



## Kenneth Louis Mickel

October 9, 1938 - September 13, 2024

### Kenneth Louis Mickel: The Final Escape

Father, husband, jiddo, brother, son, friend to many, enemy to none, Kenny Mickel, in one final twist managed to escape the bonds and boundaries set for him by society and his frustrating medical condition, when he refused to awake to the demands of family and friends, who for days insisted he revive and get back to the golf course, family parties and his office where clients were patiently waiting for him to finish with "depositions." On Friday, Sept. 13, 2024 at Flower Hospital surrounded by family and friends from both sides of the transcendental divide, Kenny adjudicated his celestial discharge and has now taken his case to the highest court where he will no doubt charm, entertain and enlighten all souls who surround him.

The grandson of Lebanese immigrants, Kenny was born at the Ontario Street home of his parents, James Alexander Mickel and Laura Hanna Zraik, on Oct. 9, 1938. There in the North end of Toledo, he grew up surrounded by a bevy of cousins, aunts and uncles of first and second generation immigrants from the middle east, Italy and Greece which began his lifelong fascination with other cultures, and his tolerance and embrace of different ways of thinking. He graduated from Woodward High School in 1956 and earned a bachelor's degree in 1961 from the University of Toledo where he was president of his fraternity Phi Kappa Psi. In 1965, he graduated from UT's law school, where

he was an officer of Delta Theta Phi.

Kenny was a founding partner of Mickel & Huffman, where he practiced for nearly 60 years. His specialty was personal injury law. In the early years of his practice, he and his former law partner, Joseph A. Canon were one of the few, perhaps only attorneys willing to defend and sue on behalf of minority and disadvantaged clients. In a time when an injury could send a family spiralling into debt and worse, their compassion and sense of justice demanded they advance clients' money prior to adjudicating their claims. "Uncle Ken pioneered the first loan sharking service in reverse," joked his nephew Tony Abood. His sister Fadwa Abood recalls a young mother with five kids coming to Ken with a slew of utilities bills. "He paid off at least \$800 worth of bills and she paid him back \$5 a week...if she could." In his storied career there are countless stories like this, says daughter Melissa Mickel-Portala. "If he could use his brains or his funds to help you, he never hesitated." His unflinching support of his clients no matter their social or economic situation earned Kenny enormous respect in the legal community and beyond. Generous to a fault, but smart as a whip and a tough adversary for any legal opponent, Kenny loved his work so much he never retired. When asked what he enjoyed most about his profession, he always said: "There is no greater high than a satisfied client."

Kenny was an avid reader who was fascinated by and embraced new technology. His insatiable curiosity and keen intellect had him consuming information from disparate sources and gave him a remarkable ability to research and synthesize information. He contributed to the medical canon by discovering that people of middle eastern descent had a life threatening genetic allergy to blood thinners after noticing that commonality in their medical reports. Tired of seeing children die, he designed and patented a gun safety lock which he intended to share with the industry before loosening gun laws deemed the device inconsequential.

Outside of work, Kenny had a magnetic personality and squeezed every ounce out of his life. He loved golfing, fishing, gambling and dining with his family and friends. His reservoir of energy was legendary. Even in his later years, when health issues forced him to utilize supplemental oxygen, Kenny could golf in the morning, have lunch with his cousins and drive to Detroit for an evening at the casino. His keen intellect, insatiable curiosity and lightning wit made him great company. Kenny's three children recall a man who was endlessly supportive of their ideas, be they genius, or wack-a doodle and was quick to offer both advice and financial support. Son Alex Mickel, says his philosophy was never to disparage but rather to suggest alternative ways to view a subject or problem. "Let me show you how to win" would be a good working title for his biography, says Alex.

Daughter Molly Mickel, who worked by his side as his legal assistant for over twenty years, recalls his stubborn but charming refusal to adhere to the status quo, or to believe there was any situation he couldn't reason, talk or walk his way out of if necessary. "As he lay in the hospital, immersed in an ice bath with pneumonia, he called and bribed my teenaged sister and myself to bring him clothes so he could sneak out of the hospital" says Molly. Other friends recall similar incidents where he would tear the IV's from his arms and head back to the office. Upon emerging from open heart surgery his first words were "bring me my phone" - where he immediately contacted friends and office staff with advice and instructions as to how to conduct their lives and his business.

Perhaps due to his early years, throughout his life, Ken embraced and was fascinated by other cultures. He found the love of his life in his wife of 18 years, Lena, a Ukrainian doctor with whom he was first introduced through mutual friends. They met in Warsaw for the first time, 22 years ago, and fell in

love in Turkey as they traveled the country together. Their connection transcended continents and timelines and their mutual support of one another was an example and inspiration to all who knew him.

