



Kenny Tatum

August 8, 1944 - January 19, 2024

Kenny Ardell Tatum passed from this life January 19, 2024. A beloved husband, father, grandfather, educator, contributing community member, mentor, volunteer, civil rights leader, and God fearing man will be missed by many. Born on August 8, 1944 to Annie Lou (Alford) Tatum and Braxton Tatum on his family's farm in Ouachita, Arkansas, Kenny Tatum was the youngest of eight children. He grew up farming, milking cows, digging ditches, and other hard labor. His family are pillars of the Stephens, Arkansas community. His parents valued education. All of his brothers and sisters received college educations and entered professional careers. In fact, Kenny's sister Gracie was his third-grade teacher. Kenny graduated from Carver High School in Stephens, Arkansas in 1961.

Kenny learned to play the trombone and eventually earned a music scholarship to Arkansas AM&N College in Pine Bluff, Arkansas (now University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff). He graduated in 1964. Growing up in the rural south as a young Black man, Kenny faced overt racism and discrimination on a regular basis. He decided early in life that he never wanted to be denied opportunities because of a lack of qualifications and eventually went on to receive his Masters of Education degree and completed all course work for his doctorate degree in Education at the University of Illinois.

Kenny met Patricia Ann Rousseau on campus of Arkansas AM&N College

while she was dating his roommate. They had an instant connection and have been inseparable ever since. This happy couple enjoyed 60 years of marriage. Upon graduating from Arkansas AM&N, Kenny and his young wife Patricia Ann (Rousseau) Tatum left Arkansas for Pembroke, IL where he taught music and served as a junior high school principal. Some of the children he taught became world-renown artists. Kenny went on to teach adults at the University of Chicago and the Chicago Urban Skills Institute. Kenny impacted countless lives during his fifteen years as an educator.

Kenny brought his skills and talent for working with people to Bunge Foods in Bourbonnais, IL where he became the Manager of Human Resources. During his over 20 years at Bunge, he took pride in establishing fair hiring practices and providing everyone with an equal opportunity for open positions. He dealt with people honestly, whether they liked it or not, and always encouraged others to further their careers. He was a friend and advisor to employees and many young adults who sought to work with Bunge.

Kenny devoted his life to advocating for equal opportunities, education, and fair treatment for all people. He had a passion for helping people and was especially passionate about improving the lives of Black folks. He served on the Kankakee School Board and the Kankakee Housing Authority. He served on many other boards, including the Kankakee Little League, Kankakee Pony League, Junior Football League, Kankakee YMCA, United Way, Parkside Lodge Treatment Center, and Men of Progress. His community service earned him many awards, including the Coretta Scott King Music Award, presented by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Foundation. After he retired, he enjoyed discussing bible verses, spending time with his grandchildren, lots of golf, gardening and, most of all, time with the love of his life—Patsy Ann.

Kenny and Pat have two children, Kenyatta Latricia Tatum Futterman (Chicago) and Kenny Rousseau Tatum (Atlanta), a respected son-in-law,

Craig Benson Futterman, and 4 grandchildren, Alijah, Asha, Joey and Braxton. He focused his family on education. Both his children became lawyers and two of his grandchildren already have graduate degrees. Kenny was an unequivocally devoted father and grandfather. If he was not coaching a youth sports team, he was the loudest parent or grandparent in the audience. He taught both his children to play a musical instrument. He wanted the best for his kids, so he taught them the value of hard work.

He was preceded in death by his brothers Clinton Tatum and Clifton Tatum and sisters Odessa Micheaux, Ophelia King, and Hattie Pearl Nash. Kenny's sister Gracie Hill and brother Braxton Tatum, Jr. reside in Camden, Arkansas.

Kenny is also survived by beloved cousins and many treasured nieces and nephews. Kenny truly loved and was very proud of his family.

