



## Gerald Kush Sr

September 29, 2025

Gerald Joseph Kush, 84, of Summerdale, died on Monday, September 29, 2025 surrounded by his second wife, Gail and his son, Frank at Diversicare Nursing Home of Foley, AL.

He was born February 19, 1941 in Chicago, IL to George and Cecilia (Rake) Kush. He had one brother, George Kush Jr. who passed away in 2007.

He graduated from Leo High School, where he lettered in football and basketball. Known for his fierce competitive nature, his coach once hid his cleats and said they were stolen because he refused to come off the field after injuring his knee and having a tooth knocked out during his senior year homecoming game.

Gerald was a retired Chicago Police Detective and Veteran of the United States Army Reserves. Throughout his career, he received countless accommodations for meritorious work. Under President Ronald Reagan, he was detailed to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), where his tenacity led to the arrest and conviction of "The Welfare Queen of Chicago," who defrauded the Federal government by creating over 80 aliases to draw public assistance, and the Veterans Administration, collecting disability benefits for at

least four deceased husbands. His contributions to the arrest were detailed in Josh Levin's book "The Queen," and were mentioned in an episode of Oliver Stone's "Untold History of the United States."

He always put his family before himself. In addition to working as a full-time police officer, at one time he worked four additional jobs to put his three sons through private grade and high school. He often bought his clothing and footwear from thrift shops to save money so his children had magical holidays and birthdays.

Mr. Kush was known as a tremendously giving person. Celebrating over 38 years of sobriety, he was an active Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) member in Alabama, Illinois and Wisconsin, where he sponsored several others in their own sobriety journeys. He selflessly opened his home to many in recovery, providing them stability and support without ever asking for any sort of compensation in return. After retirement, he even volunteered for several years organizing and hosting AA meetings at local jails. In his own words, he wanted "to offer second chances to those he spent his life locking up."

Through AA he met the love of his life, his soulmate Gail, who despite being previously married said that Gerald was the only man she truly ever loved. Together they experienced endless adventures including: touring the United States in an RV, living all over the Alabama coast and taking countless waterway adventures in a fleet of "fixer upper" boats they had acquired over the years. Their greatest adventure however, was each other as they started and ended each day with love and affection, boasting their desire to "snuggle" into their early 80s. Many believe Gerald's life was extended by his desire to

live his final days with his wife by his side, which he did when Gail moved into the nursing home with him in May 2025.

Whether ocean, river, lake or pond, he loved being near the water. His retirement homes in Wisconsin and Alabama proved that. While his wife, Gail considered it a form of self-inflicted torture, Gerald loved frugally buying old outboard boat motors, that “needed a little work,” and endlessly tinkering with them.

He also had a passion for food and family, spending many summers grilling and putting out amazing spreads on a shoe-string budget. His ability to eat mass quantities is a story of legend to surely be passed down for generations to come.

He was a passionate fan of the Chicago Bears, New Orleans Saints, the Chicago Bulls and the Chicago White Sox. Later in life, he became obsessed with Fantasy Football. He considered his pinnacle achievement being invited to participate in a league comprised of Chicago Sports Journalists and sports marketing professionals, where he always made the play-offs.

If ever there a person who emulated the biblical Book of Job, it was Gerald. In the past 18 month alone, he broke his back, battled sepsis three times, pneumonia twice, had pressure ulcers, diabetic wounds, Covid-19 and suffered multiple strokes. Yet his faith never wavered, nor his serenity to

accept the things he could not change, the courage to change the things he could, and the wisdom and knowledge to know the difference.

Gerald is survived by his wife Gail, three sons, Gerald Jr., Thomas, and Frank; step children Michael, Thomas, James, Susan, Matthew and Laura; 19 grandchildren; sister-in-law, Verna, niece Kimberly and nephew Bryan. He had many extended family and friends, who in his final days he shared many fond memories of including Randy Tolley, and his “adopted” daughter Rebecca Cole.

