



George Frederick 'Fred' Koontz

July 16, 1927 - November 14, 2022

George Frederick 'Fred' Koontz, 95, died in Lincoln, NE, on Nov. 14, 2022. A celebration is set at 1:30 p.m. on Friday, July 14, at The Howell Theatre in the Temple Building, 12th and R Streets. Memorials to the Laura and Fred Koontz Theatre Scholarship Fund at the University of Nebraska at Kearney through the University of Nebraska Foundation. Please visit www.hlmkfuneral.com to leave a tribute or message of condolence. Horner Lieske McBride & Kuhl Funeral and Cremation Services in Kearney are in charge of arrangements.

Named after grandfathers George Washington Koontz and Frederick Augustus Ware, he was born July 16, 1927, at Ottumwa, Iowa, to Alva Glenn and Mable Irene (Ware) Koontz. The family moved to Atlantic, IA, and in 1933 to Des Moines.

He joined the U.S. Navy in June 1945, serving at San Diego and at Mare Island near San Francisco. He returned in January 1946 to receive his Des Moines East High School diploma, finished his 14 months of Navy service in August and enrolled at York (Ne) College that month.

At York he found a talent for theatre, met wonderful friends and role models, and more important, met Polk-area farm girl Laura Jane Taylor. He graduated from York College in June 1950 and taught speech and debate for two years at St. Edward (NE) High School. On June 6, 1952 – four days after her York

College graduation – Fred and Laura were married in York. In perhaps the only sports analogy he ever uttered, Fred said he was “well above his weight class” when he married Laura.

Fred was teaching at Iola (KS) Junior College two months later. He taught at Doane College; the College of the Ozarks at Clarksville, AR; the University of Arkansas at Little Rock; again at Ozarks; and then became director of theatre at then-Kearney State College in 1966 until his retirement in 1990.

From comedy, to drama, to musical, to tragedy, he handled casting, directing and set décor with ease and expertise, all the while teaching scores of students about acting and staging, the classics and the moderns, and above all, about life. He loved teaching and his students, shown by the fact that a cadre of former students held birthday reunions for Fred nearly every summer.

Fred loved his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren and often talked about being “tickled” by their antics and successes.

Aside from their shared love of teaching, Fred and Laura loved travel. They covered the United States, visited Europe repeatedly, and spent time in China and Russia. They enjoyed the ballet, orchestra and all fine arts.

Fred was an artful storyteller with an excellent memory for detail. He refinished nearly every piece of furniture in the family home, as well as many pieces given to his children and grandchildren. He enjoyed coffee with retired teaching colleagues and was a wonderful cook who won purple ribbons at the state fair for his breads, notably for his raisin nut bread with cinnamon recipe.

Preceding Fred in death were wife, Laura; his parents; his brothers Alva Glenn Koontz Jr. and wife Alene, and James Koontz and his wife Margaret; and sister-in-law Martha Lee (Taylor) Brown.

Survivors are son Allan and wife Mary Kay Koontz, Lincoln; daughter Moray and husband Douglas Greenfield, Altadena, CA. Also survived by grandchildren Chase Greenfield, Altadena, CA; Heidi Bellner, Swanton, OH; Allison and husband Nathan Luce, Haskins, OH; Jeff Guiducci Koontz and wife Carmelia Chiang, Cascais, Portugal; and Evan and wife Jessica Koontz, Perrysburg, OH. Also, great-grandchildren Riley and Ethan Bellner; Devin, Eleanor and Madeleine Luce; Brianna Chavez and Jocelyn Koontz; and brother-in-law Thomas C. Brown Sr., Omaha.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

JUL 14. 1:30 PM (CT)

The Howell Theatre
12th & R Street
Lincoln, NE

Tribute Wall

TK

“ Dear Family, Thank you for sharing the beautiful spirit of your father & grandfather with us. Fred was always welcoming & kind. He was a good brother to our Dad, Al. May memories of the good times bless your hearts in the days ahead. Hugs & Love from the Tim Koontz Family

Tim Koontz - July 14, 2023 at 01:03 PM

KG

“ To the family: Grand was a wonderful man. Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend, but I wanted to share with you my heart-felt virtual hugs. I was blessed to have known him. I miss him and think of him often. Love, Kathy Guiducci



Kathy Guiducci - July 13, 2023 at 01:25 AM

MB

“ I read the notice of the memorial service you planned to honor your Father in the paper this morning and wanted to add my belated condolences to you Al and Mary Kay. It sounds like your Mom and Dad were wonderful people and have a wonderful family to carry on this legacy. You may not remember me, but I remember you especially as a wonderful newspaper editor and a great person. Now I can see who your roll model was. Blasts from the past are always interesting, but just wanted you to know, you were a good influence on Beatrice and enjoy honoring your Father and Mother on Friday. My husband's name was Wayne, and we had four daughters Jennifer, Heather, April and Jessa. My daughter Jennifer went to Northwestern U. and majored in Journalism and my daughter April was living in Russia and now lives in the country of Georgia. Blessings to you and your family. Marilee Brinkmeyer

Marilee Brinkmeyer - July 12, 2023 at 11:02 AM