Kenny Tatum was the definition of a people person. He was quick to smile, always had an encouraging word, frequently gave good advice, and fiercely defended his loved ones. A quick trip to the grocery store could last more than an hour for Kenny because he was bound to have a conversation with someone he knew or talk it up with someone he just met. He was generous with his spirit and his time. If he could help someone he would. He loved being on a golf course where he forged life-long friendships. Still, he would not hesitate to voice his opinion about his opponent's golf game! He was a man of his word and a man of action. He got up early and worked hard while still appreciating all the blessings in his life. He loved many and he was loved by many. He will be missed dearly.

Cemetery Details

Mound Grove Cemetery

1000 N. Greenwood
Kankakee, IL

Previous Events

Service

JAN 26. 11:00 AM (CT)

Lax Mortuary
187 S. Greenwood Avenue
Kankakee, IL 60901
(815) 935-0090
laxmortuary@laxmortuary.com
<http://laxmortuary.com/>

Tribute Wall

VJ

“ *My 7th Grade Teacher in Hopkins Park, Illinois..1965....So nice Mr. Tatum !!!*

Violet Jackson - May 13, 2024 at 04:28 PM

DW

“ *Mr. Tatum was a good person, he hired me at BUNGE considering my background, he gave me a chance for better. And we also went to same church. He will be missed.*



Debra Williams - February 03, 2024 at 11:03 AM

MG

“ *Pat and family you have my heart felt condolences. Praying for your strength during your time of sorrow, Sending love*



Mary Gaddy - January 28, 2024 at 07:16 AM

JL

“ *Pat and Family, we are lifting you up in prayer. With sincere condolences. Jimmy & Jacqui*



Jimmy & Jacqui Lipscomb - January 25, 2024 at 09:28 PM

MF

“ *My sincere condolences to the family. Mr. Tatum was a great man and a great friend to my father. Praying for the family's comfort.*

Monica Copeland Fountain - January 25, 2024 at 08:32 PM

CB

“ *To Tatum family my deepest condolences and prayers are with you. Mr. Tatum was kindest person who kept smile on his face he will definitely be missed.*

crystal bryant - January 25, 2024 at 07:20 PM

DA

“ *Praying for comfort and strength for the family of Kenny Tatum.
With Sympathy
Dr Rodney & Jackie Alford*



Dr Rodney & Jackie Alford - January 25, 2024 at 06:54 PM

RF

“ *ROSEMARY BROWN & FAMILY purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Kenny Tatum.*



ROSEMARY BROWN & FAMILY - January 25, 2024 at 04:53 PM

AS

“ *God Bless You Mr Kenny Tatum*



Alexia Sanders - January 25, 2024 at 02:31 PM

AS

“ *I remember Kenny Tatum from many years ago. He was a great man. Kenny set example for future generations. R.I.P. Kenny God Bless his Family too*

Alexis (Chambers) Sanders

Alexia Sanders - January 25, 2024 at 02:28 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Kenny Tatum.*



January 25, 2024 at 02:21 PM

LD

“ *LaVella Darby lit a candle in memory of Kenny Tatum*



LaVella Darby - January 25, 2024 at 02:05 PM

RN

“ Sincere condolences to Mrs. Patricia Tatum (home girl) and family. Prayers for your strength and comfort.



Ruby F Nelson - January 25, 2024 at 11:43 AM

JK

“ Even in your sadness,we hope you can hold on to the thought that a life lived with so much love never ends,but goes on forever in the hearts of those who remember. We saw Kenny at Riverside gym and he always had time to chat with a smile . Enjoyed working with him at Bunge.
Donna & Jay Karr

Jay Karr - January 24, 2024 at 11:26 PM

MM

“ Mrs. Tatum and family, our sincerest condolences and prayers to you all at this time. Mr. Tatum was a blessing to the Pembroke/Hopkins Park community.



