



## Kenneth Lloyd Nelson

February 28, 1928 - January 12, 2024

There's no easy way to describe Kenneth Lloyd Nelson other than a force of nature. An institution. A man who knew his own mind and wanted everyone else to know it too.

Born February 28, 1928, in Windsor, Colorado to Anna Marie and Ernest Nelson, Ken lived through sixteen US presidents, the transition from horses to tractors, the Great Depression, World War Two, the Cold War, the moon landing, the Civil Rights movement, Watergate, the information age and the subsequent tech boom.

Ken began his education at Observatory School, a one-room schoolhouse, and he graduated from Windsor High School in 1946. In May 1950, he graduated from John Brown University in Siloam Springs, Arkansas, where he majored in Engineering. Shortly after, he was drafted into the Korean War where he served at Dugway Proving Ground in Utah as Chaplain's Assistant until 1952. On October 15, 1955, he married Alice Donetta Brown at First Baptist Church in Fort Collins, Colorado. She admired his strong working hands and he relied on her calm strength. Together, they had three children: Alice Ann, Nels Alan, and Walter William.

A lifelong farmer, Ken made his work his life. He grew up working in the fields of Cactus Hill Ranch and finished out his days in those same fields. In 1956 he took his father's vision of feeding sheep to the next level. He studied how

sheep ate feed and drank water and used the principles of engineering that he had studied at college to design and build, and then operate the world's largest sheep feedlot. His innovations set the standard for the sheep industry and are still considered best practice. As he aged, Ken was able to train his sons and eventually his grandsons to operate the business that he built, and he willingly took a successively smaller role in the day-to-day operations. If you dared bring up the question of retirement or vacation, his response was ever the same, "vacation and retirement are two words that aren't in the Bible!"

Ken worked long hours, there's no denying that, but he always made sure to have some fun. Ken hosted huge parties that were quite literally the talk of the town. When he got older, his fun was taking the grandkids in his supercharged Chevy Caprice to see how fast it could get to 100-MPH going uphill. Ken and Donetta loved to eat out, and always took some of the grandkids with them, a tradition that Ken continued even after Donetta's death. He spent time mentoring his grandchildren—so much time in fact that he always joked about retiring to get away from the grandkids—modeling ethics and work habits. They spent time with him in the tractor and were always welcome at his house for a drink of orange juice and some Oreos. His gruff exterior that shouted things like "Here, stop that!" or "Be quick-uz as a lark!" hid a heart of gold that was always ready to help anyone who needed it.

One of his favorite things to do was invent new words. When something was broken past repair it was "doomicated," when you were confused you were "piecorkulated," when something fell it went "boomaganga." While working in the fields, he would come up with ditties for Burma-Shave signs advertising sheep manure. "Democrats and Republicans/ Have agreed/ That sheep compost/ Is what you need!" Or, "Scare the goblin/ Scare the ghost/ Grow HUGE plants/ With sheep compost!"

A persistent Christian, his incredible thirst for knowledge and propensity to ask the tough questions piecorkulated many of the pastors around him, but he never stopped going to church, reading his Bible, and pondering the things of

God. If you spent any time talking with him, he always had a question to discuss from last week's sermon or a lecture about things such as the "two-foot rule": every verse stands on its own two feet. Easy answers never contented him.

Ken wasn't interested in repeating anybody's party line. Family dinners with him would be punctuated by loud declamations about the deficit (Reagan was the culprit here—he legitimized deficit spending!) or how unnecessary the Iraq war was. Sometimes the rapture was the subject—he incited several relatives to near violence by hounding them about biblical inconsistencies in rapture theology. In his last years, his theological rumination revolved around the phrase "a sinner saved by grace." "If you're saved by grace, you're no longer a sinner," he would declare. "The Bible says that you shall know them by their fruits, and if those fruits are sin, what does that tell you?" This inevitably started discussions, sometimes arguments.

