



Kenneth Rudolph Kivela

January 3, 1949 - January 24, 2026

Kenneth Rudolph “Ken” Kivela peacefully passed away at the Crest Nursing home on Saturday, January 24, 2026.

Ken was born to Johnny and Sylvia Kivela on January 3, 1949 in Minnesota and moved to Butte in 1955. Johnny and his brother, Einar acquired the Broadway Bar in Finntown. Music was always in Kenny’s blood.

He attended Butte High School, then studied at Montana State University in Bozeman and Western Montana College in Dillon where he majored in Music and Art Education.

While studying in Dillon, Ken established an upholstery business and also played with Wally Jemmings Band. It was during a band break playing at the “It Club” that he met Judy. It was truly love at first sight and they married on June 10, 1978.

Ken continued the upholstery business and passed realtor exams to join Judy with Kivela realty which served many local and Montana families.

At this time, Ken was also teaching music and art at West Junior High, traveled as a grade school teacher and also taught at Butte High, from where he would retire after many years of service.

Ken and Judy managed to find time to attend many conferences in various U.S. states and traveled on lots of memorable vacations together.

His hobbies included drumming and playing the accordion, along with reading and art. A great lover of animals, he enjoyed his beloved pets Kelso and Phalen the dogs and Missy the cat.

Ken is survived by his brother Terry Kivela of Butte, nephew, Kevin (Jennifer) Kivela and their family of Missoula, niece, Kris (Kurt) Gillis and their family also of Missoula, niece, Kenna (Travis) Watkins and their family of Portland, OR, brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Mike and Susan Bruhns and various other nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be conducted Saturday morning at 10 o'clock in Wayrynen-Richards Funeral Home and interment will follow in Mountain View Cemetery. A reception will follow at the East Side Athletic Club. Ken is remembered and missed by so many.

Previous Events

Funeral

JAN 31. 10:00 AM (MT)

Wayrynen-Richards Funeral Home
1800 Florence Ave
Butte, MT 59701
(406) 723-3221
<https://wayrynen-richards.com/>

reception

JAN 31. 12:00 PM (MT)

East SideAthletic Club
3200 Dexter
Butte, MT 59701

Tribute Wall



“ *I taught with Ken at West Elementary. He was such a kind-hearted and generous person. He loved Butte and our history and shared it with so many. He will be missed.*

Patty O'Neill - January 27 at 09:06 PM

JB

Terry and family so sorry to hear of Kenny's passing. Your family were such good friends of my mom and dad Tony and LaVonna Baumgartner. They met at the Broadway Bar on St. Patrick's Day. Later married and continued many more fun times in Finntown with your parents. Toward the end of Dad's time on earth Dad looked forward to visits from Kenny and reminiscing. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family at this difficult time. Julie Baumgartner

Julie Baumgartner - January 27 at 10:13 PM

LA

Terry So sorry for your loss you are in are thoughts Jack & Cindy Atcheson

Lucinda Atcheson - January 28 at 10:32 AM

EN

“ *Dear Terry and family, I'm so sorry for your loss. Thinking of you during this difficult time. Elena Nelson*

Elena Nelson - January 27 at 05:06 PM

TS

“ *Losing a family member is not like licking honey. In other words, it is not that easy.*

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, self-control, and loyalty,

Fruits of the Holy Spirit be with you, Terry and your family 🙏🕊️

Tom Stetzner - January 27 at 04:32 PM



“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



Wayrynen-Richards Funeral Home - January 27 at 02:04 PM