



Kenneth G. Gerken

April 25, 1938 - March 19, 2024

TOWNSEND: Kenneth Graham Gerken, 85, of West Townsend, passed away peacefully at Lahey Hospital, Burlington, March 19, 2024 surrounded by family.

Ken was born on April 25, 1938 in Woodhaven, New York and grew up in Stony Brook, LI, NY. He was the son of Charles W. and Dorothy (Brodt) Gerken. Ken was a beloved husband, brother, father, stepfather, grandfather, great-grandfather, uncle and friend.

Ken attended Stony Brook Prep School, Long Island, NY. After graduation from Roanoke College in Salem, VA, he enlisted in the United States Navy Aviation Helicopter Program.

He served two tours in Vietnam performing Vertical Replenishment. After four years of active duty he continued to serve in the Navy reserves and retired at the rank of Lieutenant Commander.

In 1978 Ken was presented the Navy Commendation medal for heroic achievement. He removed a critically injured pilot from a blazing helicopter wreckage following

its crash.

Ken waited with the pilot despite intense heat and threatening flames until the arrival of medical personnel and successful transport of the pilot.

After military retirement Ken received his Teacher's Certificate and Master's Degree

from Fitchburg State College. He taught Physical Education in the Shirley and Westford

School Systems and officiated high school sports in the region. Ken also flew the corporate helicopter for Simplex Corporation in Gardner.

Ken and Susan traveled the world from The Great Wall of China, hiking through Italy,

canal boating in England, couriers to Singapore and biking through Holland.

They

traveled across the country in their RV "Pickle Machine" and spent 20 winters in Key West at Sigsbee Naval Air Station campground.

Ken will be most remembered for his generous heart, kindness and service to others.

He was an active member of the community of many Townsend organizations: Townsend Ecumenical Outreach, New Beginnings United Methodist Church, Rod & Gun Club, VFW Post 6538, Senior Center and Lions Club.

Ken and his wife Susan were honored in 2013 with the William E. May Endowment

Award in recognition of "Extraordinary Acts of Generosity" presented by Friends of the

Townsend Seniors.

Ken leaves his wife of 33 years, Susan; three sons Timothy of Pepperell,

Geoff of Shirley, Kenneth Jr. of Ashby, stepchildren Tracey Anderson-Kollar and her husband, Joe, of Bridgeport, CT, Jeff Anderson of Conroe, TX, Carol Anderson-Farwell, Brookline, NH, Michael Anderson and his wife, Kathy, of Houston, TX and Debbie Falconer and her husband, Bill, of Fitchburg; grandchildren Michael, Mary Cate, Leah, Terrance John, Jessica, Haley, Christian, Nicholas; great-grandchildren Tai and Colton; brother Larry Gerken; nephew Matthew Gerken and great-niece Alina Gerken.

Ken's family will receive relatives and friends at calling hours, 4- 7PM Sunday, March 24, 2024 at the Anderson Funeral. Home, 250 Main Street (Rte 119) Townsend Center

A memorial service will be held 11 AM Monday, March 25, 2024 at New Beginnings United Methodist Church, 265 Main Street, Townsend.

Memorial contributions may be made to the NMRS Scholarship Foundation, PO Box 715, Townsend, MA 01469.

Interment with military honors will be held privately at Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery, 111 Glenallen Street, Winchendon

Cemetery Details

Massachusetts Veterans Cemetery

111 Glenallen Street
Winchendon, MA

Previous Events

Calling Hours

MAR **24.** 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Anderson Funeral Home - Townsend
250 Main Street ~ Route 119
Townsend, MA 01469
(978) 597-2692

Memorial Service

MAR **25.** 11:00 AM (ET)

New Beginnings United Methodist Church
265 Main Street
Townsend, MA 01469
<http://newbeginningsumcma.org>

Tribute Wall

RS

“ I heard about Kens passing. He was my favorite Gym Teacher in Robinson and Cameron school. I had some good times with me and helped me overcome my fears of heights on the gymnastics equipment. I will miss him.

