



Dr. Cecil Kohake

March 14, 1950 - January 25, 2023

Dr. Cecil Bernard Kohake, 72, Topeka, Kansas, passed away Wednesday, January 25, 2023, surrounded by family and love.

Dr. Kohake was born on March 14, 1950, in Seneca, Kansas. He attended Most Pure Heart of Mary School and Hayden High School, where he was quarterback of the football team and cast as lead in the school musical his senior year. He graduated from Washburn University, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics. He was a member of the Kappa Sigma fraternity and was voted “anchor man” by the Delta Gamma Alumni Association.

Following undergrad, he earned his Doctor of Optometry at the Southern California School of Optometry, where he graduated cum laude. While there, he was co-director of a student-run organization called Project Concern that held free community vision screenings throughout Orange County.

After school, Dr. Kohake moved back to Topeka and joined the optometry practice of Drs. Reynolds and Reynolds in 1977. He had a long, fulfilling career as an optometrist in Topeka serving the community for 33 years. Dr. Kohake was elected a fellow of the American Academy of Optometry and was a charter member of the Contact Lens Sports Vision sections of the American Optometric Association. He was on the advisory board for Wesley-Jessen and

CIBA Vision contact lens companies, and was a member of the American Optometric Association, Kansas Optometric Association and Kansas Optometric Foundation. His alma mater, Southern California School of Optometry, created the Dr. Cecil B. Kohake Endowed Scholarship for Clinical Science to honor his accomplishments.

Giving back to his community and helping those in need was important to Dr. Kohake. He was active with many local charities including Kansas Big Brothers Big Sisters, Topeka Lions Club, Catholic Charities and Remote Area Medical, where he traveled the country donating eye care to the underserved. He also developed a program to screen the vision of student-athletes at Washburn University, as well as with the Special Olympics of Kansas.

Dr. Kohake leaves behind his wife of 45 years, Nancy; their two daughters, Hayley and Lexy (Rhodes); and his two grandchildren, Cooper and Quinn. He is survived by his mother, Bernice; his sister, Nancy (Tom); his brother, George; as well as 11 nieces and nephews whom he adored tremendously. We take peace knowing he is now reunited with his father, Cyril, sister, Beverly, and nephew, Drew.

Dr. Kohake loved his family more than anything. He took great pride in his profession and enjoyed learning, growing and helping others. He appreciated the arts and was an expert piano player and photographer. He liked experiencing new countries and cultures and traveled the world with his wife, Nancy, after retirement. He enjoyed playing and watching sports, was an avid golfer, and always looked forward to cheering on the KU, KSU and Washburn athletic teams with friends and family.

Dr. Kohake brought endless love and compassion to everyone around him. We miss him dearly and always will.

Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10 a.m. Wednesday, February 1, at Most Pure Heart of Mary Church. Burial will follow in Memorial Park Cemetery. All are invited to attend.

Memorial contributions are suggested to Most Pure Heart of Mary Church or the Kansas Optometric Association, sent in care of Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home, 2801 SW Urish Road, Topeka KS 66614.

Condolences may be sent online to www.kevinbrennanfamily.com.

Cemetery Details

Memorial Park Cemetery

3616 SW 6th Street
Topeka, KS 66606

Previous Events

Mass of Christian Burial

FEB 1. 10:00 AM (CT)

Most Pure Heart of Mary Church
3601 SW 17th Street
Topeka, KS 66604

Tribute Wall



“ *Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Dr. Cecil Kohake*



Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home - January 31, 2023 at 05:10 PM

“ *Dear Nancy and Family*
I feel terrible that I just learned about Cecil's passing. I want you to know that I always appreciated my friendship with Cecil that started while we were students at Washburn.
He provided me excellent care as an optometrist while I lived in Topeka and he always treated me with great kindness and consideration.
I am so embarrassed that I just heard about his passing. He was way too young.
I hope that the fact that your loss was shared by his many friends will provide some comfort.
Please accept my belated condolences. My thoughts and prayers are with you.
Jim Slattery

jim Slattery - August 03, 2024 at 09:29 PM

DE

“ I always appreciated Dr Kohake’s top notch professionalism and keen ability to fully educate & communicate any of my eye care issues. Always, every time. Always with sincere care & interest. Each visit ended with the feeling of saying thank you & goodbye to my Dr - and to a friend. Prayers and Peace to his entire family.

