

Obituaries

KENT BRAUN

As Kent’s niece, I remember him differently than some, but those who knew him will likely relate. For those who didn’t know him, Kent was a simple man. He loved his home and independence, he appreciated the land he lived on, he cherished his dog - man’s best friend, and selflessly contributed to family and friends. Kent’s photos in his phone are mostly of his dog Bruno, and the rest are of rainbows shining over the horizon from his front porch, turtles and rabbits passing through his yard and a photo that I took of him years ago when he was shooting skeet with one of his best friends, Frankie Jr., his nephews, and his great niece, Paige. This photo represents time spent doing what we love with people we love.



If you spent time with Kent, you’d likely hear him laugh. Hearing his laugh always made me giggle; as it was a unique sound; and watching him laugh would make me laugh harder. His hand gestures and expressions when telling stories were also something unique about him.

We had lively conversations and I enjoyed listening to him talk, especially when he told stories about him and my dad.

Kent was a teacher to us, his nieces and nephews. I don’t think he probably imagined himself to be much of a teacher, but between him and his good friend Frankie Jr., we had the best men guiding us.

Daniel and Dylan, Kent’s twin nephews, spent their younger years with him hunting and fishing. He taught them how to drive tractors and their vehicles. He was only a phone call away when the boys wanted to go hunting or fishing, even on windy or miserable days, he made it happen.

Kent would take them to play darts, and because he was a pro, it was always a competition for the boys to try and beat him. They felt lucky if they got to use his fancy darts, and sometimes he’d let them, as long as they put them back. When our mom was at work, the twins would stay at Kent’s, and he’d always make sure they were fed and taken care of, often that meant eating pizza and watching tv together.

As a new homeowner, Kent taught me how to put wood floors in my home. He spent weeks helping me lay subflooring and plane old, reclaimed tongue and groove to install. When I needed a kitchen table, but didn’t know the best way to build one, I called Kent and he showed up to teach me how.

Whether fishing, hunting, driving, fixing or building something, Kent was there to help and he always answered when we called.

Kent was a creature of habit. His home was meticulous, everything had a place; every boot, hat, jacket and key. His belongings were well cared for and his shop was incredibly organized and ready for any project or task.

Kent worked with his hands as a carpenter, loved the labor of living off the land, and valued the life he built. He cherished memories with the people he loved, and kept these photos throughout his living room. Antiques passed down from his dad, and others that he collected throughout his life, decorated his living room as one of the most genuine bachelor pads I’ve ever seen.

Kent is loved by many and we will miss him in our lives. I hope he’s having a good time reacquainting himself with the great friends and loved ones who passed before him.

I hate that I have to write your obituary Uncle Kent, but I’m honored and grateful to share who you are, and will always be, to us. Love you, “Fred”.

Kent James Braun, 60, McCracken, KS died September 7, 2024, at Wesley Medical Center, Wichita, KS. He was born on May 11, 1964.

Survivors include four siblings: Rick Braun of Texas, Bobbi Jo Braun of Kansas, Nicole Zeeman and husband, Richard of Indiana, and Jodi Braun of Colorado.

Seven nieces and nephews, Terri (Fred) Polifka, Dylan Braun, Daniel Braun, Taylor Huckins, Dalton Braun, Kristeny Davis, and Austin Martinez; a great-niece; Paige Denson-Polifka and three great-nephews; Leighton Braun, Benton Braun, and Hayes Davis.

He was preceded in death by his parents Robert J. Braun and Benita A. Braun, and a brother Larry Braun.

The Amish Project at FHSU reflects on forgiveness amid tragedy

By FHSU University Communications

A “profound story worth telling,” The Amish Project will be presented by FHSU’s Music and Theatre Department Nov. 15 through 17. Show times are Nov. 15 and 16 at 7:30 p.m. and Nov. 17 at 2:30 p.m.

The play centers on the radical acts of forgiveness of the Amish community following the Nickel Mines schoolhouse shooting in 2006. Written by Jessica Dickey, the play uses ten fictional characters to tell the story of the shooting, exploring the ripple effect of the Amish community’s compassion toward the family of the shooter.

Directed by Catherine Trieschmann Miller, FHSU Theatre Program Specialist, the play incorporates four chorale pieces and has flexible casting. Chorale selections will be directed by Allie Straub, Hays sophomore with choreography by Brooke Raacke, Hays freshman. Cast members include: Grace Betts, Russell senior; Caleb Johnson, Hays sophomore; Allie Straub; Holly Trullinger, Jetmore freshman; Rebecca Cole, Hays MPS student; Hailey Maldonado, Hugoton sophomore; Lillyan Kimberlin, Holton junior; Kasheia Peterson, Salina freshman; Karter Smith, Great Bend junior; and Addyson Brown, Ottawa freshman. The stage manager is Jacob Wegner,

Garden City senior; and the assistant director is Lauryn Gaddis, Smith Center senior.

Catherine said she is very excited about the talent level of the students she is working with for The Amish Project.

“Half the students have done plays at FHSU before and half have not, which is also very exciting,” she said. “It’s young and diverse and fresh – a good mix.”

Because of violence, the play is recommended for mature audiences, although Catherine said the violence is handled “very poetically and not explicitly.”

“It is really a beautiful play that is intended to provoke conversation and meditation when you leave the theatre. The play doesn’t politicize the issue at all. It is really a spiritual journey.

Although this is her first theatrical production at Fort Hays State, Catherine is no stranger to theatre or life in Western Kansas. She and her husband, Carl Miller, FHSU associate professor of philosophy, have been Hays residents for almost twenty years. Catherine joined FHSU’s faculty in August when “the timing was just right.”

