



Kenneth "Ken" Stephen

July 9, 1946 - August 4, 2024

Ken Stephen came into this world on July 9, 1946, in Emporia, Kansas, the first of four boys born to Charles and Louise Stephen. He learned responsibility at a young age and always looked out for his mom and younger brothers. There was a lot of fishing at Peter Pan Park, even though the Stephen brothers never significantly decreased the fish population. Ken met Betty, the love of his life, in Junior High band class behind the snare drums. After a couple of false starts, they both realized their love for each other and were married on August 1, 1965. Uncle Sam came calling shortly after, and the first years of their marriage were spent with the Air Force in Germany. He worked long nights in undisclosed locations as a radio operator protecting Western Europe during the Cold War. Once his service to his country was complete, Ken and Betty settled in Emporia and started their family. While Ken was earning his bachelor's degree in accounting at Emporia State University (go Hornets!), he became a father to Dana and David, and his family was complete.

Ken took pride in providing for his family and serving his community. He worked in banking for 25 years, and then embarked on a new career in healthcare auditing. He was active in the Lion's Club of Emporia, proudly serving as President in 1979, until the family relocated to Topeka in 1980. He was the President of the Wanamaker Elementary PTO for the 1982 school year. After he retired, he found a way to combine these interests by working

as a bus driver for the Auburn-Washburn and Hayden school districts. 'Mr. Ken' loved the kids on his routes and was always touched when his former charges found him at the school and stopped to say hi. He signed up for every possible high school sports team trip and was always ready to encourage and cheer on the youth of our community.

Baseball was a lifelong passion of Ken's. He played a lot of sandlot ball with his brother Charles as a kid and played summer ball as a middle infielder through high school. His Army post-mates were even willing to let an Air Force guy share his skills with their team. He coached David's youth baseball teams and Dana's youth softball teams in the 80's and travelled many hours over the past 15 years to watch his grandsons Max and Cooper play in Texas and Kansas. Not surprisingly, he was a loyal and avid Royals fan, and was delighted over their World Series win in 2015 after a 30 year wait.

Emporia High didn't have a baseball team, but Ken was a varsity basketball player (forward) and ran track and cross country for his school. He never played football, but was a big fan, and as with the Royals, was delighted when the Chiefs finally won another Super Bowl in 2019. He also had season tickets to Kansas State football for several years and his family has happy memories of multiple bowl game trips over the years.

Those who knew Ken will remember his dry and goofy sense of humor. You never knew when an over-the-top impersonation or silly pose was coming your way, and he could sucker you in with his deadpan statements and explanations. He loved Benny Hill, Hogan's Heros, and silly songs like 'You Can't Roller Skate with a Buffalo Herd' and 'Chug a Lug'. Not only did he like 50's and 60's music, but he knew the lyrics to nearly every song that was played!

Ken is survived by his wife of 59 years, Betty, children David (Rhonda) of

Independence, Kansas, and Dana (Greg Scofield) of Austin, Texas, grandsons Max and Cooper, brother Gary (Donna) of Emporia, Kansas, and nieces LaDonna and LaVerne, along with their families, also of Emporia.

Ken was the best husband, father, and brother anyone could hope for, and will be missed without measure.

Visitation will be 5 to 6 p.m. Friday, September 6, 2024, at Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home, 2801 SW Urish Road, Topeka KS 66614, where service will begin at 6 p.m. with military honors to follow.

At that time the family is hoping to gather any written remembrances and stories his friends or family may wish to offer. In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting donations in Ken's name to either the Disabled American Veterans or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in care of the funeral home.

Condolences may be sent online at www.kevinbrennanfamily.com

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP 6. 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM (CT)

Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home
2801 SW Urish Road
Topeka, KS 66614
(785) 272-7888
info@kevinbrennanfamily.com

Memorial Service

SEP 6. 6:00 PM (CT)

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2801 SW Urish Road
Topeka, KS 66614
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Tribute Wall



“ Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Kenneth "Ken" Stephen



Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home - August 28, 2024 at 03:14 PM

JL

We were classmates from elementary school through Emporia High School. We were both on the Woodland Park Dairy baseball team for two summers. He was an outstanding pitcher. Ken will be missed.

Jim Liles - August 30, 2024 at 06:19 AM



“ Basket Full of Wishes was purchased for the family of Kenneth "Ken" Stephen.



September 05, 2024 at 11:10 AM



“ Carl Hill lit a candle in memory of Kenneth "Ken" Stephen



Carl Hill - August 13, 2024 at 05:19 PM



“ Kenny was a gentle and kind spirit as well as a dedicated husband and Father. He never seemed to complain and took life with a smile and a positive attitude. The times we were together were most valued, and he will be missed by all who knew him, One could not ask for a better brother-in-law. Our hearts go out to his wife and children, and may he have fair winds and following seas on his journey home.

Our love to the Stephen family

Carl Hill - August 13, 2024 at 05:03 PM

LM

“ Dear Stephen Family, I loved Kenny and will always remember how he kept Betty straight on our phone calls. (Of course it went both ways 😊) This was just something I will always remember. We would be talking and Kenny would chime in. It is a fond memory for me.

LeAnn McGranahan - August 13, 2024 at 12:37 PM

RC

“ Dear Betty, Dana, David, and Family,
What a beautiful tribute to Ken. He was an amazing husband, father, grandfather, and friend. We remember his kind spirit, and how gentle he was around, “the babies.” We have such fond memories spending time with the wonderful Stephen’s family. We will hold you in our hearts and keep you in our prayers during this difficult time.

All our love, Rod, Susan, Shelby, and Tyler Chilson

Rod and Susan Chilson - August 07, 2024 at 08:10 PM

GK

*Dear Betty, Dana, David and Family,
This was indeed a beautiful tribute to one very deserving man. My late husband Dan and I met the Stephen family at the Ken Berry ballpark as Kenny and Dan coached and Betty and I cheered from the bleachers. Such great memories were made over the years! Kenny was always upbeat and had a big smile for everyone. He will be greatly missed by those who knew and loved him.
Much love and sympathy to the family, Gloria and Daniel Kapelle*

Gloria Kapelle - August 08, 2024 at 01:42 PM