

Ralph "Ken" Cooksey

August 11, 1945 - January 9, 2022

Ralph "Ken" Cooksey, 76, passed away on Sunday, January 9, 2022. He was born on August 11, 1945, in Evansville, IN, and was a longtime resident of Libertyville and Grayslake, IL. Ken's passion for learning earned him several degrees and continued throughout his life with classes in astronomy, computer programming, photography, and aviation ground school. He was a beloved physics teacher at Deerfield High School for 30 years and head of the Rocket Club. Ken was an active member of the United Methodist Church in Libertyville, where he took pride in being a Stephen Minister, offering prayer and support, and initiating the distribution of handheld wooden crosses. Ken was a member of the RC Flyers at Saddlebrook Farms and enjoyed playing poker. He will be remembered as an avid outdoors person that loved biking, canoeing, fishing, camping, outdoor photography, and complicated jokes. Ken is survived by his wife of 30 years, Leslie Cooksey; children, David (Amanda) Cooksey, Gwen (Ben) Dowell, Matthew (Anoosh) Cooksey, and Sara (Joshua) Jakubowski; grandchildren, Abigail and Felicity Cooksey, William, Julia, and Nicholas Dowell, Arlo, Adrineh, and Aiden Cooksey, Jaxon and Connor Sikora, and Aslan Reeves; brother, Dr. Steven Cooksey and former wife and dear friend, Jean Cooksey. He was preceded in death by his brother, Randal Cooksey, and grandson, Nathaniel Cooksey.

Arrangements by Burnett-Dane Funeral Home in Libertyville, IL. Memorial contributions can be made to the Parkinson Foundation, www.parkinsonfound

ation.org or ASPCA, <https://secure.aspca.org/donate>. The Cooksey Family would love to see your shared memories and photos of Ken at www.burnettda ne.com or call (847) 362-3009 for more information.

Tribute Wall



“ Ken was a neighbor when I lived in the Strawberry Condominiums. While there a poker group was formed that lasted at least 40 years (1974 - 2014). Here are a couple pictures of the group



Navyne Kline - January 24, 2022 at 10:13 AM

CA

“ I remember Ken as the great dad of two darling little boys (when they attended Libertyville Cooperative Nursery School). He was a very kind and gentle guy. Ken was also a DHS Science Department colleague of my husband, Vance. Both of them taught physics. Vance remembers that Ken used many intriguing objects to teach physics to his students. Ken and Leslie were the wonderful hosts of several outstanding Science Department picnics in their large back yard, complete with fires for roasting hot dogs, etc. After the guys retired, they formed a Breakfast Club, which met once a month (photo below). They enjoyed talking about "old times" and recent happenings. Even when his health was declining, Ken attended the meetings, always arriving with a big smile and never complaining. Thank you, Leslie, for driving him to the last few meetings before the pandemic and for taking such good care of him. We all enjoyed Ken's company. We will miss him greatly

Carol - January 23, 2022 at 10:57 PM

CH

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Carol & Vance Huntsinger - January 23, 2022 at 10:34 PM

DA

“ 7 files added to the album Dad



David - January 17, 2022 at 05:39 PM

RS

“ I taught with Ken at Deerfield High for many years. When our kids were small we went with Ken, David, and Matthew in his camper for an overnight in Fishlake Park. It was a blast for this city slicker. I remember many cookouts with the Cookseys at their place in Libertyville with that big, beautiful backyard. Beer and cheddarbrats done right in the bbq pit! Ken was an easy-going gentleman with a big heart. A couple of years ago we had breakfast together and I got to see his big, bad Ram pickup that he was so proud of! RIP Ken.