Catherine and Carl were living in Washington, D.C. in 2006, when Carl was offered a faculty position at FHSU. Catherine had just lined up her first theatre agent and was preparing for her first professional play in London. After careful consideration, though, she decided that Western Kansas might be a quiet

place for her to continue her writing career.

“I moved here and never looked back,” she said. The move proved to be a positive one. In her first decade here, she had three plays performed off-Broadway and wrote a movie script that premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival.

Her belief that geography influences artistic production has proven true over the years.

“When I moved out here, I started writing plays about this landscape, which I found so poetic and beautiful and strange,” Catherine said. “It has really infused my writing. You can create art anywhere.”

During the COVID pandemic, when she was unable to travel outside Hays, Catherine began to look for projects she could do locally.

“I just started to see the possibilities of the great art I could do right here in my own backyard,” she said. “That was such a blessing and so eye-opening. I thought of this position at FHSU as a good mirror to where I am in life right now.”

Catherine looks forward to collaborations with other departments and FHSU organizations as she undertakes her new role on campus.

For tickets to The Amish Project, go to <https://www.ticketreturn.com/prod2new/team.asp?SponsorID=18717>

Additional news and information about Fort Hays State University can be found at <https://www.fhsu.edu/university-communications/>

Change in Hours of Operation for ACCESS Public Transportation

Press release

ACCESS General Public Transportation serving the City of Hays Kansas would like to make the public aware of a scheduling change in the operating hours of ACCESS

Public Transportation.

Starting November 30, 2024, ACCESS will be changing the weekend operating hours schedule. The new hours will be from 6:00 AM to 4:00 PM on Saturday and Sundays, which means the first ride for the day will be at

6:15 AM and the last available ride will be at 3:30 PM. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

ACCESS looks forward to helping meet the transportation needs of the citizens of Hays, Kansas and of visitors.

Founders’ Week of Events at Fort Hays Tech | North Central: Honoring Trailblazers, Celebrating Community and Giving Back

By Mendi Anschutz

The Fort Hays Tech | North Central Foundation is announcing its annual Founders’ Week, a celebration that pays tribute to the pioneering spirits who envisioned and established Fort Hays Tech | North Central in 1964, and those who have contributed since. As Fort Hays Tech | North Central celebrates its 60th anniversary, Founders’ Week, spans from November 4 to November 8, 2024, as a week of reflection, appreciation, and community spirit on both the Beloit and Hays campuses.

A group of remarkable trailblazers had a vision for a local technical education institution in the early 1960’s. Their tenacity and dedication led to the establishment of Fort Hays Tech | North Central as the first technical college in the state of Kansas. Founders’ Week is a special time to honor these visionary leaders, as well as the instructors, administrators, and all members of the Fort Hays Tech | North Central community who have contributed to a legacy of excellence.

Founders’ Week is filled with exciting events that will take place in Beloit and Hays, bringing students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the community together to celebrate the spirit of Fort Hays Tech | North Central.

Monday, November 4 - Birthday Party on Beloit Campus: On Monday, November 4, Founders’ Week will begin with a Birthday Party on the Beloit Campus in honor of Fort Hays Tech | North Central Founders and the establishment of the Technical College. A 60th Anniversary staff photo will be at 4:00pm, following this, students, faculty, and staff will enjoy cupcakes, and fun birthday party food and activities.

Tuesday, November 5 - Hays Hall of Fame Award Ceremony: The Fort Hays Tech | North Central Foundation will present this year’s recipient of the Hall of Fame Award on the Hays Campus on Tuesday, November 5, at 4:30 pm in Room B of the Business Occupations Center. Current Board of Trustees member, Dale Montgomery, who has served on the Board since 1987 and is still contributing at every meeting, has played a pivotal role in the growth and

expansion of the College will be recognized. The public is encouraged to attend.

Wednesday, November 6 - Beloit Hall of Fame Award Ceremony: On Wednesday, November 6, the Fort Hays Tech | North Central Foundation will present the annual Hall of Fame award at 4:30pm in the Conference Room of the Student Union on the Beloit Campus. This year’s recipient is Dean Haddock, the “grandfather of technical education in the state of Kansas.” Dean researched and advocated for post-secondary technical education in the state as well as helped establish Fort Hays Tech | North Central in Beloit. The public is encouraged to attend.

Carpentry Alumni Social Event: At 5:30pm, following the Hall of Fame event, the Carpentry/Construction Technology Program will host an alumni event in the carpentry shop. All carpentry alumni, current students, faculty, staff and the public are invited to attend. This will be a great time to catch up with former classmates and reminisce with former instructors.

Thursday, November 7 - Birthday Party on Hays Campus Rounding out the week on Thursday, November 7, another

Birthday Party will be hosted on the Hays Campus to honor Fort Hays Tech | North Central Founders and the establishment of our Technical College. A 60th Anniversary staff photo at 11:30am, following this, students, faculty, and staff will enjoy a food truck lunch, cake and fun birthday activities.

Ending November 8 - Week of Giving Match Campaign: Throughout Founders’ Week, Fort Hays Tech | North Central is joining forces with our amazing donors to make a difference in the lives of future students. All supporters are invited to participate in our Week of Giving Match Campaign from November 4-8, where all donations made through our website donation portal will be generously matched. For more information about donating during our Founders’ Week of Giving and to contribute, please visit <https://fhtechnic.edu/donate-now/>.

Founders’ Week is a time to celebrate our past, present, and future. We invite the community to join us in commemorating our rich history and supporting the continued success of Fort Hays Tech | North Central.

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