Mr. Kush was grateful for the compassionate and dignified treatment he received from Diversicare Nursing Home and Community Hospice staff; all of whom said he was among their favorite residents to care for.

While Gerald’s life of service, sacrifice and giving indeed earned him a pair of the nicest wings God’s hands can make, his son Frank believes he’d prefer a used pair, repaired in duck-tape, that “run great” but need some tinkering- just like his boat motors.

A memorial service will take place in Illinois. Details will be posted when finalized. His final resting place will be Holy Sepulchre Catholic Cemetery, 6001 W 111th St., Alsip, IL 60803.



# Tribute Wall

KK

“ I have so many wonderful memories at family gatherings especially the holidays with mine and the boys' grandparents and my parents. Uncle Jerry and I have birthdays only 6 days apart. We would send each other yearly gifts and occasionally chat on the phone. My father, George, loved his brother to pieces. He and Gail were there for my dad when he was in the hospital with failing health. I know they are having a joyful reunion! God Bless! Love, Kimberly Kush

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**KIMBERLY KUSH** - October 10, 2025 at 10:41 AM

SM

“ I visited Jerry and Gale several times when they were still living at the house. Gayle was my sponsor but I would count on Jerry to tell me how the program works.. Sherilyn Mahrt

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**sherilyn mahrt** - October 10, 2025 at 09:48 AM

PT

“ I wish most of the people I have played fantasy football with over the years in various leagues had once ounce of Gerald's competitiveness and dedication. There will likely never be another like him. Now mind you, I wasn't always happy with him after checking the waiver wire! I often found myself virtually shaking my fist at him.

- Phil Thompson  
Chicago Bears Beat Reporter  
The Chicago Tribune

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**Phil Thompson** - October 10, 2025 at 08:44 AM

RM

“ He sounded like really interesting and good guy. I’m sure he made differences to many in his lifetime. Hugs your way!

Rosa MacNeil - October 09, 2025 at 10:00 PM

BG

“ I have so many memories of my Uncle Jerry, it’s hard to pick just one. One of my fondest memories was visiting him up in Wisconsin with my two boys. Our boys never really had the opportunity to boat or fish. Uncle Jerry took them under his wing and showed them how to fish and brought them out on the boat to enjoy the lake. This was not the easiest task as my first son was autistic and my younger son uses a wheelchair. That did not even slow Uncle Jerry down. He lovingly showed the boys the excitement of lake living. The look on my boys' faces when they caught their first fish was one I will never forget. He always gave of himself, to me, my family and my extended family.

Another thing I will always cherish about Uncle Jerry was the way he loved my Grandparents. While he may have been technically a son-in-law he was the son my Grandmother never had. She loved him dearly and always looked forward to him and Gail visiting. I know Uncle Jerry cherished her too. When, in their later years, their AC unit failed Uncle Jerry was there to help. He was always willing to do whatever they needed. And if my Grandmother were here I know she would talk your ear off about him.

We love you Uncle Jerry, we will miss your smile, your laugh and your wisdom. I will miss hearing the Brylee nickname you gave me.



Bryan Gustin - October 09, 2025 at 12:39 PM

EN

“Gerry had a real passion for the “newcomer.” I was one of those 17 years ago. I always had the most respect and admiration for Gerry. He was indeed a “friend.”

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**eddie norris** - October 05, 2025 at 12:37 PM

JS

“Gerry and Gail wonderful people I've known them for a long time caring and giving Godspeed.

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**Jerry D. Smith** - October 04, 2025 at 02:42 PM

PS

“I was blessed to spend frequent visit's with Gerry. I and Gail over the last year. Gerry would light up each time I came into their room. He had granddad wisdom with filled with love and caring. We enjoyed reading the daily reflection and talking about God. Gerry listened to what you said always sharing his ES&H. Knowing Gerry was one of the treasures I hold in my heart.

Thanks Gerry, for being a “Old timer” one day at a time. Always giving back.

Say hi to Bill & Dr Bob for me.

Much love Paulie



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**paulie serina** - October 01, 2025 at 11:12 PM