

Kenneth Myron Berg was born in Callendar, Iowa on December 24, 1913 to Albert and Clara Berg. He was the third son after Gaylord and Kermit with Sister Dorothy completing the family. When he was 7, his mother passed. With 4 children, Kenneth's father knew he couldn't handle the responsibility of the children and allowed baby Dorothy to be adopted by a loving family in Ogden, Iowa. Gaylord and Kermit were old enough to find work with their Father. Young Kenny went to live with a family on a dairy farm. Kenny often told that of one of the happiest days of his life was when his brother and uncle arrived to take him to live with his Mother's sister, Hazel and her husband Gil Dolder...thus ending his years of grueling 12 hour days working on the Dairy. Happier days were to follow, Aunt Hazel and Uncle Gil had children of their own and many cousins were now a part of his life. He stayed with his aunt and uncle until he graduated from Callendar High School in 1932.

In 1933, Kenny moved to Boone, to work and play fastpitch for a local team. It was here he met his future wife Marimae Wilson from Frazier. They were married in 1935. Marimae was from a family of 7 and now they were his family too. He forever thought of her mother, Emma Jane as the mother he had lost as a small boy.

Kenny joined the Navy in 1941 and was stationed in Coeur deLaine, Idaho attaining the rank of Chief. Although he was busy training troops, Marimae was allowed to join him in military housing for spouses. They both loved the area but returned to Boone to family and many friends after the war. Soon Kenny accepted work with Curtis Candy Company moving the couple to Marshalltown, Iowa. While delivering candy for his route, a chance meeting with a pretty girl from the local newspaper would change his life 50 years later.

On becoming a supervisor for Curtis Candy he and Marimae were able to move back to Boone once again. In 1946 they welcomed daughter Jody Jane. While she was not the son Kenny thought he would have, Jody was the apple of her Dad's eye and had personality to charm even the athletic minded Dad. Daughter Julie Marjean arrived in 1949 with a mild temperament much like her Mother's. He always said how proud he was of both his girls.

In 1948, while playing in his front yard with Jody, Kenny heard Susie Park's mother screaming from across the street. He ran over to find Susie had fallen down an unused well in her back yard, perhaps a push from a small neighborhood boy. Kenny immediately lowered himself between two small boards and worked his way to the bottom of the well. He reached down in the murky water, grabbed the small girl by the hair and pulled her up. He then pushed her up over his head and towards frantic neighbors. A short time later he was presented with the Governor's award for saving Suzi's life. That plaque hung on his wall from home to home. A few months before he passed, he spoke of that award to a group at the Veteran's hospital. Another very proud moment!

Kenny traveled through the 1950's and 60's working for the Research Institute of America, Des Moines Life and Casualty and the Gold Bond Stamp Company. In 1973, his wife of 34 years passed suddenly. Devastated, he needed to fill the void in his life and began doing community service work.

He was a life time member of the Boone American Legion #56 achieving the position of post commander. While at the Legion, he spent countless hours working Bingo nights and was famous for his chef duties in the kitchen cooking rib eye steaks for the monthly men's stag. He was instrumental in setting up an American Legion scholarship fund for local students for DMACC College. Kenny was also there for the bell ringing at Christmas, selling Poppies for disabled veterans and for representing the Legion at local funerals.

He was an original member of the Boone Golf and Country Club. His membership stretched for over 50 years. He sat on the Board in the 1980's and 1990's. He loved to Golf, when asked what his handicap was he would say; "it was a 2, then smile slyly and add, but really a 1 and a half". Kenny had three hole's in one, all achieved over the age of 72. He played golf with friend Lee Modeland for over 25 years, after Lee died; he played one more time and hung up his clubs forever.

In 1996, his chance meeting from 50 years ago would return to his life. While in Marshalltown one afternoon, he looked in the phone book and saw the name Mary Hanfeld. He drove to her house and knocked on the door. He explained who he was, that they had known each other many years ago. They reminisced about the big band dances they both had attended in Marshalltown in the 1940's. This was a dance that would be continued 50 years later.

