

KENNETH FRANK SCHOLTZ, PHD

Dr. Ken Scholtz, of Fox Chapel, passed away unexpectedly at his home on June 4, 2024. He was 85 years old... and looked ten years younger. Born to Frank and Erma (Kopp) Scholtz on November 20, 1938. The family house on James Street in Springdale was one block from church, and two blocks from the ball field - just right for young Kenny. The stories from his childhood are epic - some of them involved trains, and many ended with him and his buddies running from something or someone - think "A Christmas Story" or "Stand By Me" and you can get the picture if you sprinkle in a lot of pickup basketball games and hunting and fishing with his dad. He cherished his Springdale upbringing and spoke of it often, we never tired of hearing about it.

At Springdale High, Ken starred in football, basketball and baseball, and graduated in 1956. After a year at St. Vincent College, Ken went on to Slippery Rock, where he again played all three sports... keeping "only" football and baseball into junior and senior years. Playing football - for Coach Charlie Godlasky - he never wore a facemask in his life. Ken really excelled in baseball. He continued playing for years post-college, on "teams in the Valley that paid you a few a bucks per game."

Graduating with a teaching degree, he was hired at the newly established Fox Chapel High School, in 1961. Fox Chapel is where Ken met the love of his life, Marjorie Ganter from Bethel Park, who had just graduated from Penn State and taught speech and English. Ken taught science and coached football, and - the legend is true - asked the principal "Who's coaching baseball?" - the response being "We don't have a team." He convinced the principal to let him start a team, and served as head coach.

Ken and Marge were married June 20, 1964, at St. Germaine Church in Bethel Park, with a honeymoon on Nantucket. Their love for each other was undeniable. They talked about their newlywed years as having no money to spend, but always going places, having adventures, and laughing a lot. They spent summers in a graduate program at the University of Connecticut, and also drove to California for a summer program at UC-Long Beach.

They celebrated the birth of baby Marjorie "Jodie" in 1967, Mollianne in 1969, and son Kenny in 1975. Absolute joys to the young dad - with endless 8mm film reels to prove it.

With a growing family, and a masters degree from UConn, Ken transitioned from science teacher and coach, to assistant principal at Fox Chapel High. Attending night school at Pitt, he earned his PhD in 1972. That same year, Hampton School District hired him as High School Principal. It was his favorite job of all time. He could've written a book filled with great stories from HHS - so I won't try to squeeze any in here... but I will just offer: '84 hoops run, scavenger hunt, and the VW Beetle on the roof. Ken was named Pennsylvania State Principal of the Year in 1984. He also served a term as President of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. He transitioned to Superintendent in 1987, and retired in 2000. Hampton is a special place - not because of him, but anyone will tell you that he played a big part.

The thousands of kids who went through Hampton Schools way back when, maybe got to feel a little bit of what Jodie, Mollie and Kenny got from their Dad in bunches. Love, support, steady guidance, consistency, humor, faith, positivity, focusing on the right things and giving us seemingly all the right nudges - and that was just when he was teaching us to ski and play tennis! He was the best dad anybody could ever ask for, and then some. He would always seem to say just the right thing, or leave the right note for you at the right time. Recently, his grandkids gained the benefit of much of this same support.

In the 1990s, as Jodie and Mollie graduated college and were off to jobs in the airline industry, the airline industry soon found out what happens when you give Ken and Marge access to a generous family perks program for ticketing. My goodness. Their travels around the world were prolific. Picture Ken driving a stick shift rental coupe through a mountain pass in Spain as Marge writes journal entries, navigates on a paper map and checks a guidebook for dinner recs. Altogether they hit 36 countries, many times returning to favorite spots years later.

Hands down Ken and Marge's favorite destination was 160 miles north, on Chautauqua Lake, NY. Starting in the summer of '63, the little cottage on the Lake was a constant draw for all the right reasons. There they welcomed family and friends from all over, and had all sorts of fun. In retirement, they spent five months a year living there (and the other seven daydreaming about it!).

During retirement, Ken kept his busy pace and stayed involved - attending daily Mass, filling in for part-time gigs in school administration and mentoring new administrators, and serving on the Boards of Holy Family Institute and Summit Academy. In recent years, until her passing in October, 2023, Ken also poured himself into caring for Marge, after her diagnosis with dementia. His heart may have given out on June 4th but it broke a thousand times over the years as she struggled and eventually died.

Ken is preceded in death by his parents, Frank & Erma (Kopp) Scholtz, sisters Linda (Long) and Erma Jean (Lutz), his wife Marjorie (Ganter), and daughter Jodie (John) Terlisner. Ken is survived by his daughter Mollianne (Douglas) Messineo of Ridgewood, NJ, and son, Ken (Tracy) of Hampton. He is also survived by eight adoring grandkids - to whom he will forever be "Papa" - the Messineo boys: Charlie (25), Andrew (22), William (20) and Max (18); Jack (19) and Peter (17) Terlisner, and Clare (14) and Frankie (12) Scholtz. Watching them all grow and excel brought him such pride and joy.

Visitation will be at **WEDDELL-AJAK FUNERAL HOME**, 100 Center Avenue, Aspinwall, on Tuesday, June 11th, from 2 - 6 p.m. and 7 - 9 p.m. A Funeral Mass will be held at Christ The King Parish - St. Scholastica Church, on Wednesday, June 12th, at 10 a.m. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to Holy Family Institute, in Ken's memory.

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