



Kenneth Sparks

August 7, 1932 - May 19, 2016

Kenneth Norman Sparks, 83, of Charlotte, died peacefully on Thursday, May 19, 2016 in Charlotte. Ken was born August 7, 1932, in Charlotte, MI, the youngest of the 6 children of William Harrison and Ilza Elnora (McArthur) Sparks. Unfortunately, at the age of 5, Ken lost his father tragically. His mother later married Albert Germain, who continued to raise Ken.

Ken graduated from Charlotte High School and was an avid athlete in football, basketball and track. He attended Michigan State College (now MSU), where he was very proud to walk-on as a center for the football team. Ken asked Joyce (Schenck) to marry him at the MSC stack and they were married on July 11, 1953 and together they raised 5 children.

Ken was drafted in 1954 and served a short time in Atlanta, GA before shipping off to France for 1 ½ years. When he returned to the United States, he apprenticed at Intaglio Cylinder Service before receiving his Master Engraver. He then worked for Michigan Gravure and eventually started his own company with his two sons, Tri-K Cylinder Service.

He was a member of the Eaton County Shrine Club, Rotary Club of Charlotte and Charlotte Country Club.

Ken loved camping all over the United States, first with a tent and eventually a motor coach. Through their extensive travels Ken and Joyce visited all 50 states. Ken loved snow skiing, golfing, sports, hunting, fishing, playing cards and working on vehicles. He loved animals, especially his German Shepherds. Above all, Ken was a huge family man and always enjoyed time

spent together with family, especially taking his entire family, including grandchildren, on a 7-day cruise. He and Joyce visited every state and traveled the world together and enjoyed time with their many friends. Ken is survived by his wife, Joyce Sparks whom he was married to for 62 years; their children, Jennie (Tom) Richardson, Jodie Leeser, Kent (Susan) Sparks, Kurk (Donna) Sparks and Judie (John) Bridleman; 11 grandchildren, Jeffrey (Amber) Richardson, Kirsten (Curtis) Wondra, Kyle Leeser, Jay Sparks, Sophia Sparks, Kevin Sparks, Kali Sparks, Kaci Sparks, Kyan Sparks, Jacob Bridleman and Jordan Bridleman; sister, Betty Sutfin; and brother, Gordon Sparks. He was predeceased by his brothers, Donald Sparks, Russell Sparks, and Robert Sparks.

Funeral services will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, May 24, 2016 at First Congregational Church of Charlotte with Rev. Phil Hobson officiating.

Visitation will be from 2:00 – 4:00 and 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. on Monday, May 23, 2016 at Pray Funeral Home, Charlotte. Interment will take place in Maple Hill Cemetery, Charlotte. Memorial Contributions may be made to Sensations Memory Care 511 E. Shepherd St., Charlotte, MI, or First Congregational Church of Charlotte 106 Bostwick St., Charlotte, MI.

Previous Events

Funeral Ceremony

MAY **24**. 11:00 AM (ET)

First Congregational Church of Charlotte
106 S. Bostwick
Charlotte, MI 48813

Tribute Wall



“ *Pray Funeral Home, Inc created a Tribute Video in memory of Kenneth Sparks*



Pray Funeral Home, Inc. - May 23, 2016 at 12:30 PM

LS

“ *2 files added to the album Life Tributes*



Laurie Sparks-Sellers - May 26, 2016 at 10:13 PM

JR

“ *1 file added to the album Life Tributes*



jennie richardson - May 26, 2016 at 01:15 PM

JR

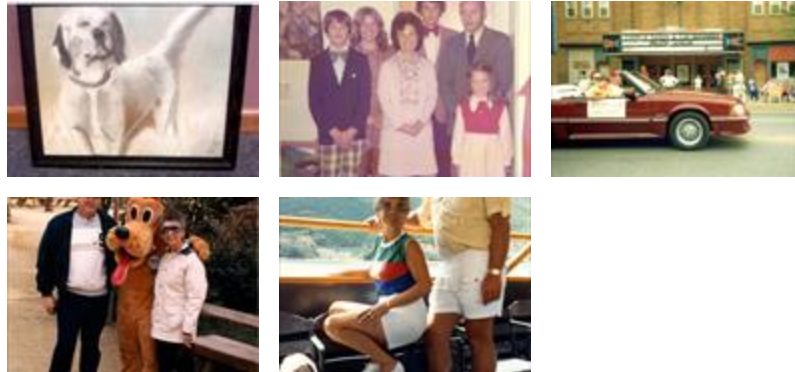
“ 2 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



