



Kenneth "Ken" Bledsoe

April 19, 2026

Devoted husband, loving father, grandfather, brother and son, Ken Bledsoe passed away on April 19th. He is survived by his wife, Phyllis; daughter, Erin Vigil (Erik Vigil) and grandchildren Noah, Mikaela, Shiloh and Tinsley; and siblings Eugene Daley, Mary Bledsoe and Will Bledsoe. He is preceded in death by his parents, Mary D. Bledsoe and Bill Bledsoe.

Born in Monahans, Texas, Ken's early life can be characterized as overcoming adversity. At age six he contracted polio and had to learn to walk again. Following his recovery, Ken held the city record for the fifty-yard dash at Wilson Junior High and became a high school football and track star at Highland High School in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

After high school, Ken attended Fort Lewis College in Durango where he achieved a bachelor's degree in American and Southwest history. He later received two master's degrees from Colorado State University in Fort Collins. He served six years in the New Mexico and Colorado Army National Guard, becoming a tank commander and medic. While returning from a monthly drill for the Colorado National Guard, Ken and a fellow reservist happened upon a head-on collision. Together, they were credited with saving lives and subsequently awarded the Meritorious Service Medal.

Ken was a highly esteemed educator in the Poudre School District, having

taught American West and World Cultures and Geography at Rocky Mountain High School for twenty-four years. He also developed the first AP Human Geography course at RMHS and was awarded the Poudre School District Distinguished Teacher Award; as well as Teacher of the Year and Honor faculty at RMHS. For twenty years, Ken coached track and field at Rocky where he coached a Colorado State high jump champion. Ken began his teaching and coaching career at Grants High School in New Mexico.

Ken retired in 2003 and began researching his biological father, Vernon Elder, who was a B-17 tail gunner in the South Pacific during WWII. Vernon's plane crashed near Horn Island off the coast of Australia in 1942. Vernon survived and continued to fly bombing missions. To honor his father's service, Ken and Phyllis reconstructed Vernon's journey, interviewed remaining survivors of the crash and traveled to Horn Island. Ken snorkeled to locate and investigate the wreckage of Vernon's plane and then published the book "Echoes From an Eagle", a loving tribute to his father.

Ken enjoyed being out in nature whether it was hiking in the Rocky Mountains or the prairies. In addition, he enjoyed volunteering in his daughter's elementary school classes. If one were to ask Ken what was most meaningful about his life, he would not hesitate - "Loving my family." Ken will be so profoundly missed by his family, friends, and neighbors.

A celebration of life and internment will be private. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the Colorado Special Olympics in Ken's honor. Or feed and water your backyard birds!

Tribute Wall

MC

“ *Phyllis and Erin, I am very sorry to read of Ken's passing. I hope you will be able eventually remember the good and loving times with Ken. I just lost my sister in December, with the services in April. My last immediate relative. I know there is so much to do. May you have peace and happiness. When we grieve, we know we are alive. May his memory be a blessing.*

Mary Carlson - May 17 at 05:31 AM

MM

“ *I had the privilege of teaching at Rocky Mountain High School with Ken when I was fresh out of college and green as grass. My memories of Ken will always be filled with his gentle nature and immeasurable kindness to everyone. Sending condolences and prayers for peace to all his family.*

Martha Marvin - May 12 at 12:13 PM

SW

“ *I had Mr. Bledsoe for History class at RMHS. I came here to say that Ken Bledsoe had an impact on my life that has stuck with me ever since taking his class. He was a great teacher and there are not too many people that I can say had a positive impact like Ken Bledsoe did with me. I am grateful for his dedication to teaching and grateful for the time that I got to spend with him as one of my teachers.*

Scott Webb - May 09 at 10:23 AM

JK

“ I had a few "favorite" teachers in my junior/senior high years and Mr Bledsoe was on top of that list. I still remember the arrowhead collection he brought in. He made history class something I always looked forward to attending. I graduated RMHS in 1980. What a wonderful man!, I'm lucky that I got to know him in my lifetime.
Jennifer Barrett Kinion

Jennifer B Kinion - May 05 at 11:20 AM