



Honorable G. Kendall 'Ken' Sharp

December 30, 1934 - March 24, 2022

United States District Court Judge George Kendall Sharp - (Dad, Bampa, Ken or Judge to those who adored him) passed away in his home surrounded by loved ones on March 24, 2022 at the age of 87. This man was bigger than life--fearless and iconic--a real modern-day Renaissance man. To his daughters, he was and always will be their personal Superman. In so many respects, Ken Sharp lived a blessed life. He was privately devout...always honorable and generous-of-heart. He was good at everything and was by far the best all-around athlete you would ever meet. Ken could beat much better players on the tennis court, tiring out unsuspecting opponents with softly sliced dropshots followed by perfect lobs to the baseline. He had a beautiful golf game in spite of the fact that he often played with only two clubs: a putter and an old, rusty dial-a-club. (His golf shoes appeared to be circa 1970.) Ken was a boat captain, pilot, free-diver, world traveler, snow skier, intellect, veteran, public servant, adventurer, and jack-of-all-trades. This man was a magician at fixing any broken thing with caulk, superglue or a roll of silver duct tape, though admittedly they rarely looked good when he was finished. He once "fixed" his plane's muffler with an old soup can....true story!

Sharp's chambers at the Federal Courthouse were legendary, with old Civil War muskets mounted on the walls; fifteen bronze Frederic Remington statues (some of which may be authentic) lining the shelves; souvenirs from his dives with Mel Fisher here and there; and the unlucky stuffed heads of

creatures like a dwarf T-Rex and the mythical jackalope hanging on the walls. Ken was a gifted raconteur who never forgot a single detail of any of his yarns and/or never let the truth stand in the way of a good story. Thankfully the judge had his razor-sharp memory and wit through the very end.

Sharp's blessed life was also thankfully book-ended with a blessed death, as his children and grandchildren all had the opportunity to communicate how much he was appreciated. They surrounded him with adoration and gratitude, and with Hospice's guidance ushered him lovingly through his transition. The precious parting gift Ken left with them was allowing them to witness his fearlessness in death as in life. Because his decision was so brave and certain, the family was able to be together and share collectively the sacred experience of caring for him during his death with the same devotion he had given to them in life. Together they were able to begin grieving the monumental loss of his bold and shiny presence in their lives.

Ken Sharp grew up on the South Shore of Chicago, the only child of Ed and Florrie Sharp. While living in Chicago, Ken became very involved in the Boy Scouts, eventually rising to the rank of Eagle Scout. The scouting activities and camping trips he took with his troop impacted him greatly, most certainly developing Ken's unwavering integrity, sense of honor and love of the natural world.

In ninth grade at the young age of fourteen, his parents sent him to a preparatory school in Andover, MA called Phillips Academy. Those years were especially formative and precious to Ken, and from his time at Andover he developed and maintained life-long friendships.

After Andover, Sharp went onto Yale University where he played football and sang with the Whiffenpoofs, the world's oldest and best-known collegiate a cappella singing group. In between college and law school, Ken joined the

Navy and spent nearly four years on active duty both in the Pacific aboard a supercarrier called the USS Ranger and on missions out of Norfolk, VA. During those years while serving as the Ranger's "plank owner" and navigator, Ken had the chance to see exotic parts the Far East and dive untouched reefs in Australia, Okinawa and the Philippines. Even after completing his tour and moving onto to the University of Virginia for Law School, Ken continued to serve in the Naval Reserves for the rest of his life, eventually ascending to a position of Captain. Sharp LOVED serving his country in the Navy! Sharp's ashes will be interred at Arlington National Cemetery.

After law school, Ken Sharp moved to Vero Beach where he married Isabelle Beuttell and had two daughters whom he taught to swim before they could walk. As a private attorney in the 1960's there was not the level of specialization you see today, consequently Sharp handled a broad range of general real estate, litigation and estate matters while also representing a good number of grove owners on citrus industry issues. During his years in private practice, Sharp also worked as the local public defender for indigent clients, outside counsel to Indian River Hospital and lawyer for the School Board of Indian River County.

