



## Kenneth E. Wildhaber

June 20, 1936 - May 24, 2025

Kenneth E. Wildhaber, age 88 of Highland, IL, died peacefully Saturday, May 24, 2025, at St. Louis University Hospital in St. Louis, MO.

He was born on Saturday, June 20, 1936, in Highland, IL, the son of Elmer Robert and Susan (nee Senn) Wildhaber.

On Friday, August 21, 1959, he married Lynn R. Wildhaber (nee Geppert) at the E & R Church in Highland, Illinois, who survives.

Kenny was born and raised in Highland, IL. He graduated from Highland High School in 1954, where he was captain of the basketball team. Ken then went on to attend McKendree College where he continued to play basketball. After he graduated college, he started at Highland Middle School teaching and coaching basketball for 38 years. His teams had a 65% winning rate -- 582 victories against 311 losses. Ken filled the trophy case with 34 championships during his long tenure from 1958-1996. Included in that total were 16 conference titles. In 2013, he was elected to the Illinois Basketball Coaches Assoc. Hall of Fame as a Career Coach. After retiring in 1996, Ken helped at school as a scorekeeper and substitute teacher. He and his wife were election judges for many years.

Kenny and his wife loved nature, often going to watch eagles and other birds.

He was very sociable and would often stop at what was once known as Handy Mart for Lynn's icy Dr. Pepper and to chat with everyone. Kenny liked to attend stock car races and car shows. He enjoyed music and liked to listen to Aerosmith, Scorpions and Boston, like his daughter, but more recently he listened to country music. Ken liked to go to indoor soccer games and was an avid St. Louis Cardinals fan.

Survivors include:

Spouse - Lynn R. Wildhaber, nee Geppert, Highland, IL

Daughter - Tanis Lynn (Kenneth) Wildhaber Pfoser, Lombard, IL

He was preceded in death by:

Father - Elmer Robert Wildhaber - died 7/17/83

Mother - Susan M. Wildhaber (nee Senn) - died 1/14/89

Arrangements are being handled by Spengel-Boulanger Funeral Home in Highland, IL.

A private graveside service will be at 2:00 PM on Friday, May 30, 2025, at Highland City Cemetery in Highland, IL.

Interment will be at Highland City Cemetery in Highland, IL.

Memorial contributions may be made to Stray Rescue of St. Louis or the Basketball Museum of Illinois.

# Tribute Wall

CM

“ *Tanis, I am truly sorry about your dad, I really liked him, we had a lot of fun times in the classroom on the basketball courts and cutting while his grass. I got away with a lot of stuff because we were neighbors I know! but he was always great to me! always! your dad was so soft-spoken, because of this he did NOT get the respect or credit he deserved as one of the basketball GREATS of Highland IL! Coaching and playing on the best team in Highlands history and coaching the ONLY undefeated team in Highland History — chew on that Highland folk. Please give your mom my sympathy as I have not seen her in 40-years.*

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**Craig Ray Marti** - May 29, 2025 at 12:42 PM

WF

“ *With Sympathy from your LabWare Family purchased the Basket of Memories for the family of Kenneth E. Wildhaber.*



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**With Sympathy from your LabWare Family** - May 29, 2025 at 10:56 AM

SG

“ *Rest in peace coach! Thank you for placing your confidence in me in the 8th grade basketball team! You have no idea how much that meant to me. Prayers and condolences to you and your family members. stan gunter*

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**stan gunter** - May 29, 2025 at 10:38 AM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Kenneth E. Wildhaber.



May 29, 2025 at 07:38 AM



“ I work at Highland health care center in kitchen, I will always remember the time Ken came to the kitchen door and open and said I need 2 chocolate milks please! He nearly scared me to death. I will miss coming down hall saying Good morning Lyn and Ken

Patricia Clayton - May 28, 2025 at 07:56 PM



“ Lynn and Tanis you have my sympathy. Ken helped shape many young men's lives. He was a wonderful coach and someone that the students could look up to.

Marilyn McCall - May 28, 2025 at 12:14 PM



“ Lynn and Tanis you have my deepest sympathy. Ken and I were friends and colleges for many years. I helped Ken stage his basketball games and ran the clock at Highland Jr. High. When Ken retired from coaching, he kept the score book at Highland Middle School so that he could continue to be involved in basketball. Ken was always a pleasure to work with, and we had many conversations about basketball and life.  
John McCall

John McCall - May 28, 2025 at 12:06 PM

KI

“ Lynn and Tanis, you have my warmest and deepest sympathy. Your husband and father was my sixth-grade teacher and jr. high basketball coach. He was inspiring, fun, and taught me a lot in both positions during those formidable years! I also remember reading about his play in beating Collinsville in the sectional or super-sectional tournament, including his running one-handed shot from the corner late in the game. Lynn, if I remember correctly, you grew up across the street from my grandmother and it was always a thrill to see either you or your husband while I was visiting her. I have always had the greatest respect and appreciation for everything that Ken Wildhaber taught me about life and basketball! He was a **WONDERFUL** man and teacher!!

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**Kent Iberg** - May 28, 2025 at 09:40 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Kenneth E. Wildhaber.

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May 28, 2025 at 04:55 AM

MS

“ It was always good to talk to Ken. He always had a story to tell from his years of experience. Sorry for your loss. Praying for your family.

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**Matt Scheibel** - May 28, 2025 at 12:47 AM

AI

“ Mr. Wildhaber was our 7th and 8th basketball coach. He shepherded us through 2 great years. We learned not only basketball but also life lessons from him. He was a good mentor for us.

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**Allen Iberg** - May 27, 2025 at 08:49 PM

BS

“ Sending sincere sympathy to his family. God Bless 🙏🙏

**Bob & Beckie Schrupf** - May 27, 2025 at 04:42 PM

JB

“ June Barney lit a candle in memory of  
Kenneth Wildhaber



**June Barney** - May 27, 2025 at 04:25 PM

DW

*So sorry for your loss Tanis and Ken we had some fun times together.  
Dave and Judy West*

**Dave and Judy West** - May 27, 2025 at 06:58 PM

BS

*Mr Wildhaber was my 6th grade teacher and 7th and 8th grade  
basketball coach. I don't know if we ever lost a game. He always had a  
great smile, was very positive, a true gentleman and loved coaching. I  
will always remember his corduroy suit. He made a huge contribution  
to all the kids he taught and coached. We will all remember him.*

**brian siever** - May 28, 2025 at 11:20 AM