Debra - June 06, 2023 at 09:11 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Dr. Cecil Kohake.



February 05, 2023 at 09:45 PM

DB

“ My wife and I were patients of Cecil. I know you all know how great a guy he was, but maybe it doesn't hurt to hear that sentiment from others. I was 2 years behind Cecil at Washburn U. I didn't know him at that time but had heard his name mentioned in the Phi Delta Theta house and it seemed everyone liked him even though there was somewhat of a rivalry between the 2 frats. I came back to Topeka in 1984 and was working in the IRS office above his practice. I needed an eye doctor remembering his name from WU decided to give him a try. One of the best decisions I ever made. I very much looked forward to my appointments as I just enjoyed talking to him. We found we knew quite a few people in common from high school and college.

I credit Cecil with saving my left eye. I had an appt with him 2 days before a Thanksgiving holiday. He noticed the retina detaching. He immediately set set up an appointment for the next day with Dr. Dyer in KC. The day after Thanksgiving Dr. Dyer did the operation. Cecil was so concerned and helpful I couldn't thank him enough.

My wife and I were very honored to be invited to his retirement party. Unfortunately I only ran into him a couple times in retirement, and not in quite some time so I'm still somewhat in shock at his passing.

I'm very sorry for your loss and its really a loss to all who knew him.
Sincerely, Dean Burrell

Dean Burrell - February 01, 2023 at 11:27 PM

CW

“ The picture you share of Doc says it all for me. It's exactly how my heart remembers such a gentle, caring soul. A man who was as quick with a smile as he was focused on a person's health. I remember his deep concern for my heart health after looking at pictures of my eye... It made no sense to me at the time, but he didn't stop. He pushed me toward cardiac care which quite probably saved my life. Doc and his girls were such a blessing to all of us fortunate to share a bit of their life's journey...I know that his girls were his shining light. I send out my condolences to Mom, Haley and Lexi. Thanks for sharing this marvelous man with us all!

Corey Wilson - February 01, 2023 at 03:52 PM

AC

“ I was so sorry to hear of Dr Cecil's passing. I worked for him from 1987 till he retired. He was always so friendly and welcoming to all his patients and always looked so dapper. He was a great boss. I didn't know in 1987 that I would have my job interview with him because at that time the optometric practice was under Dr Reynolds and I didn't know that Cecil was an optometrist there. Funny story during my job interview he asked what high school I attended and I said " the same one you did". I guess he didn't remember me even though we were in some classes together. He did remember my husband though from sports in high school and before. I continued on at the optometric practice for 6 more years after he retired and his patients sure did love him and miss him. To Nancy and daughters and grandchildren please accept our condolences. Keep the sweet memories close

Alice Chavez - January 31, 2023 at 07:25 PM

E(

“ Emily Fundermann (Sherwood) purchased the Celestial Love for the family of Dr. Cecil Kohake.



Emily Fundermann (Sherwood) - January 31, 2023 at 06:35 PM

MG

“ Our prayers and condolences go out to the Kohake family. I had the blessing of having Lexi and Hayley in my class at TW and will always remember how respectful they were and that comes from amazing parents led by Dr. Kohake. Mike Goehring

mike goehring - January 30, 2023 at 09:15 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Dr. Cecil Kohake.



January 30, 2023 at 07:56 PM

RK

“ I had the good fortune to have Cecil as a classmate and roommate while we were in Optometry school. Cecil's natural abilities and personal charisma were recognized and admired by faculty, fellow students and Cecil's patients. After graduation, Cecil loaded all his belongings into his Volkswagen bug to travel from California and start his new life in Topeka. We knew when he left California in his small car that Cecil would have a fabulous Optometry career, a wonderful family life and that Topeka had gained a remarkable citizen. Nancy and family, I share your sorrow. RIP, Cecil.
Rick Kellogg, OD
Spokane, WA

Richard Kellogg - January 30, 2023 at 11:27 AM

TM

“ Nancy,

Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. Dr. Kohake will be missed, but his legacy will live on at DRO Optometry.

