

KIEF'S AUDIO/VIDEO

John Kiefer



Store Bio:

Kief's was founded in 1959 by John Kiefer. Disappointed by the lack of representation of his favorite blues and Rhythm & Blues artists in the local record shop, Mr. Kiefer rented a 600 sq. ft. of space in a fledgling strip mall. With the questionable, yet unshakeable, premise that other people were looking for Muddy Waters and Toussaint McCall, Kief's Records was born. Today, Kief's Audio/Video operation includes CD and DVD Sales, Home Audio and Home Theater, Custom Installation and Mobile Sound under one roof and comprising some 20,000 sq. ft. In 1998, Kief's opened a shop in downtown Lawrence called Kief's Downtown Music, dedicated to pre-recorded music. We've also pursued the one-stop and rack-jobbing end of the business. Like most successful independent retailers, Kief's sustained market presence has been based on a firm commitment to our customer, a commitment accompanied by an excitement about the products we sell and our ability to communicate that excitement. Kief's is a founding member of CIMS.

Owner Bio:

John Kiefer started the company as a small record shop in 1959. He's a good guy and a tremendous entrepreneur. As the company expanded, the various divisions took up more and more of his time. He is also a real estate investor. He and a partner embarked upon numerous projects which left him little time for the record business. This is where Steve Wilson comes in. He started with the company in 1973. Rock and roll had been calling the shots in his life since he saw Kathy Sterling dancing to "I Want To Hold Your Hand" in 1964. The longer he worked at Kief's, the more responsibility he took on. Never much of a place for division of labor, he only realized he was the store manager when some industry-type, after asking a few hundred questions, inquired as to his status. Having no ready answer, he then asked if Steve was the manager. Steve concurred that he must be. Soon after, he related the story to John Kiefer who agreed that Steve was indeed the manager. Despite being given the opportunity to pursue jobs in other sectors of the business, Steve says, "I have grown where I was planted. I love this company and I don't ever regret staying put. Besides, now that I'm old and crochety, the record companies and distributors probably wouldn't want me anyway."

Favorite Record:

Surely you jest.

Favorite Artist:

The Beatles.

Best In-Store

Performance:

We're not the in-store kings. Besides, I'm sufficiently distracted by the other b.s. that I don't pay the same full attention that I might at some other venue.

Most Memorable In-Store (that didn't go as planned):

They've all gone exactly as planned.

Favorite In Store Promotion:

I like the ones we do on our own, predicated completely on our excitement and enthusiasm for the music.

CIMS Membership Impact:

It certainly helped to maintain our profile. Being around since 1959, we've been pretty established as a known entity and a reporter in the industry...Above and beyond that, the camaraderie and commiseration has been wonderful, knowing that you have a lot of brothers and sisters out there going through the same things you are. It's provided some revenue streams, but to me, the association with the other members is the biggest thing.



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Buyer:Steve Wilson
Formats Sold:CD, DVD and vinyl
Best Selling Musical Genres:Alternative, rock, jazz and rap/hip-hop
Other Locations Kief's 823 Massachusetts Street, Lawrence, KS 66044.
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