed and always on the just side of an issue. None of this comes as any surprise, for Abbie truly left a unique mark on the political landscape of this country.

His humor, also obvious, was never ending. Abbie really was a very funny little guy. His other loves, less obvious, were cooking (Abbie was a gourmet chef), sports (watching, sometimes betting, and—yes—playing too), traveling (for pleasure), and flower gardening (that's how we met). Perhaps his greatest love of all was Johanna—his running mate, friend and lover for the past 15 years. A very special woman.

Abbie called himself an "American Dissident" and the "Jewish Road Warrior". He was a community organizer, a writer, and a rousing public speaker. Throughout, Abbie was a teacher—a teacher for anyone who wanted to learn. I was a student.

Abbie and I met in the summer of 1983. I had been accepted by him for an organizing internship at Save the River. Well, the project never materialized (like many of Abbie's good ideas), but I had nothing else to do so I traveled to the St. Lawrence River to see what was going on. Abbie and Johanna arrived for the summer not long after I did, and within twenty minutes I had become the gardener for the next few months.

Picking the weeds and Abbie's brain changed the little I had known about gardening while greatly enhancing my political understanding. I worked at Save The River after all and spent over a year there, fighting and winning a major environmental battle against the Army Corps of Engineers.

This was the beginning of our friendship. Abbie, Johanna and I have worked on and off together ever since. In fact, it was Abbie who first made me conscious of the situation in Central America—an issue that I have been working on ever since.

Overall, Abbie's commitment to youth was unwavering. In recent years he kept looking to others to carry on. How can we hope to replace him? We never will. Abbie will be missed.

In his spirit, I hope you will join me in recommitting ourselves to creative struggle against all forms of injustice. To laugh...to cry...to challenge...to fight...to understand that living is political and that if we act, we can make a difference.

Abbie died in peace...for peace we must live...

| ABBIE HOFFMAN PRESENTE! |

-- Lisa Fithian