



## Kenneth Gene Haack

December 18, 1940 - January 20, 2024

### In Loving Memory of Kenneth Gene Haack

Kenneth Gene Haack, a man of indomitable spirit, courage, and a dash of luck, peacefully departed from this world due to COVID at the age of 83 on January 20, 2024, in Vancouver, Washington. Born to Wilbur Julius Haack and Dorothy Maye Abrahamson in Missouri Valley, Iowa, Ken spent his formative years in Vancouver, Washington.

A celebration of Ken's extraordinary life will be held on Saturday, March 2, at 10 am at the Heathman Lodge in Vancouver, Washington. His final resting place is at Evergreen Memorial Gardens in Vancouver.

Ken's journey began with a stellar athletic career, excelling in multiple sports during his youth. From his days at Shumway Junior High School to becoming a standout athlete in football, basketball, and track at Fort Vancouver High School, Ken's talent shone brightly. His athletic prowess earned him recognition as the outstanding lineman of the Washington State Highschool East vs. West All-Star Football game and Athlete of the Year in 1959.

Securing a 4-year football scholarship to Oregon State University, he was later inducted into the Oregon State University Athletics Hall of Fame in 2012 as a member of the Oregon State 1962 Liberty Bowl team.

During his junior year at Fort Vancouver, Ken met Kathie McKnight, and they married in 1961. Together, they raised two children, Julie Ann Haack and Kenneth Russell Bruce Haack. Committed to providing for his family, Ken was an early adopter of the side hustle. After summers spent painting houses and

delivering milk, he found great satisfaction as a pioneer and 40-year veteran of the Portland Saturday Market

Yet, Ken's life wasn't solely defined by work; he sought to enrich his family's experiences. From traversing Central America with the Clackamas High School International Youth Circus in 1970 to embarking on a 52-day van trip across the US to commemorate the bicentennial in 1976, Ken fostered unforgettable adventures. Additionally, their Clackamas property provided endless joy for loved ones.

Graduating in 1963 with a BS in Science from Oregon State University, Ken embarked on his career at Clackamas High School (1963-1993), where he served as a biology teacher and assistant football and track coach for a decade. His innovative spirit led him to explore educational television's potential, producing, directing, and presenting biology programs between 1964 and 1967.

After earning his MS in Education in 1974, Ken transitioned to a 20-year tenure as a guidance counselor, leaving an indelible mark on the Oregon Association of Secondary Counselors and championing youth through the Student Assistance Program, earning the Distinguished Service to Youth Award in 1992.

Ken cherished community and friendship, maintaining lifelong connections with friends from Fort Vancouver HS class of '59 and colleagues from Clackamas High School. In retirement, he pursued his passion for art at the Portland Saturday Market, sailed the San Juan and Gulf Islands, and cherished moments with his granddaughter, Samantha Haack.

Following Kathie's passing, Ken found love anew with Sandra Sue (Sandy) Whitehead, whom he married in 2017. They shared 11 joyful years together in Surprise, Arizona, and Redding, California.

Ken is survived by his brother Charles G. Haack (Portland, Oregon), his children Julie A. Haack (Eugene, Oregon), Kenneth RB Haack (Portland, Oregon), and his granddaughter Samantha C. Haack (Milwaukie, Oregon). May his legacy of resilience, love, and creativity endure in the hearts of those

who knew and loved him.

# Tribute Wall



“ 0 file added to the tribute wall

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Evergreen Memorial Gardens - July 03, 2025 at 05:18 PM



“ Ken was my high school biology teacher, neighbor on the Clackamas (when I was Junge), and fellow artist when he was sculpting in wood and metal. He remained in my mind all these years because he was an outstanding guy. A beautiful family, a beautiful life.

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nancy shearer (junge) - February 11, 2024 at 12:00 AM



“ Growing up, my family lived across the street from the Haacks. Ken and Kathie were mentors; I remember their home as a safe haven for this awkward, nerdy girl. I still have their graduation gift to me - a book of American Folk Songs.