It was in Vero Beach that Sharp learned to fly and bought his first airplane. From Vero's Flight Safety, Ken flew to and fell in love with the Bahamas where he fished and free dove for the next sixty years. Even the best Bahamian free divers were in awe of the judge's breath-holding ability. Because Ken was so deadly with a Hawaiian sling in his hands, the groupers and hog fish of Freeport are now collectively breathing a sigh of relief. Ken always dove in his signature Superman shirt, and many friends, if asked, will tell you harrowing stories of watching him elbow and fight off nosy sharks a little too interested in Superman's fish. Thankfully the stories end happily. You'd always see a big blue, red, yellow "S" burst through the surface of the water with a fish on the

end of a spear.

After practicing law privately for fifteen years, Sharp went on to serve as Circuit Court Judge from 1978-1983. During his time serving Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin and Okeechobee Counties, Ken flew his Cessna from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. It was during this period that Ken Sharp became known locally and affectionately as “the flying judge”. If not for this lucky five-year stint, many of us would otherwise never have set foot in Okeechobee, Florida, much less have benefitted from the bargains at the Okeechobee Flea Market or enjoyed the fine cuisine of the Golden Corral (mac-n-cheese and Jello being all-time Sharp favorites).

In 1983, Judge G. Kendall Sharp, as he was known professionally, was nominated by Ronald Reagan and confirmed by the Senate for a position on the federal judiciary. Ken honorably and tirelessly served as a Federal District Court Judge in the Middle District of Florida for 38 years, the last twenty-two of which as a Senior Judge. “The Judge” continued signing important judicial orders until just two weeks ago. Two of Judge Sharp’s most gratifying moments were when, in 1991, he was able to swear his son-in-law into the Florida Bar...and then thirty years later and exactly six months ago when Judge Sharp so proudly swore in his granddaughter, Lyndal Carter, in a moving and beautiful ceremony.

Ken’s great loves were his daughters, Kendall Sharp (58) and Julia Carter (55), his son-in-law David Carter (57), his daughter-in-law Anne-Marie van der Velde (53), and his grandchildren-- Austin Carter (29), Lyndal Carter (27), Greta Carter (24), Carter Sharp (17) and Quinn Sharp Viele (13), all of whom survive him.

The great legacy that Ken Sharp left with his children and grandchildren is their conviction that value in life is not measured in material things accrued,

but rather in experiences shared. They all love snorkeling in Bahamas, snow skiing the great mountains of the western US, and traveling to off-the-beaten path destinations. When they stumble across particularly seedy dive bars, they automatically think “Bampa would love this place!” Both Ken’s daughter Kendall and grandson Austin followed his footsteps and attended Yale. All three athletes played their respective sports in the legendary Yale Bowl.

Lastly, the greatest love of his life, Carolyn Coats, found her way into Ken’s life so beautifully and unexpectedly only five years ago. They discovered their mutual affection at a time in their respective lives when they both needed a little magic. They had such fun together, and as it happened, also enriched each other’s lives joyfully, emotionally and profoundly. Carolyn helped enhance the gentle and tender side of Ken, and did so beautifully and effortlessly. She literally brought out the best in him, and adored his brilliant mind, sense of humor and unequalled spontaneity. On the other hand, Ken whisked Carolyn away to tropical locales and taught her how to snorkel. They went on grand adventures--to Honduras searching for whale sharks; to the Bahamas swimming with rays and sea turtles; white water rafting in Costa Rica and among other places, to Puerto Rico where she rode on the world’s longest zip line--one mile long! Ken brought much-needed wonder and adventure to Carolyn’s life six years after she had lost her precious husband of 57 years.

Lastly, it should not be left unsaid how much Ken enjoyed his friendships and cherished his friends, many of whom he’s known for multiple decades. For years Sharp relished the University Club where he played handball with the guys (and was frequently the men’s singles champ). Sharp was a loyal and regular participant of the Yowell Sunday School Class at the First Presbyterian Church in Downtown Orlando. Ken hardly ever missed Wednesdays with Sonny at Linda’s La Cantina. Monday was sangria night with Carolyn and friends at the Olive Garden. And every Saturday he hosted a male-only

Bloody Mary party at his own cute bachelor pad in College Park. Only one female has ever been a first-hand witness to the mischief, and that was his daughter Julia who crashed the party last December. Julia recalls that the stories told that day were so rich and textured that she felt like she was among royalty.