When he wasn't starting debates, he was busy inventing new creations for the grandkids—and names to go with them. Things like the "Teetawop" (a swinging teeter totter that could go up to 15 feet above the ground. . . if you dared) and "Launchadooms" (large wooden ladders to fling yourself off of with the tire swing) were his signature efforts, but the pedal tractors and the Teetadoom (a homemade teeter totter, of course) were great fun as well. As his energy waned, Ken invented fewer things for the grandkids and switched to browsing Facebook Marketplace for toys the great grandkids would enjoy. He'd call up their parents and ask for the little ones to come over so he could watch them putter around on a new trike or inch on a gliding worm with his planters full of zinnias as a colorful backdrop.

In the end, old age and Covid finally doomed him. On January 12, 2024, a little over a month before his ninety-sixth birthday, all the trumpets sounded as Ken crossed the Jordan to enter his eternal reward with his Savior. He was preceded in death by his wife, Donetta, his brother Edward (Guyla), his

daughter, Alice (Dave) Williamson, and a granddaughter, Abigail. He is survived by brother Donald (Linda), his two sons, Nels (Annie) and Walter (Sandy), twenty grandchildren, and twenty great grandchildren.

There will be a viewing at Bohlender Funeral Chapel from 9am to 4pm, Thursday, January 25, 2024, at 121 W. Olive Street, Fort Collins, Colorado. Services will be Friday, January 26, 2024, at 10 am at Fort Collins Bible Church, 2550 S. Taft Hill Road. In lieu of flowers, consider a donation to the Aniridia Foundation International <https://www.make-a-miracle.org>.

# Previous Events

## Viewing

JAN **25.** 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM (MT)

Bohlender Funeral Chapel  
121 W. Olive Street  
Fort Collins, CO 80524

## Funeral Service

JAN **26.** 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (MT)

Fort Collins Bible Church  
2550 South Taft Hill Road  
Fort Collins, CO 80526-1440

# Tribute Wall

SH

“*Congratulations, Ken on your graduation from this earth to heaven where you will be reunited with your lovely wife and Daughter and are currently in the presence of our dear Lord and Savior. I will never forget the Sunday afternoons spent with Nels and Walter riding 3 wheelers around the farm and I will always picture you wearing your safari hat anytime you were outside. The sip and sings we had on Sunday nights at your house, where you measured me for a casket, I can still remember the cold water you poured down my pantleg. Thank you for loving all of us like we were you're own. Mom and Dad would come home after a night at your house with big smiles and tell us kids about how much fun they had singing while you played the piano. When you played the piano you became "one" with the keyboard loving every minute of playing and singing hymns. You will be missed, but we will see you soon. Stan and Pam Heeney.*

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**Stan and Pam Heeney** - January 26, 2024 at 09:16 AM

LG

“*Our condolences to Mr Ken Nelson's family. He was a very kind man and one of the hardest workers we have ever seen. Many a time we would see him working on his tractor in the fields late at night or very early in the morning. He always treated everyone kindly and if you ever needed something he was there and got things done quickly. He would take a wagon with bales of hay and kids on rides around the ranch and it was such a delight to see those kids having so much fun. He will surely be missed, but we know he is with our Savior and what better place to be than in the arms of our beloved Jesus. Liz and Rosendo Gutierrez*

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**liz gutierrez** - January 26, 2024 at 02:20 AM

HN

“ Ken has been a lifelong friend since childhood. Through the years many memories stand out. We both attended First Baptist Church where we learned of our need for salvation and accepted the gift offered to us by Christ. Through the years our families shared many activities together along with many other couples in the church such as sings where Ken played the piano, worked with the youth department and led their activities, steak fries with the adults, etc. Since we both had farming businesses, we shared a love for agriculture. Too many memories to count easily. As our children grew we realized the need for Christian education and with others, we helped start Heritage Christian School. The time came that we worked together with many others to help start Front Range Baptist Church. Linda's and my relationship with Ken and Donetta through the years is/was very dear to us. They both are missed greatly, but we rest in the knowledge that they are both safe in the Saviour's arms.  
Howard Norman

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Howard Norman - January 23, 2024 at 02:14 PM



“ Our family sends their condolences and love to the Nelson family on Ken's passing. Ken was one of a kind and was very influential in a number of young people's lives over the years.

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Jim Burrill - January 20, 2024 at 11:03 AM