

## Kenneth J. Kopecky

**DES MOINES** - Kenneth J. Kopecky, Professor Emeritus of Mathematics and Computer Science, who taught at Drake University for 42 years, died on July 6, 2019, at the age of 82.

Kenneth was born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa to Mary and Wesley Kopecky. Survivors include his wife Betty of 56 years; daughters, Jill Croft (Kevin) and Jane Hall; grandchildren, Katelyn Hall, Andrew Croft, and Emily Croft; sister, Sally Alvarez (Dennis) and many nieces and nephews. Ken's brother, Duane predeceased him.

Ken received his B.S, M.S., and Ph.D. degrees from Iowa State University in Mathematics, Physics, and Electrical Engineering. Ken did post-doctorate study in Computer Science and computer research for NASA at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, and at the Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama. He worked on experiments for The Space Shuttle.

Professor Kopecky expanded the Computer Science Department at Drake University with grants he received with his NASA contracts. He sent two of his computer science students to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory for summer internships with his NASA funded contracts. He taught students to write computer programs in many different computer languages. He loved teaching and passed that love on to many of his students, who also became teachers, professors, and researchers.

Ken was a Drake Relays Official for 52 years and was nominated to the Drake Relays Wall of Fame. He was a certified USA Track and Field official, and an official for the Iowa State Boys and Girls Annual Track meet at Drake University for many years. Ken was a well known Iowa runner and bicyclist, winning many trophies, plaques, medals, and ribbons in races.

He was admired by his students, fellow professors, and friends and called "Kope" by many.

Ken's family would like to thank Care Initiatives Hospice, and the kind Resident Assistants and Staff at Edencrest Assisted Living in Beaverdale, who cared for him in the last year of his life and to all of the Professors, students, family, and friends who visited Ken there.

Ken will be buried at Resthaven Cemetery in West Des Moines in a private family service. In lieu of flowers, the family would like to suggest contributions in memory of Ken be directed to the Professor Kenneth J. Kopecky Computer Science and Mathematics Scholarship Fund at Drake University.