Richard Sturtevant - March 27, 2024 at 06:56 PM

GD

“ On behalf of the Dearborn family we are so sorry for your loss Sue.
- Glenn, Janet & Alberta Dearborn

Glenn Dearborn - March 25, 2024 at 06:31 AM

BR

“ 4 files added to the album Ken and Hirk



Bill Rideout - March 24, 2024 at 05:20 PM

GL

“ Blessings to Tim, Geoff, and Ken. You had an amazing dad. Love and hugs to Susan, married by Miller Lovett on his deck 33 years ago on 9/9/90. I will miss Ken. My heart reaches out to you. Ginny Lovett

Ginny Lovett - March 23, 2024 at 12:31 PM

DS

“ David and Susan Scribner purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of Kenneth G. Gerken.



David and Susan Scribner - March 23, 2024 at 10:55 AM

DS

“ David and Susan Scribner planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Kenneth G. Gerken.

David and Susan Scribner - March 23, 2024 at 10:55 AM

JD

“ To The Gerken Family, Martha and I received the info on Kens passing with heavy and sad hearts. We spend many years enjoying Key West in our RV with Ken and Sue and they honored us with their attendance at our wedding in Florida 17 years ago. Ken loved people and always greeted everyone with that wonderful smile of his. Always fun to be in his presence. RIP dear friend.
JJ and Martha Demartini
Ecuador

JOHN DEMARTINI - March 22, 2024 at 11:52 PM

JS

I was one of the many children in the Westford elementary schools lucky enough to have Mr. Gerken as my gym teacher. Enthusiastic and kind is how I remember him. ❤️ Jes Kusmin Sloan (Frost School 1977-82, Westford)

Jes Kusmin Sloan - March 23, 2024 at 07:00 PM

MF

Ken was one of three gym teachers who rotated schools - he worked with Frank Bishop and Chris Lightbody at Frost School where I taught. The children loved him as did I for the fun, skill and warmth he brought. Through the years we remained friends. When I went through an unexpected divorce Ken had me come home to his house with Sue for dinner. His warmth and compassion touched me to this day. Everyone who knew him was lucky. He will be forever in my thoughts and memories. ❤️❤️

Marilyn Frank - March 24, 2024 at 01:52 PM



“*Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Kenneth G. Gerken.*”



March 22, 2024 at 01:35 PM

DF

“*My most sincere condolences to Sue and all of Ken's family...Ken will be sorely missed.*”

"Non sibi sed patriae"

Dave Funaiole - March 22, 2024 at 12:47 PM



“*Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Kenneth G. Gerken.*”



March 22, 2024 at 11:22 AM

LB

“ Love, Todd, Kristina and Noah Bakke planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Kenneth G. Gerken.

Love, Todd, Kristina and Noah Bakke - March 22, 2024 at 11:22 AM

BR

“ Thanks for all you did for Townsend Ken. We are all lucky to have been your friend, and the world is a better place for your well lived life! Bill and Cheryl Rideout

Bill Rideout - March 22, 2024 at 10:08 AM

SF

“ Susan and family so sorry to hear of Ken's passing. Remembering his kindness and seeing him at the Senior Center when bringing Mom (Pat) Freeman for a hearing test. Always engaging in conversation with only love and kindness. Dad (George) Freeman spoke of him often and the many conversations they had at church always with a big smile on his face. His light shined bright for all to see.

Sandy Freeman - March 22, 2024 at 06:09 AM



“ Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Kenneth G. Gerken.



March 21, 2024 at 11:45 PM

AT

“ To Jeff and family We are good neighbors of Jeff. May he rest in peace. Mike and Adele Turnbull

Adele Turnbull - March 21, 2024 at 10:42 PM

LM

“ Dearest Susan and family...sending heartfelt love and condolences. Ken truly was a caring and kind friend. He will be missed by many. Love, Lindsay

Lindsay Morand - March 21, 2024 at 09:42 PM



“ Serenity Wreath was purchased for the family of Kenneth G. Gerken.



