



## Kenneth Lyle Wooddell

June 27, 1926 - September 15, 2023

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of a legendary sports broadcaster and remarkable community leader, Kenneth Lyle Wooddell, age 97 of Mattoon, IL. Ken passed away at 12:16 AM, Friday, September 15, 2023, at Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center with his family by his side.

A funeral service in his honor will be held at 10:00 AM, Saturday, September 23, 2023, at Mitchell-Jerdan Funeral Home, located at 1200 Wabash Avenue, Mattoon, IL 61938; Reverend Ron Dickinson will officiate. A committal service will immediately follow in Dodge Grove Cemetery with Military Rites conducted by Mattoon VFW Post 4325. The visitation will be held from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM, Friday evening, September 22, 2023, at the funeral home.

Ken was born on June 27, 1926, to the late Luther W. and Margaret E. (Hill) Wooddell in Paxton, IL. He married Millie J. Stewart on August 2, 1947, in Champaign, IL; she preceded him in death on March 30, 1995. He later married Mabelle S. Snapp on November 23, 1996; she survives and resides in Mattoon, IL. He is also survived by his two sons, Ken Wooddell II and wife Polly of Menomonee, WI, Gary Wooddell and wife Marilyn of The Woodlands TX; four stepchildren: Mike Snapp and wife Maria of New Orleans, LA, Lisa Snapp of Henderson, NV, Laura Schneider of Coralville, IA, David Snapp of St. Louis, MO; four grandchildren: Katherine "Katie" E. Wooddell of

Friendsville, TN, Kenneth P. Wooddell and wife Becky of Menomonee Falls, WI, Kerry E. White and husband Jonathan of Wauwatosa, WI, Brian M. Wooddell of Fort Worth, TX; and five great-grandchildren: Hailey Cross of Friendsville, TN, Elijah and Wesley Wooddell of Menomonee Falls, WI, Blake and Casey White of Wauwatosa, WI. He is preceded in death by one brother, Charles.

After graduating from high school in Charlotte, MI in 1943, Ken enlisted in the US Army during World War II. Following his honorable discharge, he graduated from the University of Illinois in 1949 and went on to work in Radio Broadcasting for fifty-six years. Before his 40 year tenure at WLBH in Mattoon, he worked at WDWS in Champaign, WILL in Urbana and WMIX in Mt. Vernon. Ken retired from WLBH in 1988 and taught for 8 years through 1996 in the Communications Department of Eastern Illinois University.

Ken was a 73 year member of the Mattoon Kiwanis club beginning in 1950. He also held a 75 year membership at the Mattoon Masonic Lodge #260 since 1948. Ken was a long time member of the American Legion, Mattoon Association of Commerce, and the Mattoon area Family YMCA. He was a charter member of the Mattoon Tourism Committee and held a membership in the Eastern Illinois Panther Club. He was also a Board member of the First Federal Savings in loan.

From 1949 to 1999, Mr. Wooddell's life involved news broadcasting, advertising sales and various levels of management for WLBH radio. His first love was sports broadcasting in which he broadcast 1,768 games of all sports for Mattoon High School, Eastern Illinois University, and local area schools.

Ken was inducted into the Illinois Baseball Hall of Fame in 1975, the Eastern Illinois Letterman's Hall of Fame in 1995, was awarded the Coles Country 4-H Alumnus Award in 1988, and gained the IHSA Distinguished Service award in

1991. He received the Glen Hesler Eastern Illinois Award in 1993, an honorary directorship of the Charleston Holiday Tourney in 1994, and received the Illinois Broadcaster Pioneer award in 2013.

With his vibrant personality, Mr. Wooddell touched the lives of countless individuals throughout our community. His departure leaves an irreplaceable void in our hearts and will forever leave a lasting impact on our community.

As much as Ken was devoted to his career and community, he was truly a family man at heart. He cherished his role as a loving husband, doting father, grandfather, and great-grandfather finding joy in the presence of his family. His unwavering love and support enriched the lives of his family and served as a guiding light for them.

Memorials in his honor may be made to the United Methodist Church, 1601 Charleston Avenue, Mattoon, IL 61938

Please visit [www.mitchell-jerdan.com](http://www.mitchell-jerdan.com) or [www.facebook.com/mitchell-jerdanfuneralhome](https://www.facebook.com/mitchell-jerdanfuneralhome) to light a virtual candle in his honor or share a memory with the family.

# Cemetery Details

## Dodge Grove Cemetery

917 North 22nd Street  
Mattoon, IL 61938

# Previous Events

## Visitation

SEP **22**. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Mitchell-Jerdan Funeral Home Ltd.  
1200 Wabash Ave  
Mattoon, IL 61938  
(217) 234-8828  
contact@mitchelljerdan.com  
<https://www.mitchell-jerdan.com/>

## Service

SEP **23**. 10:00 AM (CT)

Mitchell-Jerdan Funeral Home Ltd.  
1200 Wabash Ave  
Mattoon, IL 61938  
(217) 234-8828  
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# Tribute Wall



“ *Kenneth Lyle Wooddell*

October 08, 2023 at 07:40 PM



“ *I am fortunate to have known Ken. He served as a role model and mentor in so many ways, as a volunteer, announcer, teacher, and community promoter. With a firm handshake and a compelling smile Ken Wooddell always helped others look for the positive. As a fixture at community gatherings and sporting events Ken will be missed but he will always be part of those he mentored.*

**Vinnie Walk** - September 22, 2023 at 03:51 PM



“ *Sue Engelhardt planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Kenneth Lyle Wooddell.*

**Sue Engelhardt** - September 22, 2023 at 09:51 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Kenneth Lyle Wooddell.*



September 22, 2023 at 09:51 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Kenneth Lyle Wooddell.



