



Lyle Crabb King

March 10, 1919 - December 19, 2016

PRINCETON — Lyle King, 97, of Princeton passed away at Liberty Village in Princeton on Monday, Dec. 19, 2016. He was surrounded by family and friends at his passing.

Lyle was born in Chenoa on March 10, 1919, to Jesse and Lula King.

Lyle was active in the Heart Association and the Cancer Society, and was a delegate to the Illinois Coaching Association. He was a past Bureau County commissioner.

Lyle coached several sports (football, track, basketball or wrestling) at Waverly, Chenoa and Princeton high schools. When he started the PHS wrestling program, he taught himself the sport and how to coach it as he was never a wrestler. At one time his football teams had the longest winning streak in Illinois High School football history. He was inducted into the Illinois High School Coaches Association Football Hall of Fame in 1981. He started the Princeton Invitational Wrestling Tournament, now the Lyle King Invitational, with a small handful of teams over 40 years ago. The tournament now attracts wrestlers from more than 30 teams and is recognized as one of the best Class

A wrestling tournaments in the state.

As a high school biology teacher, he inspired many students to pursue careers in the sciences. He taught at the advent of DNA technology and was always excited by the new frontiers that the science of DNA would open.

During World War II, Lyle served in the Caribbean and South Pacific arenas. He married Johnnie Taylor Lanning in December 1946 and together they made a life in Princeton where they farmed for more than 60 years.

In addition to earning degrees from Illinois State and the University of Illinois, Lyle completed graduate credit at the University of Southern California, Arizona State University, the University of New Hampshire and Brandeis University.

Lyle valued hard work and fair play. Throughout his life as a teacher, coach and parent, he strove to instill these values in his students, athletes and children.

Lyle is survived by his wife of 70 years, Johnnie Louise; three children, Susan and her husband, James Smuda of Albuquerque, N.M., Lyle B. of Atlanta, Ga., and Kenneth and his wife, Sandra Simpson, of Newton, Mass.; six grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

Lyle was preceded in death by his parents, one sister and two brothers.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, March 18, 2017 at 11:00 am at the First United Methodist Church in Princeton.

Memorials may be directed to the First United Methodist Church (Mission Possible) or the Princeton High School science department.

The Norberg Memorial Home in Princeton is in charge of arrangements. Online condolences may be left at www.norbergfh.com.

Tribute Wall

PC

“ I remember Mr. King as a soft spoken person. He always had a smile on his face and a kind words to say. He will be remembered as a great Coach, teacher and friend.
Peter Clausen

Peter Clausen - March 18, 2017 at 09:12 AM

DR

“ I am so sorry to hear of Mr. Lyle King's passing. He was a wonderful teacher and coach.

Donna Rott - December 28, 2016 at 08:18 AM

RO

“ I feel sorry for your loss. Lyle was a great guy - about as pure as they come.
Please pass along my sad sediments on to Johnnie and the entire family.
Lyle & Johnnie have always been a great Uncle & Aunt to me.
Roger Graham

Roger - December 24, 2016 at 04:57 PM

JM

“ Our sincere condolences to Johnnie and her family.
As a former student and athlete of Lyle's, from his first coaching job in Waverly, Illinois, I pay tribute to the "best coach" of all my years in sports! Keeping in touch with Lyle and Johnnie all these many years, has been a joy. This memory will live on! Bill Meiers (Judy)

Judy Meiers - December 24, 2016 at 11:47 AM

CH

Curt Hulteen, Member of coach Kings first season at PHS

Curt Hulteen - March 15, 2017 at 12:08 PM

JM

“ *Lyle's first coaching job was in Waverly, Illinois. He coached there for 3 years, in football, basketball, and track. He is remembered as being "THE best coach" of all my years in sports!*

The class of 1950, in Waverly, tried to include Lyle and Johnnie in their class reunions, each year at Alumni time. They were a delight and loved by all. We have kept in touch over the years, admiring their longevity, enjoying their friendship.

Our sincere condolences to Johnnie and her family.

Bill Meiers, Class of 1950, Waverly, Illinois (and wife, Judy)

Judith Meiers - December 23, 2016 at 09:01 AM

LS

“*Mr. King was my high school football and wrestling coach. At all times, we was a gentleman. I never saw him throw a tirade as many coaches do. He was calm and friendly and intent on teaching and encouraging his athletes, rather than on intimidating them. People were more important than winning.*

I was on Mr. King's first wrestling team. He did not hide the fact that he knew little about wrestling. We all learned together. Mr. King cleverly implemented a system where we would go to wrestling meets, get absolutely trounced by even the poorest teams, and then spend the rest of the time at the meet being taught by the athletes who had just won over us.

Another mark of Mr. King's caring was his presence at our reunions. I'm not sure how he made it to all the reunions, but he amazed and delighted us by his presence at so many of our reunions.

If one goal of high school athletics is to move young men and women along the road to maturity, Mr. King met that goal and he did it with class. The character of Mr. King left his mark on my life and I am most grateful.

Larry Schafer, PHS Class of 61

Larry Schafer - December 22, 2016 at 03:31 PM

RM

“ As a former student, athlete, and friend of Lyle's, my heart felt thoughts and prayers go out to all of you at this time of the year. Lyle was one of Dad's inspirations and great supporters when Dad was in Libertyvillage a couple of years ago. Johnny and he were always great friends to mom and dad and he always had great stories and kind words for all of the Martin Family.

Again, may the Lords prayers and kindness be upon all of your family during this holiday season and with your loss.

Rick Martin

Rick Martin - December 22, 2016 at 06:18 AM

BB

“ I called him *Laughing Lyle* because he was always serious teaching us but laughed when we "got it". I was his top biology student in class and he was the athletic director when I competed as captain in sports. He inspired me to have a life career in medical device implants like heart valves and heart pumps. I last saw him at the "Roast" and recognition event we organized for Lee Wahlgren. I asked Lee if he was still alive. Wally must have told him that I had asked about him. Lyle and his wife came out to the event before it started and we had a chance to speak and catch up. We should have found time to "Roast" Lyle

Brian Brutcher - December 21, 2016 at 11:26 PM

LH

“ I was in the PHS Class of 59. I played football for Lyle. I fondly remember those days as he taught us the basics of football which, as it turned out, also applied to many situations in life. I also was in his biology class and went on to be an Agronomist Seed Technologist which much of what he taught applied to my life's profession. He was a great guy and may he rest in peace!

Lee Huey

Lee Huey - December 21, 2016 at 03:01 PM

BS

“ Sorry to hear of Lyle's passing. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family at this most difficult time.

Hank and Bernie Skibinski

Bernie Skibinski - December 21, 2016 at 02:27 PM

SF

“ Mr. King was a great teacher and coach. He was a tough but very fair teacher who always sought to get the very best from each student. As a coach, Mr. King strove for excellence and had a knack for seeing potential. He was patient when you were learning, and tough when you were slacking. When he was pleased with your effort there was always that Lyle King smile with a twinkle in his eyes. He had a positive influence on many lives and will be missed.

Steve Finn, Princeton High, class of 1959

Steve Finn - December 21, 2016 at 02:12 PM

WG

“ Sorry to hear of your loss. He certainly lived a full and giving life.

Wayne & Janet Graham

Wayne Graham - December 21, 2016 at 12:40 PM