

# *In Memoriam* *Dr. Ken Gifford*

July 4, 1937 — July 4, 2020



We are deeply saddened to inform you of the passing of Dr. Ken “Doc” Gifford . Ken passed away on July 4, 2020, his 83<sup>rd</sup> birthday, at his home in Rapid City.

Ken was born on July 4, 1937 in Huron, SD to Kenneth K. Gifford Sr. and Evelyn (Halbur) Gifford. He was the oldest of two siblings and grew up in Huron where he became an Eagle Scout and graduated from Huron H.S. in 1955. While in high school, he would date his future wife. He married Berneice “Bea” Knutson in 1958 and they spent nearly 62 years together.

Ken was first of his generation to go to college and in 1959 he graduated from SDSU with a degree in Industrial Arts education. They moved to Sioux Falls where he started his education career at Whittier Jr. High School. They had two children together, Michael James and Chelaine Marie.

Ken’s passion for teaching led to the decision to pursue his Master’s Degree during the summer months from Colorado State College in Greeley, CO. And in 1970, he was one of two educators to be granted a sabbatical leave in order to earn his PhD. Ken was driven to make a difference in the lives of both his students and his fellow teachers. He took that energy and moved out of the classroom to become the Director of the SD Advisory Council on technical education.

No one loved the Black Hills more than Ken did. In 1971, he would make a purchase near Custer (pictured) that would change all of lives with the memories of hiking, campfires, and hunting. In 1982, Ken and Bea moved to Rapid City where he worked at Rapid City Stevens HS and then he was offered the Director’s role at Western Dakota Tech. He applied all of his leadership, listening skills, and teaching experience to build a totally new college campus and retired as its President and CEO.

Ken will be remembered by his students, his staff, his friends, the team at Association of General Contractors, his church family at Canyon Lake United Methodist Church, and all of the community service he did as a member of Lions Club International. He loved to write and teach technical training for young apprentices, singing in the choir, and running the SD Lions Foundation for eye screening for children, not to mention being a Lions District Governor too.

Ken will be greatly missed by his wife Bea of Rapid City, son Mike (Jerene) of Afton, MN, and daughter Chelaine (Wayne) of Rapid City. His grandchildren Erin Rempfer (Travis), TJ Gifford (Susan), Jessica Williams (Sean), Kayleen Huber (Aaron), and Nichole Asscherick (Jacob). He was blessed with 8 great children: Kaisie, Haleigh, Aiden, Gavin, Ben, Alayna, and Archie.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Kenneth and Evelyn, and his brother Dennis.

Celebration of Life Services will be held at a future date.