



Marv "Honky" Kelsey

July 3, 1935 - May 31, 2016

During his inaugural presidential address in 1961, John F. Kennedy spoke the famous words "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." Marv Kelsey took these words to heart and they were the foundation on which he built his life.

Marvyn Douglas Kelsey was born on July 3, 1935 in Bell Gardens, California, the son of Dr. Max G. and Alice M. (Bowman) Kelsey. He grew up in the Roscommon area and graduated from Gerrish-Higgins High School with the class of 1954. He went on to serve his country with the United States Army, stationed in Korea following the Korean Conflict. Following his discharge from service he worked various jobs, including for the Liquor Control Commission, before settling into a position with the Michigan Employment Security Commission in Ludington as a Placement Specialist, a position he held for the next 27 years.

Marv took the challenge given by President Kennedy, asking citizens to be active in their communities, to heart. He served with the American Red Cross and was instrumental in the acquisition and outfitting of the disaster vehicle, and served as Fire Chief of the Pere Marquette Twp. Fire Department. He served as president of the Summit PTA, and as president of the Ludington Area Schools Board of Education. During his tenure on the school board, he oversaw the building of the swimming pool, auditorium, libraries, and several other additions which still benefit the community today. As a Life Member of the Scottville Optimist Club, he took the motto "Friend of Youth" very seriously. Marv organized and oversaw the club Teen Dances for over 30 years, helped with bike rodeos and sporting events, worked with the Boy Scouts, served as chairman of the "Let's Build a Track" committee for Mason County Central schools and was the Booster Club president for several years. When his boys were growing up, Marv served as Cub Scout Master in West Branch, and as chairman of the West Branch Little League.

One of his favorite ways to serve his community was entertaining as "Honky the Clown" and as Santa Claus for parades, parties, fairs, at hospitals, nursing homes, and for local

schools. Marv enjoyed entertaining, hoping to make people in his community feel good and to brighten their day.

Marv found time for himself as well and had a passion for collecting “treasures.” The phrase “one man’s junk is another man’s treasure” were words Marv lived by. He could be considered as one of the original “American Pickers”, always buying and trading collectables, with an eye for motorcycles and coin collecting. This hobby led him to be a member and president of the Gold Wing Motorcycle Club, member of the West Michigan Old Engine Club, the Pere Marquette Antique Car Club, Ducks Unlimited, and the American Numismatic Association.

Marv received numerous awards for his service including Optimist of the Year, Exceptional Volunteer with the Red Cross, Citizen of the Year, Kiwanis Club Community Service award, from the Mason County Tourist Association for promoting tourism, and Distinguished member of Ducks Unlimited to name a few.

Even with all the service affiliations, awards, and volunteering, Marv found no greater joy than his family. His family was the very reason Marv gave so much of himself, to leave a better community for his family to live. His family is his greatest legacy.

Marv will be greatly missed by his wife Arlene, their children Tim Kelsey, Scott (Helen) Kelsey, Rick (Karen) Larson, Gloria (John) Beckman, Jennifer (Matt) McMellen, and Josette (John) Waite; his grandchildren Kaden “Timothy” Kelsey, David Vodvarka, Dylan, Ashley, and Stefanie Kelsey, Matthew Larson, Jason (JoAnn) Larson, Anthony (Amy) Larson, Nathan (Yuka) Larson, Erin (Stacey) Swiatlowski, Kendra Beckman, Trina Cambridge, Alyssa (Usman) Sheikh, Aleece (Colton) Gregory, Alexa McMellen, and David Waite; his great-grandchildren Kadence Vodvarka, Raelyn and Milli Flores, Gabriel Hernandez, Bella Neutzman, Aria Michael, Aleemah and Suleiman Sheikh, Zoe, Jason Jr, Gavyn, Sophia, Alexander, and Matthew Larson, Ara Swiatlowski, Ariana and Zachariah Larson, Lyla and Liam Gregory.

A Celebration of Marv’s Life will be held at 11:00 am on Wednesday, June 8 at Wyman Funeral & Cremation Services – Stephens Funeral Home in Scottville. Friends may gather with his family for a time of visitation on Tuesday evening from 6:00 – 9:00 pm, and on Wednesday morning from 10:00 until time of services at the funeral home. Those who wish to remember Marv with a memorial donation are asked to consider the Scottville Optimist Club.