September 21, 2023 at 01:25 PM



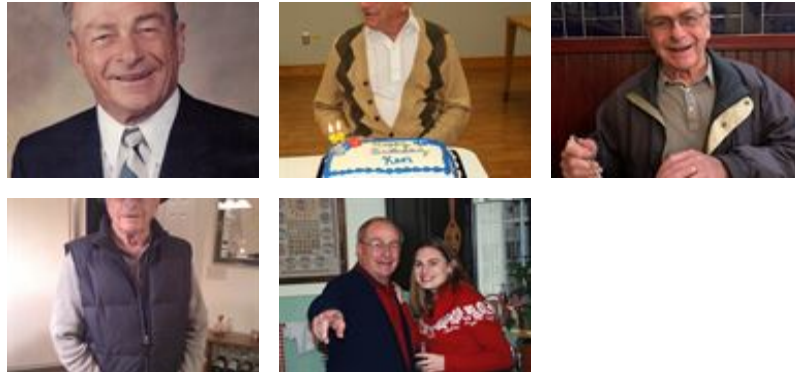
“ 1 file added to the album Life Tributes



Mitchell-Jerdan Funeral Home - September 21, 2023 at 12:57 PM



“ 52 files added to the album Life Tributes



Mitchell-Jerdan Funeral Home - September 20, 2023 at 05:18 PM



“ *When my father passed away just over a year ago, Ken stopped by the house to just sit and talk. We reflected on many things, even on the days when he announced the MHS football games that I played. Only then did I learn of some of his amazing accomplishments. Ken seemed very humble talking about himself although he had every right to proud of his accomplishments. He had a truly caring soul and will be greatly missed.*

*Rest in Peace Ken*

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**Greg Dettro** - September 19, 2023 at 04:30 PM



“ *Ken's passing is a great loss to the community. Condolences to the family.*

*Many years ago Ken interviewed me live on WLBH about the King Tut exhibit coming to Chicago. I ended-up playing the straight man to a comedian. I somehow didn't loose my step, and we had a good laugh whenever I reminded him about it.*

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**Alex Peck** - September 18, 2023 at 05:38 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Kenneth Lyle Wooddell.*



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September 18, 2023 at 03:05 PM

“With as innocent of a "Golden Voice" as he could, Ken Wooddell began his story of how he asked his newlywed wife, Millie, if she wanted to go to a homestand for their honeymoon.

Not as sports crazy as her husband, Millie didn't realize that in 1947 Major League Baseball homestands sometimes lasted two weeks. The Michigander who then lived in Illinois took his new bride to Detroit to watch his beloved Tigers for all of those baseball games those two weeks.

A few of us were holding onto the restaurant table or our chairs with laughter during this early 1990s EIU football road trip as Ken told the story much better than I can recreate here. Then we about fell off our chairs when he added that on the way home they stopped in Chicago to see a White Sox-Red Sox baseball game. "Why, I might not have ever had another chance to see Ted Williams play," Ken said with a straight face.

That is probably my favorite Ken Wooddell story, and there are many from the Hall of Fame sports broadcaster and longtime pillar of the Mattoon community. He died Friday at age 97, ending speculation of many of us younger friends that he would outlive us. Ken got away with that honeymoon stunt because he was a great husband, both to Millie, who died in 1995, and then Mabe, who survives. He was also a great friend to countless people. I remember sitting by him at a high school basketball state tournament in Peoria and I think I met half the people in Carver Arena that day. It was because everyone -- coaches, media, fans -- knew Ken.

Even more so in a local restaurant, in probably more than a hundred lunches over the years, there wasn't a time that at least a couple people stopped to say something to Ken.

Being friends with Ken was one of the easiest things I've ever done. But you knew where you stood with him. Nothing was hypocritical. I still remember in no uncertain terms him letting me know that he didn't like or agree with a column I wrote for the paper. Soon after that, he made a point to call to tell me about a column he did like. That was Ken Wooddell.

Man, I will miss him. I pray for comfort for all of his family. I will have

*an eerie feeling next time I walk into Downtown Diner without him. I will still smile when I think of his honeymoon story. But most of all, I thank God that I got to be one of Ken's many friends.*

**Brian Nielsen** - September 18, 2023 at 10:42 AM

KC

“ *Kathi Janssen Cobble lit a candle in memory of Kenneth Lyle Wooddell*



**kathi janssen cobble** - September 17, 2023 at 02:58 PM

SM

“ *I still remember Ken when he broadcasted on our local radio, keeping us all updated on the local news. My condolences to his family.*

**Sue Beasley Meyer** - September 17, 2023 at 09:43 AM

DT

“ *Ken was a Vin Scully of Mattoon Such a distinctive voice and as many have said not a nicer person in the world. Still see him in tghe corner of balcony at Mattoon High School for basketball games We would be a better world if we could model Ken Woodell*

**Dick Tate** - September 17, 2023 at 08:23 AM

HT

*Ken worked with my mom when she was on WLBH in the 50's and early 60's. He was a really nice person, and remembered me when we saw each other. I appreciated his memory for me.*

**Howard Taylor** - September 19, 2023 at 01:22 PM

AG

“ I will most remember Ken’s smile, laugh, and his exceptional storytelling. He was a good neighbor, a good friend to my parents, & had such a big heart. My condolences to his family who hold a dear place in my heart. Sending prayers your way.



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**Addie Gasper** - September 16, 2023 at 11:26 PM

 Leslie Schupbach

“ Thinking of you all and the memories we have of our families together at church and events in town. May you be comforted knowing God’s arms are surrounding you with His love! Leslie Icenogle Schupbach

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**Leslie Schupbach** - September 16, 2023 at 07:47 PM