Randall Schultz - January 14, 2022 at 11:30 PM

FA

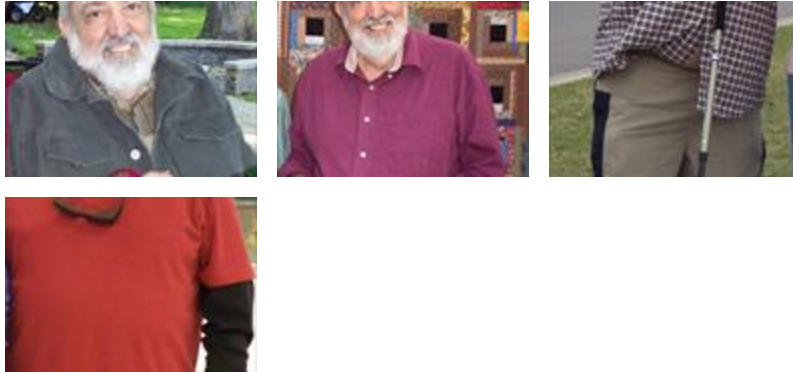
“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Family - January 14, 2022 at 04:36 PM

NE

“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



Neighbors - January 14, 2022 at 04:28 PM

MJ

“ *It's hard to know what to say about such a wonderful man that sums it up in just a few words.*

My uncle Ken was the greatest uncle I could ask for. In many circumstances served as a second father to me. He was always quick with a witty comment and I can still hear his infectious laugh.

Ken's love of family and God are what drew many people to him. More memories than I can count of spending time with Ken and the family up north making memories.

You are all in our thoughts and prayers as you grieve the loss of uncle Ken!

Mary Jette - January 13, 2022 at 04:35 PM

GH

“ When we moved to Sunset Acres in Libertyville 40 yr, ago, we were very fortunate to live right across from Ken Cooksey and family. As Bill was mowing the "hayfield" at the house, Ken came over to help & bring sandwiches. First indicator of a good man and neighbor. There were a couple July 4th's where fireworks came sailing over the house. Bill responded in kind back over Ken's house. Couple of crazy men (BOYS) !! And there were contests of who would gain the least weight. The winner got beer (calorie-free of course). As Ken and Bill retired. there was biking, kayaking, and Ken teaching Bill fly fishing. When Bill bought first computer, Ken was right there to help with set up. Always the teacher. Ken's love of photography gave us many pictures to treasure. He had a way of capturing the best around him. He had many wonderful witty sayings, some of which we have adopted with special memories attached. Ken and family invited us over to many family functions. It was such a delight to see the children grow up and their spouses join the family. The house across the street will always be "the Cooksey house". Our condolences to the entire family. We will miss a good neighbor and friend.

Wonder if Ken is already sharing those witty sayings in his new life ? Maybe.

Bill and Glatha Henson

Glatha Henson - January 13, 2022 at 03:23 PM

KD

“ Early morning, before classes started at Deerfield High School, I would see Ken and his students giggling down the hallway holding all kind of homemade rockets (and things that were supposed to be rockets) as they headed outside to blast them off. Ken and the kids excitement with the anticipation to see how the rockets would perform was contagious. Other than the beard, it was sometimes hard to tell Ken from the kids. They would experiment and try all different things to see if it would fly. The fun they were having was so contagious, I started to join them on their early morning adventures. They decided to call their club DASA, (Deerfield Aero-Space Association), why I'll never know, but I guess they wanted to make it sound more intellectual than it was. I learned from Ken to allow kids the freedom to stretch their imagination, even though he knew their idea wouldn't work or fly. When Ken retired, he asked me if I wanted to take over as sponsor of the DASA club, which I enthusiastically did. Many years later, DASA, the club he started is still going strong. I hope Ken will remember to look down on Thursday afternoons at around 3:30pm to see the rockets of DASA heading his way.

Kevin Duray

Kevin Duray - January 12, 2022 at 03:53 PM



“ Ken was one the first teachers I connected with when starting up at Deerfield HS. I was hired to be a physics teacher, and Ken was already a veteran. We would share ideas and approaches to make physics interesting to the kids.

Ken was very level-headed in his approach to seemingly everything in life, and maintained that disposition in order to stay happy doing things (like teaching teenagers) for the long haul.

Ken lived his life as a "faithful servant", and will be missed by many.

RIP Ken

John Bruss

John Bruss - January 12, 2022 at 12:09 PM

JH

“ I remember Cooksey very well he was one of the most experienced teachers when I first started teaching at Deerfield High School. He was the original physics survey teacher. He was a very good teacher and made physics fun for his students who loved him. He also hosted most of the end of the year department parties at his house back in the day. He will be missed. He was a great role model for staying calm, no matter what was going on administratively, and always putting his students first.