jennie richardson - May 26, 2016 at 12:04 PM

JR

“ 11 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



jennie richardson - May 25, 2016 at 08:23 PM

RS

“ Evie and I have known Ken and his family for 41 years. My boys grew up on many family adventures with his family over the years. Ken over the years became my closest friend. We both shared many of the same values and love of family. We have golfed together and traveled together in RV's in many states, and the four of us have been on special vacations in the US and other countries. Ken was always willing to help somebody or fix something that had gone wrong. I remember one year my family was traveling in Illinois west of Chicago in our motorhome and we started to have engine trouble. If you know me, you know anything mechanical is like a foreign language to me. This was before cell phones. We pulled into a gas station and I called Ken to ask for advice as to what might be happening and what I should do. Ken said stay there. I am on my way. He TOWED our motorhome with his motorhome all the way back to Michigan. Oh....I forgot to mention, this was on Father's Day. Kind, generous and loyal are only a few of the words that describe Ken.

23 years ago we sold Sherman Pharmacy in Charlotte and moved to Arizona. We did keep a home in the Lansing area and each summer for all of those years Evie and I have rekindled our friendship with Joyce and Ken.

The family knows I cannot make it back to Ken's funeral because of some medical tests I am having done. I am very disappointed that I cannot be there to be with the family as they celebrate Ken's life. Last summer, both Evie and I made many trips to Sensations to visit with Ken and it turns out this was our goodbye. We had some very special times on the patio at Sensations as we talked of old times and old adventures. I am told that these were some of the rare times that Ken remembered many past events. We spoke about fun and dumb things we had done. Ken even remembered some things I had forgotten about.

The last time I visited him in August and told him I would not be back until next summer, he became very sad, he took my hand and thanked me for visiting. There were tears in his eyes. I believe he knew that we would never see one another again.

I am so grateful for those visits and so much enjoyed seeing that

mischievous grin that he was known for. I look forward to seeing that grin again when we get together in Heaven for our next adventure.

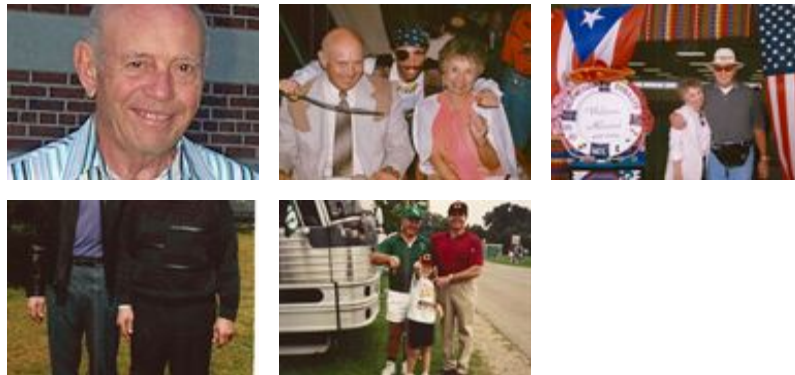
Thank you to the Sparks family for making our family part of yours. Goodbye to the best friend ever.

Ron Sherman

Ron Sherman - May 23, 2016 at 12:33 PM



“ 158 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Pray Funeral Home, Inc. - May 23, 2016 at 11:55 AM

PW

“ *Dear Joyce, Jodie, Jennie, Kent, Kurk and Judie - I'm thinking of you all fondly but with sadness over your loss. I hope you take comfort as I do in remembering all the fun times and great personality your Dad had. I'm happy to have enjoyed time with you and your family. With much love, Pam Mayhew Wiener*

Pam Mayhew Wiener - May 23, 2016 at 09:55 AM



“ *Basket of Joy was purchased for the family of Kenneth Sparks .*



May 23, 2016 at 09:12 AM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Kenneth Sparks .*



May 22, 2016 at 08:24 PM



“ *Ken always gave great advice and was so generous to Kurks friends. I'll never forget him asking me to go to the Grand Canyon with him and his family. It was an honor. Kurk and I did have to drive the night shift, even that was fun in the Sparks Winnie. God Bless your family.*

Steve Pryor - May 22, 2016 at 07:22 PM



“ *Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Kenneth Sparks .*



May 22, 2016 at 03:51 PM

SS

“ We were golfing in Tennessee when 9-11 happened we almost were late for our tee time! Hit them straight and long ole buddy!

Stephen Shook - May 21, 2016 at 08:54 PM

TV

“ It was a pleasure to care for Ken the last few years at sensations I will miss you dearly Ken

tara vanluven - May 21, 2016 at 08:13 PM

SC

“ I will never forget when he rescued me on my way home from Western Michigan University in 1972. My old Comet quit on me at one of the Battle Creek exits. I walked to a Shell station and called my dad, and the next thing you know, Uncle Ken showed up to get me! He towed me into the Shell station parking lot, tried to access the problem which indicated a new part, and so he took me home! Love, Shannon

Shannon L Cooksley - May 21, 2016 at 06:34 PM