

ONLINE OBITUARY

Edward Joseph Karsten passed peacefully on 4 November 2015 at 4:07pm from complications of pancreatic cancer. He was 61. Ed is survived by his sister Lois Karsten-Liddy and her husband Tim Liddy and by his ex-wife Kathy Karsten. His ashes will be spread at his favorite lake next May, near his birthday.

MEMORIAL SERVICES

Ed touched so many lives that there will be two (2) memorial services.

FIRE AND RADIO MEMORIAL: Ed's Fire Department and ham radio friends will hold a celebration of Ed's life on Thursday, 19 November, at the Hall of Flame Museum near Papago Park, Phoenix.

MAP: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Hall+of+Flame/@33.447695,-111.9553551,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m2!3m1!1s0x0:0xd57526fa9ca3fd54>

TIME: Arrive by 6:00pm. The service will start promptly at 6:30pm. Light refreshments will be provided before the service.

DRESS: Wear your Fire Department uniforms, yellow Amateur Radio public service shirts, if you can.

WHAT TO EXPECT: This won't be a mournful funeral. Instead, we're going to tell stories, jokes, and anecdotes from Ed's life... the way he would do if he was here.

BRING STORIES OF ED: If you have stories, anecdotes, or jokes, write them down and give them to one of the greeters when you arrive. It's hard to stay composed when speaking at such a gathering, so write (legibly, please!) or type your stories and we'll try to get them read for everyone to enjoy.

NO FLOWERS, PLEASE: In lieu of flowers, the family has asked for donations to the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network (www.pancan.org). Several of Ed's treatments were experimental to help tomorrow's pancreatic cancer sufferers. It was important to Ed, and it's important to the family. Thank you.

RESCUE A GOLDEN MEMORIAL: Ed's Rescue a Golden friends asked to hold their own memorial service. Date, time, and place TBD. Check www.golden-retriever.org for details.



ABOUT ED

The facts are simple; the man was not.

First, he is also survived by hundreds of friends. Ed wasn't an especially friendly person (he liked most golden retriever dogs better than most people!), but he served those around him the best he knew how, and that's pretty endearing.

He served as a 9-1-1 operator and dispatcher with the Phoenix Fire Department for 30 years. Ed was the last of the Old Breed of alarm room dispatchers who still knew how to do the job manually, with maps and building drawings and punch cards and banks of flashing lights, without the high-tech computers. He answered the phone on peoples' worst day of their lives and his voice dispatched countless fire trucks (he called them "BRTs"... big red trucks) and medical crews. That was back when actual people made the radio calls on the dispatch channels, not Samantha, the sterile, faintly androgynous voice you hear dispatching today. Ed served in a time when real men and women dispatched fire crews, and computers were R2-D2.



Whereas he looked forward to retiring, pancreatic cancer pushed him to retire early. But this isn't about his cancer. This is about Ed.



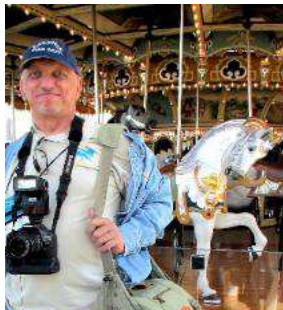
Ed also served for about 20 years with the Rescue a Golden group (www.golden-retriever.org) that finds good homes for sweet, lovable golden retriever dogs that people have neglected, abused, or otherwise don't deserve. Ed served in several capacities, most recently as Director. He never cared for the titles, only that uncaring people had their goldens taken away, the dogs were treated and healed, and good, caring homes received them. Ed even owned two vehicles. One was always an SUV large enough to hold a kennel for golden transports around the state. That's the kind of commitment all the Rescue a Golden people have, and so did Ed. The problem was big and thorny; Ed dedicated himself to being part of the solution. No telling how many golden retrievers are living happy lives with families they love because of this noble group. All for the love of a golden.

But that wasn't the extent of Ed's service. He also put his amateur radio "ham" license (callsign K9EDK) and skills to use as a volunteer, protecting the safety and well-being of athletic runners, bicycle riders, and walkathon walkers through what is called *public service communications*.

Working with a group of other radio people, Ed made sure that the course was safe, that injuries were treated quickly, and the participants had plenty refreshments to avoid becoming one with the desert. Twenty years ago, when it became hard to get radio recruits to help, Ed was one of the three charter members of the Maricopa County Emergency Communications Group (MCECG, www.MCECG.org). In fact, MCECG was invented in Ed's living room one evening with Jim Pierce, N7QVW, and Ron Reynolds, N7WTF. With that invention, sniggling politics and other nonsense were completely stripped away from public service communication, making it much more attractive to volunteer hams. That group is active and healthy three generations of leaders later, largely due to the wisdom and foresight of the foundation that Ed, Jim, and Ron laid in that living room.



So, Ed showed love by serving... serving people in crisis through the 9-1-1 alarm room, serving golden retrievers and those who love them through Rescue a Golden, and serving athletes and people supporting charitable causes through MCECG.



But when Ed wanted to be a kid again, he looked for merry-go-rounds. Yep, carousels. Bobbing horses, carriages, stage coaches, tinny music... the works. Ed had worked in a carnival as a young man, and became enamored with carousels. Throughout his life, Ed attended annual conventions around the country that toured and showcased carousels from different eras, from different countries, and with different themes. That man couldn't get enough of the wooden horsies!

The facts of Ed Karsten's life and death are simple. The man himself was far from it.

He loved intensely, but in his own way. And those of us who received that love were drawn like iron filings to a magnet. If it's true what the apostle John wrote in First John 4:8, "God is love," then Ed showed the family traits of his Father.