



Donald L. Kerouac

October 26, 1949 - August 3, 2024

Donald L. Kerouac, age 74, of Kankakee passed away Saturday, August 3, 2024 at his home. He was born October 26, 1949 in Kankakee, the son of Leslie & Alice (Book) Kerouac. Donald married Billie Kern in 1994 at St. Mark's United Methodist Church in Kankakee. Donald was not only a well-known HAM radio operator, but a photographer and caver, among many other interests including astronomy and astrophotography. He spent many nights in his observatory studying the stars.

Don made key contributions in exploration and conservation of caves and their environments. He is a past member of the Cave Research Foundation, giving him the opportunity to explore and survey sections of Mammoth Cave in Kentucky and participating in Mammoth Cave Restoration Camps. He is a long-time member of the Near Normal Grotto chapter of the National Speleological Society (NSS), held officer positions within the group. His experience led him to be a key part of the Karst Conservancy of Illinois, including serving as President. He was part of the early explorations, surveying, and conservation efforts of Pautler and Twin Culverts Caves in Southern Illinois, along with helping efforts to protect other endangered karst areas. He was a recognized figure at caving events such as Old-Timers' Reunions, NSS National Conventions, and Missouri Valley Ozark Regional Conventions.

From 1978-2015, Don made a successful career as a Radio Broadcast Engineer....full turn key services from studios to transmitter plants including AM directional arrays and fine tuning of FM antennas with over 70 stations in the Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, & Michigan areas. His professional career shaped him as an expert radio station builder and customer service talent for the broadcast industry. His technical knowledge in broadcast engineering, antennas, and station design was unparalleled. He was always willing to help with ideas on station improvement with local hams as well.

Prior to his retirement from his business Midwest Broadcasting and ISP Services, Don was Chief Engineer of WKAN Radio for 25 years.

In the early days, Don taught electronics classes at the local Junior College and worked for the local Motorola MSS.

Don was the “go to” guy in his beloved KARS (Kankakee Area Radio Society) that he joined immediately after receiving his ham radio license in 1968, having held every office for many years, currently as VP and served as the newsletter editor as well. Don enjoyed transmitter hunting with the club. Don, a ham radio volunteer Examiner since 1984 and AD (Assistant to the director) of the AARL (American Radio Relay League).

He had documented contacts with 343 countries. The walls in his ham shack office were covered by awards he won for winning radio contests and achieving his goals.

Surviving are his wife, Billie Kerouac; two daughters, Jennifer Kerouac (Scott Steinhart) and Julie (Jason) Williams; one son, David Kerouac & fiancé, Amada Roth; one stepdaughter, Sheri (Stuart) Clifford; one brother, Dennis (Sharon) Kerouac; and eight grandchildren. Donald is preceded in death by his parents and one sister, Judith Kerouac.

Visitation will be held from 1 p.m. until the time of the 4:30 p.m. funeral service on Sunday, August 11, 2024 at Clancy-Gernon Funeral Home in Bourbonnais. Private family interment will be held at All Saints Cemetery in Bourbonnais at a later date.

Memorials may be made to River Valley Cat Oasis in Momence.

Cemetery Details

All Saints Cemetery

1839 W. Route 102
Bourbonnais, IL 60914
(815) 933-2342

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 11. 1:00 PM - 4:30 PM (CT)

Bourbonnais - Clancy-Gernon Funeral Homes, Inc.
295 Main St., NW
Bourbonnais, IL 60914
(815) 932-1214
cgfuneral@gmail.com

Funeral Service

AUG 11. 4:30 PM (CT)

Bourbonnais - Clancy-Gernon Funeral Homes, Inc.
295 Main St., NW
Bourbonnais, IL 60914
(815) 932-1214
cgfuneral@gmail.com

Tribute Wall

LS

“ *Billie, my sincerest condolences. Fond memories of all of us traveling to Turks & Caicos for a Ham Radio contest! May God wrap his arms around you to help ease your pain.*

Lori Rosalius Skinner - August 14, 2024 at 09:00 PM

LF

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Les Fordham - August 12, 2024 at 03:42 PM

WD

“ Don was a great man, friend, and mentor. I even looked up to him as a father figure. The knowledge you shared with everyone including myself, made a positive, lasting impact on our lives.



