

Edward J. Keenan

September 13, 1935 - March 8, 2025

Edward J. Keenan, son of Charles and Helen (Gleason) of Fairmount, Philadelphia, PA, died Saturday March 8, 2024, peacefully with his sons nearby.

Ed was born September 13, 1935, the youngest of 6 Keenans. He is preceded in death by his parents, his brothers Charles, Joseph, Thomas, James, and his sister Helen. He is also preceded in death by his wife Catherine (McLaughlin, d. 2005.) Ed is survived by his sons Brendan, Emmett (Nancy), and Colin, and his grandchildren Quinn, Róisín, Kai, Maia, and Myles. Ed is also survived by a large extended family of nieces and nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews, and beyond, with whom he has remained close over his years.

A proud son of the Philadelphia neighborhood of Fairmount, Ed attended elementary school at St. Francis Xavier, and then high school at Roman Catholic High School, graduating with the class of 1954. After his early formative years in the city, Ed elected to join the US Army in 1957 and was stationed in Kansas for two years of military service. Following his return to Philadelphia, Ed next heard his calling taking him to Maryknoll College in Ossining, NY, where he majored in religious studies and trained for the priesthood and missionary work. Ed graduated in 1963 but chose to step away from the path to priesthood and return to the Philadelphia area, seeking another journey of service for himself.

Ed's experiences and interactions in Kansas and New York sparked an

interest in supporting people, with special attention paid to social justice issues and recognizing the needs of some of our most vulnerable friends and neighbors. During those early working years, he completed a Masters in Social Work at the University of Pennsylvania. Thus began a remarkable 35+ year social work career, where he excelled in various capacities spanning direct social work roles to administrative leadership positions, and culminating in a 27-year tenure as the Executive Director of the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) in Montgomery County, PA, that continued until his retirement in 2000. It was during this early time in Ed's work career that he met his wife Catherine "Missy" McLaughlin of Germantown; they were married in 1967. They raised their family in the Frankford neighborhood of Northeast Philadelphia, where Cathy and Ed were active members of their church at St. Joachim. They remained together until Cathy's passing in 2005. She was the love of his life. Ed's retirement years were notable for the continuation of his commitment to serving people. Soon after his departure from his work with older adults, he partnered with his high school alma mater Roman Catholic, designing a program to link students completing their community service requirements with Roman Catholic graduates living in nursing homes and long-term care facilities throughout the Philadelphia area. The ASIST (Alumni-Student

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Intergenerational Support Team) Program has spanned 25 years, positively impacting the lives of hundreds of Roman students and alumni along the way. His legacy as a proud graduate but also as a daily support to the students at Broad and Vine Sts. today is recognized by many at the school as a significant and valuable asset to the Cahilite Community.

Ed's family and friends remember him as warm and generous in all interactions with others, and just as passionate about his care for people as his beloved Philadelphia Phillies. Many remember Ed as the person who would look a person in the eye, firmly shake their hand or give them a warm hug, and then ask them directly, but sensitively, how they were doing. Ed was a mentor for many in their pursuit of higher education and careers in helping

professions, but also an endearing positive influence on everyone he encountered because of his wonderful use of humor and his keen empathetic approach. He loved a well-poured Guinness in a cozy Irish bar, but more importantly he immensely enjoyed time well-spent with family and friends for a meal and a chat about how they were. Ed Keenan is missed dearly by a large but close-knit extended family and network of friends he has known over his 89 years.

Friends and family are invited to his funeral mass Tuesday March 18, 2025, at St. Francis Xavier Church in Fairmount at 10 AM. There will be a viewing on Monday evening, March 17, 2025 from 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM and Tuesday morning from 8 AM - 9:30 AM at Shelly-Dinan funeral home, 1923 Spring Garden St.

In lieu of flowers donations can be made to:

Roman Catholic High School

301 N. Broad Street

Philadelphia, PA 19107

Attn: Mission Advancement

Memo line: Roman Fund-Ed Keenan Memorial

<https://www.romancatholichs.com/giving/roman-fund>

Tribute Wall

EM

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



emmett - March 17, 2025 at 04:27 PM

TI

*Hey guys it's been a minute, Sorry to hear about your father. Growing up across the street from you guys your dad was always so kind. I remember I'm helping me home a couple times when I got injured at your house he was always so kind. Let me hang around with you guys and go to some baseball card conventions the old days bring back a lot of memories. That was a great man, our dad had many good conversations together.
Again, sorry about your father. Hope all is well.*

Tim - January 01 at 02:56 PM

TI

Sorry for the late condolences, but I found out today.