*They babysat me when I was little, and I babysat Julie and Bruce when I got older. I was included in at least one camping adventure - a lovely gift, since camping was not a part of my family's activities.*

*Ken was kind, intelligent, and a good neighbor to our family. I have too many memories to share, but know that Ken lives on in the hearts of all who knew him.*

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Cherie Renae Atiyeh - February 08, 2024 at 12:00 AM

JH

“ 1974-2009 artist Portland Saturday Market

*The year was 1974 and as a teacher of science, my family and I had no money for the coming Christmas.*

*The month was October, and the Wood Carvers Association was having a wood carving show at the Western Forestry Center. The association was looking for craft vendors to fill several spaces at the show. My wife and I called and got a space. My craft was chainsaw carving. The first day of the show we sold everything, and we made \$45. Christmas was looking better.*

*Then the next week we saw an ad about the Saturday Market. We called the number they displayed and they told us if we wanted a space we had to be at the market site at 4 am on Saturday.*

*Saturday morning came very, very early. The reason why we had to be there so early was to get as close to the starting line as possible. Dana, the manager of the market, would blow his whistle at 7 am. When that whistle blew, all hell broke loose. All of the vendors made a mad dash to the marked off spaces. Since it was our first time there, we were confused. It was like a herd of zebras running. We could not focus on any one space. When the dust settled, all the spaces were taken. The unlucky vendors had to go home and try again next week. As we turned to go home, we noticed that we were standing in the middle of space number 15. Horary!! We were of the lucky ones.*

*The Saturday Market helped me to stay in the field of education. I was able to teach for 30 years and retire. It made it possible to live a more comfortable life. - Kenneth Haack*

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**Julie Haack** - February 06, 2024 at 12:00 AM

BG

“ I first became friends with Ken in 7th grade at Shumway Junior High School shop class and in sports. We were the first ones to receive sports letters - him in football and me in Track. Our friendship continued at Fort Vancouver High School where we were both on the football team. My favorite football story about Ken - Our team was undefeated senior year thanks to Ken, who was not the regular kicker. The last game of the season, when the win depended on a long field goal, Coach Furno put Ken in to kick, because he felt Ken had the stronger leg. Even though the kick hit the opposing team player's helmet, the ball bounced up over the goal post. He kept in touch with many of his teammates throughout his life. He earned a football scholarship to Oregon State and was on a Hall of Fame roster.

Although he became a Science teacher, he was an Artist at heart. He made metal art which he sold at craft fairs during summer breaks. In retirement, he took up pottery, and later painting when he moved Vancouver. He used many of his metalwork designs in his watercolor paintings, which he happily gave away to friends. He was a man of many talents.

Ken was an good friend and I will miss him. He was kind, funny, and friendly to everyone. He and Kathy, and later Sandy included me in their wide circle of friends, were always gracious and fun to be with. I spent more time with him after he moved to Vancouver, sharing stories, and fruit from my trees. I was surprised to learn he liked green pears.

*Bill Graham*

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**Bill Graham** - February 02, 2024 at 12:00 AM

JC

“ My first teaching assignment was at Clackamas High School. Pat Smith and Ken Haack were extremely helpful for a first year teacher. Ken and I both graduated from Oregon State. Ken played football with Terry Baker and was happy that Terry made a special effort to throw him a pass when he came off the bench. Ken moved to the counseling department and after about 7 years of teaching I also moved into counseling and worked with Ken. My daughter and son both had Ken as their counselor After retirement Ken made beautiful wooden and metal sculptures and sold them at Saturday market. My daughter especially enjoyed visiting him at the market. He was a joy to work with and he and was a great friend. We miss him.

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**Jon Cottrell** - January 31, 2024 at 12:00 AM

AH

“ We are deeply sorry for your loss ~ Evergreen Memorial Gardens Cemetery, Funeral Chapel and Crematory

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**A Memorial Tree was planted for Kenneth Gene Haack** - January 26, 2024 at 12:00 AM