Ken's beautiful, easy-going, irrepressible, irreplaceable spirit is already terribly missed by us all.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, April 2, 2022 at the First Presbyterian Church of Orlando, 106 East Church Street, promptly at 10am. Reception immediately to follow at the University Club, 150 East Central Blvd., Orlando, Florida. The service will be live streamed for anyone unable to attend in person. If you are interested in joining remotely on Saturday at 10am, just type in: <http://www.fpco.org/funeral>

In lieu of flowers, the Judge would have appreciated you directing any donations to the Boy Scouts of Central Florida.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

APR 2. 10:00 AM (ET)

First Presbyterian Church of Orlando
106 East Church Street
Orlando, FL 32801

Reception to follow Memorial Service

APR 2 (ET)

The University Club of Orlando
150 East Central Blvd.
Orlando, FL 32801

Tribute Wall

SB

“ I had the privilege of knowing Judge Sharp at the federal court. In time, I had the greater privilege of his friendship.

Judge Sharp's fearlessness, and his love of aviation, remind me of the poem, "High Flight," by John Gillespie Magee:

*"Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds, – and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of – wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air...
Up, up the long, delirious burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, or ever eagle flew –
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God."*

Having forever slipped the surly bonds, Judge Sharp soars now as God's wingman.

*Respectfully,
Steve Branyon*

Steve Branyon - April 03, 2022 at 04:36 PM

GD

“ Sorry to hear about Ken’s passing. Our family has fond memories of Ken. When Mary and Ken were visiting us in New Canaan, CT, he graciously offered to speak to my daughter’s 5th grade class many years ago. The kids loved him, he was terrific with them. We spent a few weekends with Mary and Ken in Okeechobee in that caboose. Again lots of laughs.

Rest In Peace. Diehl Family

Gail Diehl - April 01, 2022 at 06:05 PM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Honorable G. Kendall 'Ken' Sharp.



April 01, 2022 at 04:40 PM



“ Basket of Memories was purchased for the family of Honorable G. Kendall 'Ken' Sharp.



April 01, 2022 at 02:00 PM

FG

“ Frances (Fran) L. Grant purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of Honorable G. Kendall 'Ken' Sharp.



Frances (Fran) L. Grant - March 31, 2022 at 06:43 PM

LT

“ Ken was a great friend to my father, Leon Handley, who called him "Not so...(sharp)", and I heard great tales of their Bloody Mary parties! My parents had lots of wonderful adventures with Ken and Mary over the years, and their friendships remained close through the years until the end. He will be missed by all who knew him.
Laura Handley Tappan

Laura Tappan - March 31, 2022 at 10:02 AM



“ *Treasured Lilies Spray* was purchased for the family of Honorable G. Kendall 'Ken' Sharp.



March 30, 2022 at 01:37 PM



“ *Lovely One Spathiphyllum Plant* was purchased for the family of Honorable G. Kendall 'Ken' Sharp.



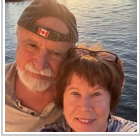
March 30, 2022 at 08:38 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of Honorable G. Kendall 'Ken' Sharp.



March 29, 2022 at 02:41 PM



“ Arthur and I were so happy to have the chance to get to know Ken in his later years. We met him for dinner one night when he had traveled up to Boston for a Federal Judge's training conference. I asked what they were being trained on and he replied that they were learning to use Iphone apps to be more efficient as judges. I was amazed that he was totally unfazed about learning new, advanced technologies at age 80. But that was Ken; the world was his oyster and he was relaxed, present and engaged in whatever circumstances he found himself. Also a keen observer of people and experiences and a great conversationalist. He leaves a big hole in the hearts of his family and for that we offer our deepest sympathies.

Anne Sterling - March 28, 2022 at 06:17 PM

DP

Prayers and sympathy. David and Barbara Phillips

david phillips - March 29, 2022 at 02:06 PM

KE

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



kendall - March 28, 2022 at 03:46 PM



“ 2 files added to the album *Memories Album*



DeGusipe Funeral Home & Crematory - March 28, 2022 at 08:51 AM