



Ken "Coach" Erny

JUN 4, 2023



Scan to Visit

Table of Contents

Obituary	Page 3
Events	Page 6
Tribute Wall	Page 7



Ken "Coach" Erny

JUN 4, 2023

Ken "Coach" Erny, age 67, entered Glory peacefully around 4:30 a.m. on Sunday, June 4, 2023 at home in Fruitport after a three-year battle with ALS. He was born on March 6, 1956, to Harry and Betty (Greenlee) Erny in Mount Holly, New Jersey.

What the world may wish to know:

The Burlington, New Jersey native graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Social Science Comprehensive from Cedarville College in Ohio, and a Master of Arts in Teaching and School Administration from Calvin College in Grand Rapids, MI. He married his college sweetheart, Lori (Neal) on June 23, 1979. Ken began his impact within the Fruitport community by coaching soccer and teaching at Fruitport Faith Christian. After the school's closing and a stint as an educator with Calvary Schools, Erny was hired by Fruitport Community Schools in Community Education. He was selected to serve as the inaugural boys' varsity soccer coach and held that position from 1990-2008, also serving as the school's athletic director from 1996 until he was diagnosed with ALS in 2020.

Ken, known by many simply as "Coach," poured his heart and soul into countless student-athletes. He understood that athletics must be educational and made it a priority to teach long-lasting life lessons while seeking competitive success. Among his other accolades and accomplishments, Ken helped launch the "No More Sidelines" program at Fruitport High School in 2006, the Student Athlete Leadership Team (S.A.L.T) in 2009 (to mentor young leaders and share wisdom from his tireless reading and lifelong learning), and the Fruitport Athletic Hall of Fame in 2013. Ken was truly a "Hall of Famer" in his own right. He was inducted into the Michigan High School Soccer Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2015, received the Gene Young Distinguished Service Award from the Muskegon Area Sports Hall of Fame in 2022, and later that year was inducted into his hometown Fruitport Hall of Fame.



Obituary

Ken "Coach" Erny

Ken's servant leadership in the workplace and at home was exemplary, and he valued character and integrity above any accomplishments. His natural humor and witty one-liners regularly brought joy to others. He often cited the famous "Don't Give Up" speech from the late Jim Valvano, and truly sought to laugh, cry, and think each day. He would often pour into those that he noticed were struggling by walking alongside them. His top priorities were faith, family, and Fruitport, and he deeply understood that his life was not his own but that of his loving Creator.

Ken is survived by his wife Lori; 4 children: Mindy (Nicole) Acre, Steve (Jacqui) Erny, Jon (Breckley) Erny, Jess (Ethan) Parcher; 9 grandchildren: Cing, Charles, Isabelle, Paul, Rosalie, David, Piper, Skye, William; sister Terry Simpson, and brother Gary (Sharon) Erny. The family would like to offer their unending gratitude to the countless people who walked alongside them throughout Ken's ALS journey, caring for him and loving him so well through his final days on this Earth.

He was preceded in death by his parents Harry and Betty Erny, sister Linda Erny, and brothers-in-law David Neal and John Simpson.

What Ken would want the world to know:

1. Always give your best, because life is too short to just go through the motions.
2. Always treat people really, really well, because everyone you will ever meet has infinite worth.
3. Always demonstrate unconditional gratitude, because no matter what kind of day you've had, no matter how good or bad your performance was, or how bad your diagnosis is, there is always something to be thankful for.

In quoting one of his favorite music artists Matthew West, "this life ain't always wonderful, but what a wonderful life it's been."

The visitation will be held at Fruitport High School, 357 N. Sixth Ave., Fruitport, MI, 49415 on Tuesday, June 13 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The memorial service is set to take place on Wednesday, June 14 at 4:00 p.m. at All Shores Wesleyan Church, 15550 Cleveland St., Spring Lake, MI, 49456.

Flowers may be sent to Fruitport High School (357 N. Sixth Ave., Fruitport, MI, 49415) on Tuesday, June 13. In lieu of flowers, donations via check may be written out to Fruitport High School to be



Obituary

Ken "Coach" Erny

given towards the Ken Erny Student-Athlete Leadership Scholarship, which will be awarded each year in Ken's name to Fruitport High School seniors.