Tim - January 01 at 03:00 PM

TR

“ If you were friends with the Keenan boys you knew that their parents were among the neighborhood collective that kept the kids on the straight and narrow.

We all are fully grown today, likely parenting with many of the characteristics of care, love, and empathy that Mr. and Mrs. Keenan exhibited in their lives as our "neighborhood" parents.

A specific recollection of Mr. Keenan was one of a coach, a mentor, a role model. He was a cornerstone of our community.

Mr. Keenan was one of the many fathers that showed up each summer to coach baseball at Simpson playground. The Simpson Playground Tee-Shirt League during the late 70s and early 80s had some of the best baseball in the city. Mr. Keenan had an incredible ability to see potential in every player. I'll never forget how he recognized my strength as a pitcher-not as a finesse player like Steve Carlton, but more in the mold of Larry Christenson. He did his best keeping me off the injury list! He took the time to teach me how to throw a 4-seam, 3-finger fastball, patiently working with me until I got it right. No curveballs for you son he would say! That fastball was the secret sauce to getting us to the championship in the summer of 1980. He didn't just teach us how to play baseball; he taught us how to carry ourselves-with dignity, respect, and joy for the game.

After every game, win or lose, he would gather us around for a pep talk, passing out orange slices as we sat there with big orange peel smiles on our faces. He'd remind us that baseball wasn't just about winning-it was about how we played the game, how we treated each other, and how we found joy in being part of something bigger than ourselves. Those lessons have stayed with me throughout my life.

Brendan, Emmett and Colin, I hope this memory provides some respite from the sadness the moment is bringing.

I expect that this is but one of many fond stories to be shared of your father's life.

You are in the thoughts of many my old friends.

Terry Rowley - March 15, 2025 at 07:46 PM

BK

Thank you so much Terry! Love these memories

Brendan C Keenan - March 17, 2025 at 01:54 AM

PM

Well-said, Terry. As someone who coached baseball with Ed Keenan and my father, John Mooney, I can tell you that they spent hours away from the fields discussing how to bring out the best in every kid, not only as a player, but as a person. They sincerely wanted to do whatever they could to help every kid in that league to be the best version of themselves.

Patrick Mooney - March 17, 2025 at 11:45 PM

GB

I am so sorry to read of Ed's passing. He was a very kind man and wonderful husband to my good friend, Missy (Catherine McLaughlin). Missy and I were next door neighbors when we were growing up in Germantown. He was the love of her life. RIP Ed. Give Catherine a hug from me. I am glad you are together again. Thank you for your kindness to me. Genevieve Welsh Bottorff.

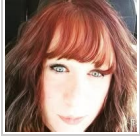
Genevieve Welsh Bottorff - April 08, 2025 at 05:06 PM

EM

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Emmett - March 15, 2025 at 04:31 PM



“ *When my oldest son was born I named him after my pop keenan, Joseph and pops nickname was Jody so Uncle Eddie called Joey little Jody, He was an amazing man always gave me hope when I had none and always made me feel like no matter what I could achieve anything and made me want to be a better person, I love you Uncle Eddie*

Frani Downey - March 15, 2025 at 05:05 AM

BJ

I was fortunate in working with Ed on state-wide aging issues. I was the Aging director in Beaver County. He was an early leader with concerns for the issues and well as the individuals his organization was serving. Sorry to hear he has died.

Brandon James - March 16, 2025 at 09:43 PM

BK

Thank you Brandon! Ed really appreciated the time he spent with other AAA directors, as far as i understood you were all trailblazers in the state!

Brendan C Keenan - March 17, 2025 at 01:52 AM

EM

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emmett - March 11, 2025 at 08:48 PM

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Emmett - March 11, 2025 at 06:08 PM

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Emmett - March 11, 2025 at 06:07 PM

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Emmett - March 11, 2025 at 03:28 PM

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Emmett - March 11, 2025 at 03:24 PM

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Emmett - March 11, 2025 at 03:23 PM

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Emmett - March 11, 2025 at 03:12 PM