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 7. 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM (ET)

Wyman Funeral & Cremation Services - Stephens Funeral Home
305 E. State St.
Scottville, MI 49454
(231) 757-3333
wyman-stephens@sbcglobal.net
<https://www.wymanfuneralservice.com>

Visitation

JUN 8. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Wyman Funeral & Cremation Services - Stephens Funeral Home
305 E. State St.
Scottville, MI 49454
(231) 757-3333
wyman-stephens@sbcglobal.net
<https://www.wymanfuneralservice.com>

Celebration of Life Service

JUN 8. 11:00 AM (ET)

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305 E. State St.
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Tribute Wall



“ *Wyman Funeral & Cremation Services created a Tribute Video in memory of Marv "Honky" Kelsey*



Wyman Funeral & Cremation Services - June 07, 2016 at 09:05 AM



“ *Marv is a man who will be greatly missed. When friends took my husband to meet him for the first time he treated him as if he had known him as long as the rest of our family, and this was very big to me as it helped my husband to feel good about moving here. Marv always had time to give you a smile and make you smile. My condolences to your family.*
Betty (Miller) Bauer

Betty Bauer - June 10, 2016 at 12:47 AM



Mark Miller said he sends his condolences also.

Betty Bauer - June 10, 2016 at 12:49 AM

PD

paul damkoehler sends his thoughts and prayers to Marv's family.

paul damkoehler - June 21, 2016 at 02:03 PM

PS

“ *"Honky" - Marv, Thanks for always sharing your kind hearted spirit with all of us! Over 40 years ago, we officially met you when I was crowned Oceana County 1976 4-H Queen. (My sister, Judy was crowned 4-H Queen in 1977). We were always delighted to see you in parades with your camera & at Oceana County Fairs.*

Thanks for all the wonderful memories & your friendship! Helping Others & Entertaining Many was truly your calling. You will never be forgotten. Our thoughts & prayers are with you all. Peggy Studer & Judy Studer James



Peggy Studer - June 08, 2016 at 05:47 AM

AM

“ There was just none other than Honky the clown! He always put a smile on your face

Alice R McDonald - June 08, 2016 at 02:49 AM

PS

“ Peggy Studer lit a candle in memory of Marv "Honky" Kelsey



Peggy Studer - June 07, 2016 at 09:54 PM



“ 29 files added to the album LifeTributes



Wyman Funeral & Cremation Services - June 07, 2016 at 08:57 AM

LM

“ Honkey, was the best clown in the USA, He will be taking many pictures of our loved ones who have passed before him. He made the 4th of July Parade the best ever. God bless your family. Lisa& David (Phoenix, AZ)

Lisa Micetic - June 06, 2016 at 04:52 PM

TR

“ So sorry to hear of Marv's passing. I met him when he worked for the Michigan Unemployment Commission. He was a really nice and fun loving man. My 4 daughters just loved him when he was playing " Honky" the clown in all the parades over the years. He will be sorely missed. Mason County has lost another one of our Icons. My condolences to all his family and close friends. May all your wonderful memories help you in the dark days ahead. RIP "Honky" your work on earth is done and now you can entertain all the angels in heaven. I know you will have loads of fun entertaining all the angels with that one of a kind special "twinkle" in your eyes.

Tana Reimer

Tana Reimer - June 04, 2016 at 10:04 PM

JC

“ Marv was a great person who touched many lives in Mason County. Gloria and Arlene you are in our thoughts and prayers/ Julie and Art Collins

Julia Collins - June 03, 2016 at 08:48 PM

BB

“ Marv and I became friends so many, many years ago; I can't recall how we met. It was an instant friendship. He was funny, loving, generous with advice or a smile. We shared a love of the same types of movies and often chatted about the most recent one we had seen. When my Dad passed 11 years ago, Marv was at his visitation. I had just had surgery and was not permitted to attend. That evening, who did I receive a call from? Marv. We had not seen or talked to each other for some time, but it was like picking up a conversation from the day before. No matter what role he was at any given time, you just knew there was love in his heart and a twinkle in his eye. Love you bunches, Marv. Rest in peace, my Friend. You have richly earned all the joys of Heaven.

Bev (Billings) Budzynski

Bev Budzynski - June 03, 2016 at 04:40 PM

JB

“ Honk you will surely be missed by everyone. We will always remember you. You will always hold a special spot in everyone's heart. Love you and rest in peace

Jennifer Beddes - June 03, 2016 at 03:31 PM

SB

“ Marv touched many lives, He will be missed! Love and Peace to the Family.

Sara Bray - June 03, 2016 at 11:19 AM

CS

“ So sorry for your loss, I loved Marv and I never ever was somewhere that he would not come up and say Hi. He will be missed and will always share a part of my heart Cheryl Schilling

Cheryl Schilling - June 03, 2016 at 08:28 AM

TM

“ Marv was a great guy, when I was in a car accident, I was in the ER room and my kids were 2 and 3 years old, they were running around the hospital as I was strapped on a gurney in the ER, no one was watching them. He stepped in and bought pizza for them and took care of them for several hours. He was also the first person I met in Ludington who helped me find a job when I first moved here. Losing a great man here, my prayers and condolences to his family.

Toni Monton - June 03, 2016 at 07:19 AM