Kenny and Mary were married October 6, 1997 in Marshalltown, Iowa. What a wonderful way to spend the remaining years of their lives. They were active and happy, living in both Boone and Marshalltown, commenting that in Boone, Mary was Kenny Berg's wife and in Marshalltown, Kenny was Mary Hanfeld's husband. They were like two youngsters so in love, never thinking about their age. Hardly a day went by without them going to coffee or dinner, watching his beloved Chicago Cubs or Mary's favorite, just taking a ride and admiring the scenery and the shapes of the clouds. Mary even brought music back into his life, they listened in the car and never missed a re-run of Lawrence Welk or Polka Town. However, their dancing was not to be. In 2005, Kenny fell, breaking his hip and in 2007 fell again breaking his leg. Eventually his health caused him to enter the Iowa Veterans Home in Marshalltown. Mary had given over 30 years of service as the Administrative Assistant for the Commandant at this very home. She was now back again as the loving companion and caregiver. Prayer seemed to be their special bond. Not a night went by without them saying the Lord's Prayer together. Mary was there at his side, holding his hand until the end of his life here on earth. In the end the only thing you have is the love inside and you take that with you when you die. He is taking so much love with him, but our love for him remains forever in our hearts!

Kenny was preceded in death by his parents, brothers Gaylord and Kermit and sister Dorothy and wife Marimae.

He leaves his wife Mary Hanfeld Berg, daughter Jody Keller and spouse Ron, daughter Julie Fitzpatrick and spouse Dave, Grandchildren Chris Johnson, Cole Fitzpatrick, Scott Keller, Josh Keller and Melissa Nocon. Eight Great Grandchildren, Toby, Elijah and Joe Johnson, Taylor and Zachary Nocon, Mary Alexis and Olivia Keller and Jack Keller

Baseball was so much a part of his life we have chosen to include this:

The following is an excerpt of an article written by sportswriter Bill McIntyre in the Fort Dodge newspaper in 1993 upon his induction into the Iowa Fast Pitch Hall of fame.

One day a message appeared on the sports desk, it said Kenny Berg of Boone was going to be inducted into the Iowa Fast Pitch Softball Hall of Fame in ceremonies at Cedar Rapids. It didn't ring a bell, but thought I had better call the number in Boone and see what's up. I'm glad I did.

Kenny Berg, it turns out, is 79 years old and the stuff legends are made of, almost a folk hero time athlete of days gone by. A depression era softball pitcher with a mean fastball, Kenny grew up in Callendar and graduated from Callender High School in 1932. Kenny Berg was a ball player, baseball or softball, it didn't matter, except that when times were so bad in 1931 and Callendar High couldn't afford to buy baseball equipment, it switched its boys team over to softball.

Forced to trade the hardball for the softball, Kenny was launched on a 10-year career that took him to national softball tournaments all over the country. By the time he enlisted in the Navy in 1942, he'd compiled a record of 219 wins and just 21 losses with 21 no-hit games. That not counting his 24-0 record as a high school pitcher. The Boone Dairy, was so impressed with Kenny, they offered him a job and the opportunity to play for their ball team there in 1934. He pitched 30 games for Boone that year and went 28-2 and made it to the national tournament in Chicago, Illinois. The team ended up losing in the consolation finals.

When he started pitching the distance to home plate was 35 feet. He had a pretty good fastball and from that distance he averaged 14 strikeouts a game. Later when they moved it back to 37 ½ feet he still averaged about 10. Must have taken a pretty gutsy hitter to stand against Kenny in those days. Softball traveling more than 90 miles per hour is not only hard to hit but darn right dangerous. Luckily, he had good control.

After World War II, Kenny returned to Boone and worked for Curtis Candy Company of Marshalltown. He had retired from the rigors of fastpitch, played a little slow pitch and a lot of golf.

The memories were still fresh in Kenny Berg's mind. Hot, dusty Sunday afternoons in Gowrie or Dayton or Callender or Burnside or any other farming community, and before TV and RV's, when people only had their town teams to watch. Kenny was going to Cedar Rapids to receive his award, it was almost 60 years from the time he was in his softball prime. It was about time!

We, Kenny's family, thank that sportswriter for his kind and true words.

Final song to be played at his funeral, "Take me out to the ball game"