



Kenneth Niska

June 26, 1924 - April 3, 2011

Kenneth C. Niska, 86, passed away April 3, 2011 at St. Benedict's Care Center in St. Cloud, MN. Ken was born to David and Lillian (Maunu) on June 26, 1924 in Menahga. He entered the United States Navy in 1945, serving in the Philippines, until his honorable discharge in 1947. On September 9, 1950, Ken and Viola Peterson were married at the Blue Grass Lutheran Church. They lived in Minneapolis and after three years they moved to Wadena where they operated the local Phillips 66 gas station, which is now the location of the Peterson Law Firm. Ken then worked at the Wadena Technical College in the custodial department. For the next 42 years he drove school bus and headed the transportation department for the Wadena-Deer Creek School District. He was active in the A.R.C. and was a volunteer for the Wadena Area Food Shelf, along with his church and youth activities. Ken loved to travel, work the flea markets, and go to garage sales to find those "deals". He traveled most of the United States, Mexico, and Canada. He loved camping and fishing with his family, and was an avid Minnesota Twins fan. Ken was preceded in death by his parents David and Lillian; and brother and sister-in-law Harvey and Charlotte Niska. He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Vi; daughter Janet (Gerald) Stover of Sartell; son Scott of St. Cloud; and grandchildren Jeremy (Shari) Stover, Jason Stover, Jaclyn Niska, Danielle Niska, and Micaela Niska; great-grandchildren Riley and Jadeyn Stover; and sister Hazel Dormanen of Menahga. Funeral services were held at 2:00 on April 8, 2011 at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Wadena, with Pastor Marilyn Breckenridge officiating.

Military honors were provided by the Elmer Goche Post 3922, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Wadena, MN. Honorary pallbearers were Jaclyn Niska, Danielle Niska, Micaela Niska, Claire Polman, and fellow bus drivers and co-workers. Active pallbearers were Jeremy Stover, Jason Stover, Ray Mitchell, Ray Eiden, Harlyn Hanson, and Dennis Tiede. Burial was in Wadena Cemetery.

Tribute Wall

RH

“Kenny Niska was my busdriver when I was in elementary school, driving what we called, old crate 58. He was also a family friend, so he was aware that as a young kid, I loved history and politics. Each morning when I got on the bus, he'd greet me with a "good morning Senator." He called me that everytime I saw him after that up to the last time I visited with him a year ago or so. He was a gentle, kind and good man, who I liked very much.

Rodney Hanson - April 03, 2011 at 12:00 AM

DS

“Dee and I often remembered fondly Ken and the days he drove the school bus for our kids. Andrew and Noah enjoyed him, and he always seemed to look out for them and for us as young parents. Even long after the boys had left home and he had parked the bus he would ask about them and what they were up to. I also remember his ability to laugh...Ken had a great laugh...God bless his memories.

Dan Skogen - April 03, 2011 at 12:00 AM

MK

“I just heard about Ken's passing. I am so sorry for your loss. I have fond memories of Ken when he worked at school and drove a bus. Vi, when I think of you, I picture your smiling face when I came through the lunch line. You were always so friendly. Ken, too. Know that I am thinking of your family at this sad time.

Mary Ellen Kollodge - April 03, 2011 at 12:00 AM