



Kenneth B. Eaves

September 3, 1942 - May 6, 2025

Kenneth B. Eaves, 82, died peacefully, surrounded by his family on May 6, 2025. Ken was born on September 3, 1942, in Boston to Earl and Sally Eaves and was their only child. Ken grew up in Quincy and lived in Norwell for nearly 50 years, where he and his wife Joan raised their five children.

As a youth and into adulthood, Ken attended Central Baptist Church in Quincy. Later in life, he was a Deacon at the First Baptist Church in Scituate. From junior high through his sophomore year in high school, Ken was a carrier for The Patriot Ledger. As a teenager, his interest in hot rods and car repair began in earnest, often working on them with neighborhood friends. Ken graduated North Quincy High in 1961. It was there that he met his future wife, Joan Babson. Their marriage would come later, in 1966. In September of 1961, Ken enlisted in the United States Army and began a brief, but heroic period of his life.

He attended the United States Army Aviation School at Fort Rucker, AL, completing his courses in aircraft maintenance in January 1962. He then was sent to Viet Nam in April 1962, where he was stationed in Soc Trang, a major helicopter base 100 miles Southwest of Saigon, as part of the 93rd Transportation (Light Helicopter) Company. This group became known as the Soc Trang Flying Tigers, for their mascot, Tuffy, an adopted Bengal tiger. There, he volunteered as a light machine gunner on the H-21 "flying banana" helicopter and on January 2, 1963, he was engaged in the Battle of Ap Bac. His actions were recognized in the US House of Representatives on January

29, 1963, by James A. Burke of Massachusetts, whose remarks cited a news story that appeared in the Patriot Ledger, relating that during that battle, Ken participated in five missions, was shot down twice and was wounded in the leg. On one mission, despite being covered in oil, he continued to fire his machine gun until his helicopter crashed. He then waded across 100 yards of knee-deep mud to reach a rescue helicopter. In addition to being awarded the Purple Heart, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross by US Army Chief of Staff General Earle G. Wheeler for heroism.

Upon discharge from the Army, Ken was employed by Northeast Airlines as an aircraft mechanic and eventually followed his boyhood passion of working on cars by opening Ken's Foreign Auto on Rte. 3A in Cohasset, which was a fixture of the community for many years, specializing in Volkswagen Beetles. The men he worked with were also close friends, particularly Jay and Malcolm Campbell and Paul Snow.

In May 1977, he received an associate degree from Newbury Junior College, with a course of study in Management.

Ken's passions stretched beyond car repair, as he was a lifelong collector of model cars, trains, antique cars and automobile memorabilia, amassing an impressive collection through his participation in numerous annual flea markets and collectors' shows, as well as his networking with a wide group of collectors that became another extended group of friends. He loved the thrill of the hunt for collectibles and equally enjoyed the art of negotiation to get the best deal.

He was a voracious reader and loved to hold wide-ranging conversations with others, particularly relating to cars and history. He was the go-to babysitter for many of his grandchildren and was known for his generosity and willingness to treat others to a nice meal, especially at local seafood restaurants.

Ken is survived by his wife Joan and their five children: Andrew Eaves and his wife Judi; Rebecca DeBoer and her husband Jimmy; Rachel Riker; Sarah Mildrum; and Alex Eaves, as well as 13 grandchildren: Sam, Michaela, Maddie, Ally and Amanda Mildrum; William, Zachary, Benjamin and Eliza

DeBoer; Catrina and Jacob Riker; Deina Mayo and her husband Eric and Heather Dance and her husband Raymond; and two great-grandchildren, Ellie Dance and Athena Mayo.

Burial services will be private and held at the Massachusetts National Cemetery in Bourne.

DROZDAL FUNERAL HOME of Northampton, MA, has been entrusted with his care. For more information, or to leave the family a personal condolence, please visit Drozdalfuneralhome.com.

Cemetery Details

Massachusetts National Cemetery

Connery Ave
Buzzards Bay, MA 02542

Tribute Wall

JB

“ It was a warm summer evening in 1961 when I answered the door at 149 Taylor Street to find a sheepishly grinning teenager, several years my senior, all decked out in a Sunday-go-to-meeting suit, white shirt and tie. Kenny, (unbeknownst to me, my future brother-in-law) was there to pick up my sister Joan to go to a movie, their first real date I believe. As an impressionable 15 year old gear-head wannabe, I was excited when I recognized that he was the local hot rod legend that I had actually seen in action! A brief, get-acquainted conversation established an instant common interest connection that has lasted for 64 years with s-o-o many tales to tell!

One in particular that stands out happened shortly after Kenny developed his interest in Volkswagens. He asked me to go to Brookline with him to help "pick-up" a VW Bug. It turned out that my job was to handle steering and braking of the powerless hulk at the end of a 10 foot rope tied to his car! Hoping to go unnoticed, he amazingly wound his way through a maze of back roads with me sweating and smoke poring from the brakes. Coming up the Adams Street hill onto a long curve clearly marked with a do-not-pass double yellow line, Kenny decided we needed to pass the car in front of us! We darted into the oncoming lane just in time to see an Eastern Mass bus coming around the curve. As I was literally and figuratively at the end of my rope, I held on for dear life as Kenny somewhat calmly punched the gas and deftly swerved back past the car into safety. Fortunately the rope held, I followed him 10 feet later and we shared a good laugh!!

In retrospect, I think it was this comfort with living a little on the edge at that stage of his life that led to his amazing heroism in Vietnam that will always be an important part of the legend of Kenny Eaves.

Rest in Peace my Brother-in Law, we are missing you.

John Babson

John Babson - June 10, 2025 at 01:09 PM

BO

“ I was truly shocked when i opened the Ledger obituary pages this afternoon. Since our days at North, i have always had a soft spot in my heart for Ken and the fond memories of his multiple cars and other vehicles. I do remember one extremely cold morning walking to school he spied me walking alone along the street and offered me a ride sitting on a milk crate in a 1930s something Ford with no visible radiator because it was so cold that the engine would never overheat. Classic Ken. I was also so proud of his Army service. He was likely one of our first Vietnam Vets in the class of 1961 and i do know it had an enormous effect on his future life. Joan, please know that you and your family are in my prayers and accept my condolences for your loss. While i am saddened to hear of his passing, i do know there is a special place in Heaven for guys like Ken.

Bill Ohrenberger, Weeki Wachee, Florida

Bill Ohrenberrger - May 22, 2025 at 04:49 PM