March 21, 2024 at 09:24 PM

FF

“ From Van Tran and Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Kenneth G. Gerken.

From Van Tran and Family - March 21, 2024 at 09:24 PM

KE

“ Deepest condolences to Mr. Gerken's wife, children, grandchildren, and all other family. Mr. Gerken was my gym teacher at Robinson Elementary way back in the 80s. I loved running around and being active but he brought fun to another level. Will always remember all the games, especially "The Grand Canyon" that was made complete with a whistle when you fell off. He made Square Dancing fun for kids. Long live the Golden sneaker. He was just the best. I now work with kids and I always hope that they have a gym teacher like Mr. Gerken. RIP Mr. Gerken!

Kendra - March 21, 2024 at 09:24 PM

BR

“ My condolences to the family.



Brenda Rodgers - March 21, 2024 at 07:30 PM

ET

“ Susan I was so sorry to learn of Ken's passing. He will be missed. I will never forget Ken's kindness in visiting Ron when he was in the hospital. It brightened Ron's day. May all the wonderful memories you have give you comfort in this difficult time. May God give you peace. Elaine Tittlemore

Elaine Tittlemore - March 21, 2024 at 02:12 PM

LS

“ So sorry to hear of Ken's passing. He was a true gentleman and lit up a place when he entered a room. Sending our love and sympathy at this difficult time. Lucille and Jack Sampson

Lucille Sampson - March 21, 2024 at 01:40 PM

KH

“ We were fortunate to have Ken as our neighbor on Sunset Lake, in Ashburnham. He was a wonderful man and neighbor. We are sorry for your loss. -Ken & Diane Hamilton

Ken and Diane Hamilton - March 21, 2024 at 01:14 PM

LS

“ Susan and family...we are so sorry to hear of Ken's passing. His smile will always be remembered and may his life have been for a blessing. Laurie and Pam Shifrin

Laura E Shifrin - March 21, 2024 at 12:48 PM

DC

What a very special person Ken was. Never a negative word only smiles and encouragement to everyone he and even more to us lucky enough to call him friend. So sorry for the lose to his family and us.

Dick Carbon

Dick Carbon - March 21, 2024 at 06:33 PM

RL

Dear Susan and family, you're in my thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. I will miss his humor..

Rosalie Longo - March 21, 2024 at 09:01 PM

KR

*Dear Susan and Family:
Ken and I first met when he was supervising baseball umpires in Acton, MA, in the early 1970s. As good fortune would have it our paths crossed again as teachers in the same department in the Westford Public Schools, eventually we worked in the same school together. As the school Physical Education teacher his students participated in games and activities they embraced and thoroughly enjoyed. His contributions to activities like Field Day and Grade Five Camp provided children with experiences I'm certain they'll never forget. Long live the goodness that Ken exhibited with others on a continual basis....kindness, caring, and love were his trademark. May God rest his soul in paradise.
Sincerely-
Kevin Regan*

Kevin Regan - March 22, 2024 at 01:20 PM

AD

*Susan: Ken was a special person and will be greatly missed at church.
Anne Deaver and Jennifer Cook.*

Anne Deaver - March 22, 2024 at 06:39 PM

LL

To Susan and family - we are truly saddened to learn of Ken's passing. All our adventures together - western Mass, Hawaii, England, Vancouver Island (great trips!), and the last trip was Lake Powell and hiking through Antelope Canyon - all treasured memories now. We send our love.

Linda & John Leng - March 23, 2024 at 10:31 PM

MO

I met Ken years ago on my first visit to Townsend Ridge and he impressed me immediately with his kind and pleasant demeanor. Over the years we played golf together many times and shared a lot of laughs and wonderful memories. I often tell stories of those to others I meet and will continue to do so. I will miss him and think of him often, especially at the golf course. He was special.

Moe Dery

Moe - March 24, 2024 at 09:53 AM