My condolences to his family and friends. Thank you for sharing this wonderful man with us at Deerfield High School.

Jeff Hoyer

Jeff Hoyer - January 12, 2022 at 11:35 AM

NE

“ I have many memories of playing with the three Cooksey brothers that lived just a few yards from us in McCutchanville as a child. Then as a grownup enjoying Swope family reunions at their home on the hill north of the airport in Evansville. Wishing the family many memories of Ken. Neil & Judith McCutchan

Neil - January 12, 2022 at 09:24 AM

LE

“ 7 files added to the album Memories Album



Leslie - January 12, 2022 at 08:47 AM

DG

“ Kenny, as well as all the Cooksey boys, were always among my favorite cousins! I was 8 years older than Kenny, but whenever we went to Indiana (we live in Ga) we would often stay with the Cookseys and we would play together when we all were younger! Several times the Cookseys would come and visit us in Ga. Once when Kenny was very young, we all went to a public swimming pool. Kenny jumped off the side of the pool and when he did his swimsuits came off! Alice got it and for a few minutes tossed it back and forth to my mother his Aunt Isabell, and played keep away from Kenny, much to his embarrassment! But Kenny was little and not many other people in the pool who probably didn't notice! Still, Kenny was mortified!

Another time, Kenny came to visit when he was an adult! It might have been when my father died! But one day we decided to show our Indiana family the local sites so we took them to see Safari Country! There you could drive your car thru a game preserve where there were lions and other wild animals roaming freely! The problem was that our old car broke down in the middle of the reserve, surrounded by lions roaming freely about us! This was before cell phones with no means of communication for help, but help did come and we were “rescued!”

So sorry to hear of Kenny's passing!

Don Germano - January 12, 2022 at 07:06 AM

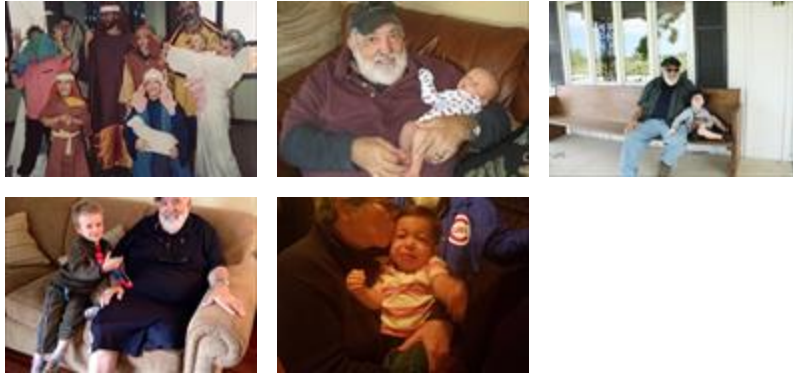


“ [https://www.burnettdane.com/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518"; target="_blank">Memorial Trees was purchased for the family of Ralph "Ken" Cooksey.](https://www.burnettdane.com/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518)

January 12, 2022 at 02:18 AM

SJ

“ Some of my favorite pictures ❤️



Sara Jakubowski - January 11, 2022 at 09:09 PM

LJ

“ Such an amazing GIFT you were to so many dear Ken...your legacy of love and devotion for all (especially children) and the JOY of Christ you always shared will be remembered for generations to come. Your love of life and the love of laughter made every interaction a moment to remember and cherish. No job too big no problem unable to fix and no one ever EVER will forget the LOVE you joyously gave to anyone down and out. Your heart had an endless supply of compassion! We shall miss you physically but you will forever be in our hearts! ❤️🙏 Leslie, David, Gwen, Matt and Sara...we love you and are praying for your hearts! Thank you for sharing your Dad with us....Always and Forever! 🙏❤️

lisa Jones - January 11, 2022 at 09:07 PM

BG

“ One of my close McCutchanville friends...can remember running into you folks at Turkey Run State Park!

Bob Ginger - January 11, 2022 at 07:55 PM

BJ

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Leslie, David, Gwen, Matt and Sara...we love you and are praying for your hearts! Thank you for sharing your Dad with us....Always and Forever!🙏❤️*

Bob and Lisa Jones - January 11, 2022 at 08:56 PM