Unfortunately, we don't realize it until someone is gone, how important they are, how great of an influence they had on our lives and how they shaped who we are today.

We met through the local Ham Radio club Kankakee Area Radio Society (KARS), where Don served may, many years in just about every role including President, Vice-President, Director and Communications / Repeater Committee (Chief Technical Guru). I appreciated the knowledge and experience I gained, working on projects with you for KARS and at your personal Ham station. I looked forward to and enjoyed all the time we spent together, our conversations, your humor, your vast knowledge on all subjects and everything you have taught me.

Don you will be missed. Take care sir and God bless you.

William Dau - August 09, 2024 at 04:28 PM

MW

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Mike Rohwedder WU9D - August 07, 2024 at 07:03 PM

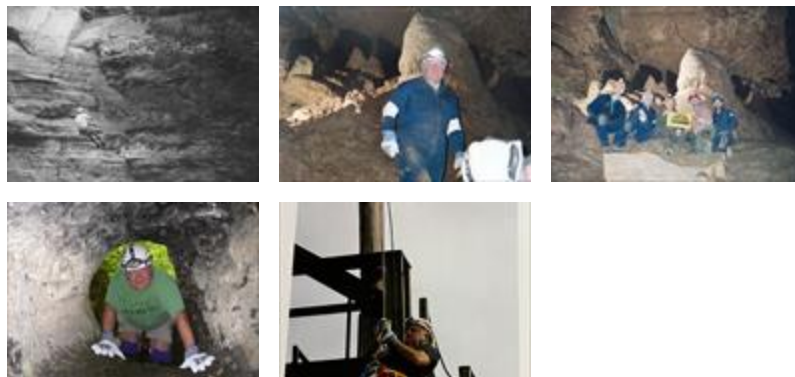
MW

“ I have fond memories of being with Don for years as amateur radio operators. He was a great officer of the Kankakee Area Radio Society, and I was proud to have served with him on the board. He will be greatly missed.

Mike Rohwedder WU9D - August 07, 2024 at 06:55 PM

CA

“ 5 files added to the tribute wall



Caving - August 07, 2024 at 10:57 AM

JJ

“ Celebrate the Life... Always.



James D. Jones - August 07, 2024 at 04:43 AM

DM

“ Donna McCollum lit a candle in memory of Donald L. Kerouac



Donna McCollum - August 07, 2024 at 12:56 AM

DM

“ Am so sorry to hear of Don's passing. Gordy and I always enjoyed being around him and I know Gordy had great respect for him, working all those years together at WKAN. My heartfelt condolences to the entire family.

Donna McCollum - August 07, 2024 at 12:56 AM

RG

“ Condolences to Don's family 🙏

Randy Garrett - August 06, 2024 at 09:52 PM

CD

“ So sorry Jennifer, Julie, and David for the loss of your dad. I will always remember our family get togethers. He will be greatly missed. Love you - your cousin Cathie

Catherine Dewberry - August 06, 2024 at 09:14 PM

LL

“ Don was a great guy to work with at WKAN a great wit and so intelligent. I'm sorry to hear of your loss

Lou Anne Lenzie - August 06, 2024 at 05:29 PM

DM

“ So sorry for your loss Jennifer. Prayers to you and your family during this time.

Denise Montague-Nichols - August 06, 2024 at 02:53 PM

TS

“ Very sorry to hear of Don's passing. Deepest symphonies to the family. Tri-Town. RAC

todd schumann - August 06, 2024 at 02:47 PM

TM

“ Tom Mallaney lit a candle in memory of Donald L. Kerouac



Tom Mallaney - August 06, 2024 at 01:16 PM

AR

The loss here is incalculable. Gone way too soon. But one of only two fellows I know to have suffered an aortal dissection and live to tell. So many accomplishments.

Arthur Reis - August 09, 2024 at 12:13 PM