Arrangements handled by The Lee Chapel of Sytsema Funeral & Cremation Services, 6291 Harvey St, Norton Shores, MI 49444. Sign the guestbook online at www.sytsemafh.com



Events

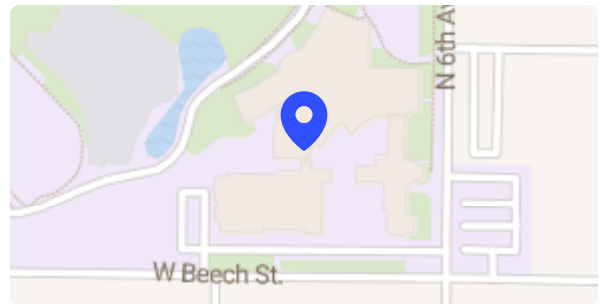
Ken "Coach" Erny

Visitation

Tuesday, June 13, 2023

2:00 PM - 4:00 PM ET

Fruitport High School
357 N. Sixth Avenue, Fruitport MI 49415

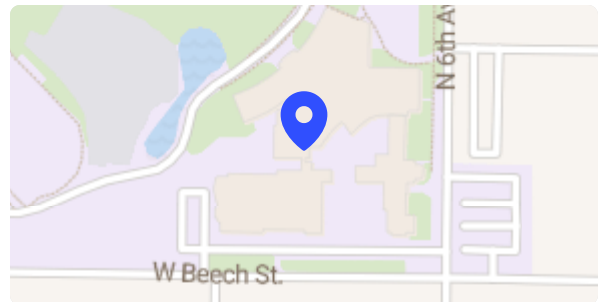


Visitation

Tuesday, June 13, 2023

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM ET

Fruitport High School
357 N. Sixth Avenue, Fruitport MI 49415



Memorial Service

Wednesday, June 14, 2023

4:00 PM ET

All Shores Wesleyan Church
15550 Cleveland St., Spring Lake MI 49456





Tribute Wall

Ken "Coach" Erny



Paul Boxer lit a candle in honor of Ken "Coach".



While I was earning my masters in educational leadership from GVSU, I had the privilege to job shadow Ken for three days. I was immediately moved by his intelligence, wisdom, wit, compassion, and competitiveness. In just a few days of working with Ken, I learned more about education, high school athletics, student-athletes, competition, and life in general than I did during four years of college. He shared so much of his wisdom with me! Above all, I saw a man whose entire life was firmly rooted in gratitude and built on a foundation of trust in God's grace and mercy. It was evident that faith, family, and Fruitport were his top priorities in life! What an inspiring role model he was for both student-athletes and fellow educators! May Ken rest eternally in the Heart of our Heavenly Father, where all things are made new, and nothing in this life is in vain, lost, or forgotten. And may the peace of God that passes all understanding be with the Erny family and their loved ones in these coming days and months. Our deepest sympathies and prayers are with the Erny family in this time of great sorrow. Paul Boxer and family

June 13 at 7:56 AM



Anonymous sent a Blue Caribbean Bouquet to the Erny family.



June 13 at 6:06 AM



Anonymous planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Ken "Coach".



June 13 at 6:06 AM



Jim McClain posted:

This man was truly an inspiration in the way he lived his life!

June 12 at 9:39 AM



Anonymous sent a Full Of Love Bouquet to the Erny family.



June 10 at 2:18 PM



Tribute Wall

Ken "Coach" Erny



Anonymous sent a Blue Caribbean Bouquet to the Erny family.



June 10 at 4:52 AM



Mike Secory posted:

A wonderful man and friend!

June 9 at 7:48 PM



Jennifer Mumby lit a candle in honor of Ken "Coach".

My daughter was on the competitive cheer squad and Mr. Erny would come watch them perform. Her 1st year they only had 4 girls and he was always super supportive of them. Thank you, Mr. Erny.



June 9 at 6:52 AM



Ginger Wolffis lit a candle in honor of Ken "Coach".

Dear Lori, You were an incredible "team"...Ken & Lori! May our Heavenly father give you courage, strength, peace and comfort in the days to come. With love and sympathy, Ginger Wolffis



June 9 at 6:52 AM



Ruth A Vanderstelt lit a candle in honor of Ken "Coach".



June 9 at 6:11 AM



Joyce Koster lit a candle in honor of Ken "Coach".



June 9 at 6:08 AM



Tribute Wall

Ken "Coach" Erny



R. Keith And Maxine Nelson posted:

Ken instructed our two boys at Calvary Baptist Academy, and they had the highest respect for Ken. He was a godly model to his students, and we appreciated that. We have fond memories of Ken.

June 8 at 6:30 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Ken "Coach" by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



Scan to Visit