He was a member of the Toledo Bar Association and Highland Meadows Golf Club.

Kenny was preceded in death by his brother, Ronald James Mickel, and half-brother, James Alexander Mickel. Surviving are his wife, Lena Mickel; sister, Fadwa Catherine Abood; children by his first wife , Melissa Mickel Portala , Molly Ann Mickel and Alexander James Mickel ; grandchildren, Michael Andrew Huettner, Eli Addison Portala, Gabriella Rose Mickel, Emma Rose Portala, Benjamin Alexander Mickel, Trudy Ella Mickel, Charlie James Mickel and Freddie Montana Mickel; great- grandchildren, Michael Jr. Huettner, Samantha Rose Vermilyea and Harper Mae Vermilyea; and multiple beloved nieces and nephews, to include Karen Grau, Norman Abood, Corinne Cassis, Laura Jajko, Mark Mikel, Dana Dunbar and Matthew Mickel.

Friends may visit at the Coyle Funeral Home, 1770 S. Reynolds Rd., on Wednesday, September 25th from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Interment will be private.

Donations can be made to:

Toledo Helps Ukraine. Website: [4ua.org](http://4ua.org) <<http://4ua.org>>  
and/or The University of Toledo Mickel Family Memorial Public Interest Scholarship Fund. Make the check payable to the University of Toledo Foundation, and mail to the Mickel Family Memorial Scholarship Fund. PO Box 9301, Toledo, OH 43697. Please view and sign our online "guest registry" at [CoyleFuneralHome.com](http://CoyleFuneralHome.com)

# Previous Events

## Visitation

SEP **25.** 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Coyle Funeral Home  
1770 S. Reynolds Road  
Toledo, OH 43614

# Tribute Wall

CJ

“ I am sending my Heartfelt condolences to the family, friends, and colleagues of Attorney Ken Mickel. He was one of the kindest and most generous people I've known, and I feel blessed to have crossed paths with him and his firm, They helped me on a couple of occasions and went above and beyond my expectations to help me. He will be truly missed. God Bless You Ken. 🙏

Carolyne Jones - August 11, 2025 at 05:29 PM

M(

“ I never met Kenny, but know him through my mother, Sally (Silver) Schwyn. She grew up with Kenny in Toledo. In the last few years, they reconnected on FB and I think even met for lunch with the gang from Toledo. Coincidentally, I have a second connection; my grandson is James Alexander Mickel V. He is a descendent from the Mickel family. After reading the obituary and watching the tribute videos, I'm saddened that my grandson never had the chance to meet Kenny. Sally and Kenny talked about bringing James to meet him. I wish we would have followed through so James would have experienced his connection with the family. Kenny's spirit shines through the tributes.

Mary B. Brooks (Schwyn) - November 06, 2024 at 09:39 AM

TI

“ My sincere condolences to the Mickel family. Not only was he caring and compassionate with family, friends and clients, he treated others including those he hardly knew in the same manner. Ken was very helpful to me when I had my own medical issues. He will be missed by all.  
Theodore B. Tucker, III

Theodore B. Tucker III - September 26, 2024 at 10:50 AM

CV

“ 2 files added to the album VIDEO TRIBUTE



COYLE FUNERAL HOME VIDEOS - September 25, 2024 at 09:38 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Kenneth Louis Mickel.



September 24, 2024 at 04:06 PM

LO

“ Lorilee planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Kenneth Louis Mickel.

Lorilee - September 24, 2024 at 04:06 PM

JH

“ Jodi H. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Kenneth Louis Mickel.

Jodi H. - September 24, 2024 at 03:25 PM

JH

“ John and Maureen Huffman planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Kenneth Louis Mickel.

John and Maureen Huffman - September 24, 2024 at 11:12 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Kenneth Louis Mickel.



September 24, 2024 at 11:12 AM



“ Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Kenneth Louis Mickel.



September 23, 2024 at 09:22 PM

KA

“ Karma and Samuel Ansara planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Kenneth Louis Mickel.

Karma and Samuel Ansara - September 23, 2024 at 09:22 PM

KF

“ My sincere condolences to the Mickel family. I worked in Ken's office in the 90's (While in law school) and between him and Bobby Kaplan I learned a great deal. He was a smart and compassionate man, definitely he made the journey through law school interesting. Rest well Ken.

