



James Kenneth Brewer

February 19, 1935 - November 5, 2020

James Kenneth Brewer, age 85, died from heart failure on November 5, 2020 in Tallahassee. Ken was born in Louisville, Kentucky to parents Virginia and James Franklin Brewer. His father was a Baptist minister so Ken and his two brothers spent their youth in several towns in Arkansas and Tennessee, but lived longest in Columbia, Tennessee, where he graduated from high school and was a member of the state championship football team his senior year. He graduated from Ouachita Baptist University where he also played football all four years and met his wife, Mary Beth Routon.

Ken went on to earn a Master's degree in mathematics from Louisiana State University and, after serving in the U.S. Army, taught mathematics at North Georgia College and Louisiana Tech University before earning a PhD from Florida State University in Educational Statistics. He spent a post doctorate year at Stanford University, then joined the faculty of Florida State University where he began a 37 year teaching career. Ken taught Educational Statistics to graduate students, served as chairman of his department and assistant dean of the College of Education, authored statistical textbooks, and received a University Teaching Award. His love of teaching is exemplified by a statement from a former student who said "He was the most amazing stat teacher you could ever have had. I'd have never made it through without his clarity of teaching and his passion for the subject."

Ken was also an inveterate tinkerer, experimenter and inventor, and driven to be constantly busy with some project: building, creating or fixing something. He also enjoyed a lifelong passion for the outdoors and spent much of his free time caring for his wooded property in Georgia, and a beach house at Alligator Point. He is remembered most by those who knew him as a caring friend with a love for life, always ready to help with a project, ready with a funny story, light hearted advice, or a humorous anecdote.

Ken is survived by his wife, Mary Beth Routon Brewer; children Mark Franklin Brewer (Mary), Barbara Brewer Dessommes (Mark), and Kent Routon Brewer (Barry); grandchildren, Justin Kent Brewer, Thomas Grayson Brewer; Hayden Brewer Dessommes, Carter Routon Dessommes, Hailey Elizabeth Brewer, and Brooke Elise Brewer; brother Robert Hall Brewer and several nieces, nephews, and cousins. Ken was predeceased by his parents and brother Luther Gordon Brewer.

Memorial services may be held at a later date.

Breanna Green of Bevis Funeral Home is assisting the family with their arrangements. (850-385-2193 or www.bevisfh.com)

Tribute Wall

VM

“ It is with deep sorrow that I just learned of Dr. Kenneth Brewer passing. I have thought of him many time over the past fifty years! Yes, I had Dr. Brewer in the late 60's when I was a graduate student at FSU. I took his non parametric statistics and was transformed into a lover of statistics ever since. I graduated from FSU with a PhD in 1972 and then went on to take many other courses at Ohio State and the University of Michigan as a post doctoral student and then taught literacy research courses during my career. I always thought fondly of his dedication to the teaching profession and hope I always tried to emulate his passion for teaching research courses. My thoughts and prayers are with you for his memory.
Vincent P Mikkelsen FSU 1972

Vincent Mikkelsen - December 01, 2020 at 05:19 PM

KI

“ I am so saddened to hear of the passing of Dr. Brewer. When I started my doctoral studies at FSU, I was scared of statistics, but Dr. Brewer made it fun and easy to learn. I left his class better prepared for the next statistics course and less fearful. I use the skills he taught me to this very day. May his memory be a blessing.

-Kyle Ingle, University of Louisville

Kyle Ingle - December 01, 2020 at 01:39 PM

GD

“ I was so saddened to hear of Ken's death. He was such a wonderful colleague of mine at the College of Education at FSU. He was so much fun to be around and I was often bent over in laughter when in his presense. He could light up your life when he greated you. We swaped many stories and bonded early on as I too was born in Louisville, he a year before me. We both had a little country in us.

One story I have to share is special to me. As a faculty member we could take two classes a semester if we wanted. I desired to know more about statistics so took one of his classes. When I got my grade, I saw that I had made a B. My only B that I recieved in a graduate class. His stock went up to me as I knew I did I wasn't an A student in his class. What I appreciated was that he did not let friendship or the fact that I was a fellow faculty member cloud his judgement. Well done Ken,

Let's all enjoy our memories of him and Mary Beth.

George Dawson - November 22, 2020 at 09:29 PM

DC

“ I was so sorry to hear of Ken's passing. Even though i grew up and lived most of my life in Hawaii, Ken was like a “virtual” uncle, kept close through all my dad's stories, memoeries, and ongoing connection with his good friend. Dad loved Ken, and the times he shared with Ken and Joby. He will live on in our memories and hearts forever. Denise Dunn-Rankin Bennett

Denise Cordeiro-Bennett - November 13, 2020 at 08:56 PM

JH

“ I regret to hear of Ken's passing. We were good friends for the past 35 years but especially the last 17 years or so. As next door neighbors I helped him fill in pot holes on our private street. When I bought timber property in Gadsden County he offered to assist (really mentor) me get the property under control. For 17 years we would take off in the morning and head to either his property or mine and do necessary upkeep to be followed by luncheon. We cherished the thought that we had visited every country buffet in N. Florida or S. Georgia. I considered him my brother and will truly miss him. Rest in peace Ken, rest in peace.
Jim and Pat Hentz

James Hentz - November 09, 2020 at 07:47 PM