



Kenneth D. Bachmeyer

November 22, 1928 - January 20, 2018

Kenneth Donald Bachmeyer died on Saturday, January 20, 2018 in Visalia, California, surrounded by his family. He was born in Philadelphia to Addie Lavina Bingenheimer and William Leonard Bachmeyer on November 22, 1928. After graduating from Thorp High School in Wisconsin in 1947, he was recruited on a football scholarship to the University of Wisconsin, which he attended until drafted into the Air Force in fall of 1948. He was married to Barbara Roberts Bachmeyer for 57 years before her passing in 2012. He is survived by three children, Joni Bachmeyer Jordan, Christie Bachmeyer, and Ken Bachmeyer, Jr., brother William Bachmeyer, sisters Mary Jean Flak and Karen (Marvin) Flak, grandchildren Michael Jordan, Cynthia Shouse, Mark Jordan, David Jordan, Andrew Bachmeyer, Amy Bachmeyer, Colin Reilly and Caitlin Reilly, seven great-grandchildren and beloved nieces and nephews.

Ken loved to travel and he and Barbara spent much of their spare time and retirement RVing through the country, stopping to visit with family and a multitude of friends made during their working lives. A history buff, Ken could not resist a museum or park that would shed light on some obscure event that shaped the landscape of the west that he particularly loved.

Ken was a lifelong fan of the Dodgers, cheering them from Brooklyn to Los Angeles during his life and every football season would find him enrapt and hopeful again that his beloved Green Bay Packers would make the playoffs.

Devoted to family, Ken was a fixture at family events: weddings, graduations and funerals. After his own father's death when he was 21, Ken returned from military service (USAF) to his hometown in Thorp, Wisconsin to help support his mother and three younger siblings. In the early 1950s, Ken ventured to the wild country of Wyoming, where the relatively new Grand Teton National Park was hiring summer workers. Ken worked summers at the park, wintering in Rock Springs with a railroad job until he was hired permanently into the National Park Service and began a deeply satisfying career with the places and people he met along the way.

After working trails and roads in Grand Teton and marrying Barbara, Ken was transferred to Joshua Tree National Monument where he worked on the road crew. After nearly six years there, he was transferred again to Death Valley National Monument, promoting to Roads and Trails Supervisor. The family stayed in Death Valley for three years before Ken was promoted again to Chief of Maintenance at Mt. Rainier National Park in Washington. He often regaled people with the story of moving from the hottest place on earth to a place that received world-record snowfall. But such was his love for natural history and the outdoors. Ken spent six years at Mt. Rainier, developing close friendships along the way, before being transferred to Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park where he served the remainder of his career, finishing as Chief of Maintenance, a job he relished.

Upon retirement, he and Barbara had many good years of travel, spending time with friends made during their Park Service years and checking in on grandchildren and nieces and nephews. When Barbara's health declined, Ken provided nearly ten years of care-taking with tenderness and compassion that spoke of his devotion to the girl that stole his heart so many years ago.

After Barbara's subsequent death and a fall that broke his leg and a difficult

recovery, Ken moved to an assisted living facility where he charmed a new group of fans. The nurses and aids at TLC Assisted Living in Visalia provided comfort and gentle humor that made his last few years enjoyable and meaningful. The family is deeply grateful for their tender care.

Private graveside celebration of Ken's life took place on Saturday, January 27 at Eshom Valley Cemetery in Badger, California.

I can't quite seem to fathom
I can't help wondering why
I was placed amongst such beauty,
all this solitude and sky.
Now, I see you ride before me,
as my feet trod earthly sod,
I watch you vanish in the sunrise.
Go with God!