Karen Wright Fairley - September 21, 2024 at 06:25 PM

SC

“ Ken has been my attorney since 1982, he's passionate concerning his clients and I have never met a lawyer who went far beyond all that he could do for you. I will be forever grateful for his service, compassion, commitment to the people he helped. Ken will be forever missed, as well as being a great man who never backed down. To his wife and children, my deepest and sincere condolences. The mold has been broken to never be mended or replaced. God bless you and keep you in his tender care.  
Sharon Carwell (client 42 years)

Sharon Carwell - September 18, 2024 at 01:02 PM

LZ

“ Linda, Renee & Mary Zraik purchased the Sweet Sincerity for the family of Kenneth Louis Mickel.



Linda, Renee & Mary Zraik - September 17, 2024 at 04:44 PM

LZ

“ Linda, Renee & Mary Zraik planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Kenneth Louis Mickel.

Linda, Renee & Mary Zraik - September 17, 2024 at 04:44 PM

MM

“ Ken is my uncle. I love him dearly. He was always there to help me when I needed him and always returned my calls. I had to be on my toes around him because of his quick wit. I can't believe that I won't see him in this life ever again, but i take solace in knowing that he is now reunited with much of his wonderful family that went before him, including my father. I love you, Unk!

---

**Mark Mickel** - September 17, 2024 at 04:40 PM

RS

“ While I never met Mr. Mickel, his love and passion for life shines bright in his daughter Melissa, who is my friend. His family is blessed by having an amazing patriarch who I am sure will remain their forever North Star.

---

**Rebecca Sutton Sillery** - September 17, 2024 at 12:18 PM

BS

“ Ken was a friend from the time we studied for and took the Ohio Bar in 1965, but shall definitely miss not having lunch with Ken at ICE a few times a week as recently as a few weeks back. He will be missed RIP

*Barry Savage*

---

**Barry Savage** - September 17, 2024 at 08:20 AM

KS

“ The brightest smile, the cutest giggle and the biggest most generous heart. That is how I will always remember Ken.

---

**Kelly SeEVERS** - September 16, 2024 at 12:48 PM

SK

“ Like a precious few of his generation, Kenny Mickel is near-impossible to capture in description. He was simply that special. And yet, defying that impossibility, the family obituary in *The Blade* did just that.

*My dad decades ago did so as well when he said that Kenny possessed “ancient wisdom.” By that, he expressed that Kenny saw connections between things which seemed not to be connected. Making connection – that was a fundamental part of Ken Mickel. And, like my father, Kenny derived life from living life. It was quite a thing to witness.*

*I could depart now and tell incomparable stories of living down the (Section) road from Kenny; or of the overlapping years together in the Spitzer Building. Instead, suffice for now to say, he lived his life in a multitude of settings, all made richer by his presence. And I can easily imagine, among those who knew him in only one setting, it will be said that Kenny was all heart. While for those who knew him only in another, that Kenny was all brain. But for those of us – the most fortunate among us – who knew him in many, we get to know this: they’re both exactly right.*

*Oh, and one more thing about Ken Mickel: he will be the easiest to recall to mind; recall to mind with tears, with laughter, with it all. And what to make of this overriding sadness? That gets always to be tempered with the affecting memories that only Kenny could give. Quite a life. And quite a gift he gave to us all.*

– Sam Kaplan

---

Sam Kaplan - September 16, 2024 at 11:41 AM

MM

*Thanks so much Sam. Being in the office when your dad, Bobby would pop in was always fun. I can hear him coming down the hall yelling for my dad "Kenny!!" Just two of the most unique humans to ever walk this world. ~Missy Mickel*

**Melissa Mickel-Portala** - September 30, 2024 at 05:01 PM



“ *Ken was a fantastic guy. He invited me to be an intern at his law firm my senior year at St Johns High School. I learned so much and had so much fun observing Ken and his partners at work! Ken was super smart, had a great sense of humor, and was a real gentleman. He was a wonderful role model and a great human being. RIP Ken.*

**Thomas Tripp** - September 16, 2024 at 04:21 AM

BS

“ *Kenny was smart, loving and caring. He was a great friend and mentor. Heaven truly gained a huge advocate for all people and I was very proud and lucky to know him. Rest well Kenny, you are so deserving. Hugs and love to the Mickel family. 🕊*

**Billie Taub Szenderski** - September 15, 2024 at 02:48 PM

BM

“ *Ken was my first attorney boss and was highly respected by all who knew him. Peace be with you my old friend...RIH*

**Bunny Mathis** - September 15, 2024 at 11:26 AM

JG

“ *Very sorry to read of Ken's passing. He truly cared about his clients and was an asset to our profession. RIP*

**Judge Michael R. Goulding** - September 15, 2024 at 09:55 AM