



Wayne Lee Kern

October 24, 1932 - September 7, 2024

Wayne Lee Kern, born on October 24, 1932, in Morton, Illinois, passed away peacefully on September 7, 2024, surrounded by his loving family at the Lake of the Ozarks, his favorite place. He was 91 years old.

Wayne was a man of extraordinary kindness, wit, wisdom, and generosity. Until the very end of his life, he was an intellectually curious polymath who was eager to understand the perspectives of others, even when they did not match his own. His career was as varied as his interests and the quintessential American dream. Born on a Depression-era farm, he worked as a farmer, teacher, truck driver and local banker before attending law school and becoming General Counsel at a series of companies including International Funeral Services, Heritage Communications, and Crown Media.

Wayne's greatest joy came from his family. He was a loving husband, devoted father, and doting grandfather. For all, he modeled unconditional love, a principled moral code, a strong work ethic, and provided unwavering support. Wayne was preceded in death by his son, Ted. He leaves behind his wife Donna, five loving children (Todd, Kirsten, Matt, Brian, and R.D.), nine grandchildren (Sandy, Sadie, Lauren, Julia, Joe, Thomas, Elizabeth, Malin, and Isla), and six great-grandchildren, all of whom will miss him dearly.

He loved flying, shotgun sports, boating, and working with his hands. But,

helping people was his true passion. His willingness to accept the faults of others without judgement put people at ease and allowed him to be an impactful mentor to many. Everyone, without exception, liked Wayne. He was always the smartest, most competent person in the room, and he felt no need to prove it. His uncanny ability to make people feel welcome, listen patiently, and offer sage advice to those who sought it will be remembered by all he touched.

A tireless advocate for education, Wayne supported numerous causes and individuals throughout his life, with a special connection to Drake Law School. Wayne believed in the transformative power of education and dedicated much of his life to helping others realize their potential.

Wayne Lee Kern leaves behind a legacy of love, integrity, kindness, and generosity. He will be remembered as a man who lived a life full of purpose, touching countless lives with his steady support, sage counsel, and unconditional love. His memory will live on in the hearts of those who loved him, and his impact will continue to be felt by the many who benefited from his wisdom, generosity, and guidance.

There will be a Mass and Celebration of Life at Sacred Heart Church in West Des Moines, Iowa on Saturday, September 14th at 10:30am. All are welcome.

Arrangements are under the direction and care of the Kidwell-Garber Laurie/Sunrise Beach Chapel.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

SEP **14.** 10:30 AM (CT)

Sacred Heart Catholic Church
1627 Grand Ave.
West Des Moines, IA 50265