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KENNETH BARRY POPKIN

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Kenneth Barry Popkin, 73, passed away peacefully at home on Nov. 18, 2013. He was then, as he is now, with those who love him.

The final eight years of Kens life were transformed by Parkinson's. In spite of the disease he lived a beautiful, full life and touched all who knew him.

Ken was born in Duluth, Aug. 30, 1940. His parents were Leo and Kate (Weinberg) Popkin.

Ken attended Endion Elementary, at 13 was Bar Mitzvahd at Temple Israel. In junior and senior high school, he played violin in the school orchestra and participated in theater. Also during his school years, he worked as a chauffeur and gardener for a Duluth family, and as a gas station attendant. He developed a keen interest in repairing and rebuilding cars. Ken graduated from Duluth East High School in 1958.

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year ended, our son Nathan Lee was born.

In 1965, we moved to Iowa where Ken earned his MSW from the University of Iowa. In 1967 we moved to Grand Rapids. Ken joined Itasca County Human Services as the county's very first Mental Health Worker. He also taught evening classes in psychology and sociology at Itasca Community College. Ken retired in 1999, completing his career in child welfare.

Ken embodied the definition of a Renaissance man. He had many interests and pursued and practiced them with passion. In addition to loving his profession, he delighted in painting. His art adorns our home. He designed and built three mid-century modern homes for our family, always selecting a building site where the gifts of nature were integral to the structure. He was a wildlife watcher. Many of our Grand Rapids friends knew Ken through bowling, running, golf, and as my dance partner. Our family was brought even closer together with our weekends at the lake. Wherever we went, folks were drawn to him, and he to them.

Ken devoted himself to the sport of hockey. In the early 70s, Ken coached cadet hockey and later became involved with traveling peewee and bantam teams. He served as a team manager or assistant coach. He assisted with the first three Star of the North hockey tournaments. When girls' hockey became a high school sport, Ken was cheering for every Lightning game.

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the boards, and Ken is working on his slap shot. Ken has gifted me with enough memories to last my lifetime. "Save me the next dance, Kenny."

Ken is survived by me, his wife, Barbara Popkin; our son, Nate; our daughter-in-law, Lisa Weiss; his brother and sister-in-law, Frank and Joann Elevitch and their children Craig and Jill; my brother and his wife, Bob (Jeff) and Diane Bolles; his cousins, Harold and Donald Cannon and Michele Popkin Solomon.

CELEBRATION OF LIFE: 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday, March 29, at the MacRostie Art Center, 405 First Avenue NW, Grand Rapids. Memorials will be divided between Grace House and Second Harvest Food Shelf. All are welcome.

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