Michael and Rita Morris - January 24, 2024 at 11:05 PM

JU

“ We are saddened to hear of Kenny's passing. He and I met and became college friends at UAPB and have been life long friends ever since. He was always the same every time we came in contact with each other and will be greatly missed! Our prayers are extended to Pat & the rest of the Tatum family.
James Utsey & family, Milwaukee, WI

James Utsey - January 24, 2024 at 06:46 PM

JF

“ *JOANN FORD-BOX lit a candle in memory of Kenny Tatum*



JOANN FORD-BOX - January 24, 2024 at 04:47 PM

PJ

“ *My love and condolences to the Tatum family. I pray that the many memories you have of Mr. Tatum comforts you during this period of adjustment.*



Patricia Jamison - January 24, 2024 at 02:39 PM

ZA

“ *Kenny was a dear Friend. I was the first black female manager He hired. He stuck with me through thick and thin. Truly a Man of God.*

Zelma Armstrong - January 24, 2024 at 12:02 PM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Kenny Tatum.*



January 24, 2024 at 10:49 AM

WB

“ With Love, Sheila Bedi planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Kenny Tatum.

With Love, Sheila Bedi - January 24, 2024 at 10:49 AM

BE

“ My condolences to the family.



Brenda Euell - January 24, 2024 at 10:47 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Kenny Tatum.



January 24, 2024 at 10:38 AM

CB

“ I'm so very sad to hear of Mr. Tatum's passing. I met this very kind man when I worked at Ultra Foods and he shopped there. Always a smile and friendly. Someone that I always looked forward to seeing. In fact, I recently ran into him In Meijer and we recognized each other immediately. My condolences to all of his family. What an amazing life he lived. RIP my friend.

Chris Breault - January 24, 2024 at 09:15 AM

RM

“ Kenny hired me at Bunge over 25 years ago and I still remember the interview and how engaging and kind he was. I'm now a Human Resources Manager and have taken many attributes from Kenny and pay it forward. I wish I could have told him that. He silently shaped my career.

René Miller - January 24, 2024 at 08:06 AM

SC

“ Mr. Tatum was one of the greatest teachers of Pembroke school system. He was loved by all the students. The band was awesome.

Stephanie Campbell - January 23, 2024 at 10:15 PM

EL

“ My deepest condolences to the Tatum's Family. Mr. Tatum was a gentle kind spirited man. He truly loved his family. May his precious memories comfort his family. And may he rest in the arms of the Father 🌸🙏🙏



Ethel Lee - January 23, 2024 at 06:06 PM

JG

“ Joe Giacchino lit a candle in memory of Kenny Tatum



Joe Giacchino - January 23, 2024 at 05:36 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Kenny Tatum.*



January 23, 2024 at 05:14 PM



“ *I am so sad to hear of Kenny's passing. I enjoyed working with him at Bunge. He will be dearly missed by so many.*

Shelley F Hays - January 23, 2024 at 01:40 PM



“ *Mr. Tatum will be missed. One of the most caring teachers I encountered throughout my school years. God bless you Mrs. Tatum and your family. We lost a treasure. Cynthia Marshall Holeman*

Cynthia Marshall Holeman - January 23, 2024 at 01:37 PM



“ *His charming smile, the wave of his hand, and "hey neighbor" will forever be missed. Our hearts and prayers are with the Tatum family during this incredibly difficult time.*

Valerie Cuddy - January 23, 2024 at 12:54 PM

LS

“ *Mr. Tatum was a very good man, well respected. Thanks for your example and legacy: uplifting and encouraging others (my daughter Rickyla).*



LaJuene Sommerville - January 23, 2024 at 12:15 PM

CW

“ *My Condolences to his family. Sending Prayers .*



Cheryl Wilson - January 23, 2024 at 11:53 AM

CJ

“ *Catherine Jackson lit a candle in memory of Kenny Tatum*



Catherine Jackson - January 23, 2024 at 11:35 AM

TE

“ *Tim Connie Eaker lit a candle in memory of Kenny Tatum*



Tim and Connie Eaker - January 23, 2024 at 10:45 AM

TE

Kenny you will be missed. Mowing grass,planting flowers! Always detail cars! Lucky Pat! The road trips! Left garage door up couple times. Always willing lend a hand.

Tim and Connie Eaker - January 23, 2024 at 06:11 PM