



Kenneth Gorgal

February 13, 1929 - May 8, 2016

Kenneth Robert Gorgal, 87, of Northbrook and Vero Beach, Florida, passed away May 8, 2016 surrounded by his family.

Ken, born on February 13, 1929 was the only child of Alexander and Florence Gorgal of Peru, Illinois. He grew up in Peru and attended the town's St. Bede Academy, a private Catholic high school. His father had played professional football in the 1920s for the Rock Island Independents, an early NFL team. Ken played quarterback on the St. Bede's football team. In 2000, he was inducted into St. Bede's inaugural Hall of Fame.

Ken went on to play college football and baseball at Purdue University from 1945-1950 where he played as a quarterback and punt returner. Ken set a school record that stood for more than 50 years in 1948.

During the summer of 1950, Ken played baseball for the Gainesville Owls and the Dallas Eagles before playing football for the Cleveland Browns. He played on the 1950 and the 1954, Cleveland Browns' NFL Championship teams. Cleveland head coach, Paul Brown, considered Ken one of his nicest players – he was known as “Gurgles Gorgal,” the coach once said, because he “added so much fellowship and good feeling to our team.” In 1954, Sportswriters named him a first-team All-Pro.

He left the Cleveland Browns for a two-year stint in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. He was stationed back home in Peru and ran background checks for the Army's Counterintelligence Corps. Then he returned to the Cleveland Browns.

He was traded to the Chicago Bears in 1955 and went to the Green Bay Packers in 1956. Following that season, he retired from football.

Ken's off the field career included owning a membership at the Chicago Board of Trade as well as managing his insurance business.

Ken is the beloved husband of Sheila Kemper Gorgal for 34 years; loving father to Diane (Richard) Eaton, Denise (late Albert Jr.) Giannotti, Mark (late Faye) Gorgal, Renee (Jack) Beam, and stepfather to John (Ann) Weimer, Jeff (Carol) Weimer, Matthew Weimer and Melissa (Mike) Grady; cherished grandfather of Jessica and Nick Eaton, Alyse and Cole Giannotti, Megan, Jack, Brad and Tom Weimer.

Ken was a kind-hearted person with a quick wit and had a passion for life. He didn't know a stranger, making friends and talking to everyone he met.

Family and friends will gather to celebrate Ken's life on Thursday, May 19 starting at 10am followed by the mass at 11am at St. Norbert Church, 1809 Walters Ave., Northbrook. In lieu of flowers, a contribution to St. Bede Academy, Memorial Fund for Ken Gorgal, 24 W US Hwy 6, Peru, IL 61354 in Ken's honor is much appreciated.

Events

MAY

19

Memorial Visitation

10:00AM - 11:00AM

St. Norbert Church

1809 Walters Ave., Northbrook, IL, US, 60062

MAY

19

Funeral Mass

11:00AM

St. Norbert Church

1809 Walters Ave., Northbrook, IL, US, 60062

Comments



“ Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Kenneth Gorgal.



May 19 at 09:13 AM



“ I am deeply saddened by the news of Ken's passing. I had the honor and privilege of working with Ken at T.A Cummings Jr., Co. He was a kind gentleman with a great sense of humor. My thoughts and prayers are with the Gorgal family.

Respectfully,

Larry B. Zindell

Larry Zindell - May 15 at 08:44 PM