Drs Deutscher, Rottinghaus & Oxandale Optometry

Tami Martinak - January 30, 2023 at 10:38 AM

JH

“ Sure going to miss Cecil. He was a mentor at Kappa Sigma, a groomsman at my wedding and allowed our son who was interested in optometry to shadow him. We have lost a good one here. My condolences to Nancy and the rest of the family.

Jim Holt - January 29, 2023 at 03:55 PM



“ *Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of Dr. Cecil Kohake.*



January 29, 2023 at 08:54 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Dr. Cecil Kohake.*



January 28, 2023 at 04:00 PM



“ *Dr. Cecil Kohake*

January 28, 2023 at 12:08 PM



“ *Nancy,
My prayers to you & your family during this time, I know this has been a long journey. There are lots of school memories and I always enjoyed seeing Cecil in church with his girls. God bless.
Cheryl McCrite*

Cheryl McCrite - January 28, 2023 at 09:44 AM

MC

“ I started with Doctor Kohake in 1977. Besides being my doctor, we enjoyed discussions about Hayden, football and his family.

I will miss you Cecil. You were a wonderful friend.

May God bless you and your family.

Mike custenboder - January 27, 2023 at 11:38 PM

SH

“ I am so sorry to hear of Doctor Kohake’s death. He was an excellent optometrist. Always very professional, knowledgeable and soft spoken. My sympathy and prayers are with him and his loving family.

Sally Hubbell - January 27, 2023 at 09:46 PM

MB

“ Dr. Kohake was my optometrist for many years. He would always ask about our family. He was very thorough with the exams and offer great advice on improving your vision if needed. He was an asset to his profession and to the community. Rest in Peace!!!



Michael Browne - January 27, 2023 at 08:57 PM

LD

*I was in school with Cecil for thirteen years from kindergarten at Randolph elementary, to Most Pure Heart, to Hayden High School. He was a most thoughtful and genuinely nice kid to be around. I will always think of him as one of the good guys. I’m sorry for your loss.
Leanne Rupp Dillingham*

Leanne Rupp Dillingham - January 28, 2023 at 03:37 PM

LB

Cecil's loss leaves a hole in his family's hearts. Lord, may they be comforted by all the beautiful memories they shared together.
Lynn Barnes

Lynn Barnes - January 28, 2023 at 07:43 PM

RB

He was our family eye doctor for years. We really like him. God bless your family.

Ralph Baumgartner - January 29, 2023 at 01:08 PM

DC

I am so very sorry to hear of Dr. Kohake's passing. I worked for him in the early 90s. He was so very kind to patients and staff. It was a pleasure to work for a man who was so dedicated to the lives he touched. RIP Dr Kohake! You will be missed.

Deanna (Bauer) Chrisp - January 30, 2023 at 10:28 AM

PE

I share my condolences with Cecil's family in his passing. I had been his patient longer than I can remember. We had crossed paths during our college days at Washburn, but it was the doctor patient relationship that I will remember fondly. I looked forward to my checkups because included with my exams were great conversations about life happenings. He was always interested in my career as a classroom teacher, and in my association with Topeka Festival Singers as a vocalist. I kept complaining that every note in the music seemed to have a "tail"! His reply was, "Well, we can't have that if you are going to continue singing!" He delved into the problem to discover that I had a rare astigmatism that required different contact lenses. Such a kind and nice man. I am so very sorry for all of his family in his passing.

Pam Ensley - February 01, 2023 at 04:16 PM

NK

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all of the kind words and expressions of Love and memories 💖 Cecil is and ALWAYS will be so deeply missed by Hayley, Lexy, Rhodes, Cooper, Quinn and myself. He was an amazing Gentleman and life definitely was not fair to this Man. Love you Forever Cecil B 💖 💖 + - Nanny 💖

Nancy Kohake - July 16, 2023 at 09:44 PM