



Kenneth S Zadnichek Sr

October 21, 2025

Kenneth Stephen Zadnichek, Sr., known to many as “Senior,” age 76, passed away peacefully on October 21st, 2025 at his home in Silverhill, Alabama, surrounded by his loved ones.

Born on January 13, 1949, in Casper, Wyoming, Kenneth was the son of Marvin Louis Zadnichek, Sr. and Elizabeth (Beth) Beiser. He grew up in Illinois and attended Downers Grove Community High School before continuing his education at the Chicago ART Institute, Mobile College, and the University of South Alabama.

Throughout his life, Kenneth wore many hats: artist, property developer, architect, farmer, welder, dental technician, entrepreneur, and railwayman. He built two homes and developed and managed several ventures, including a cattle/catfish farm, Meadow Breeze Mobile Home Park, and The Eastern Shore Company, Inc. His most enduring legacy, however, is Wales West Light Railway and RV Resort, a unique creation that combined his love of trains, community, family, and joy into one remarkable place.

Kenneth married Ann Slaton on October 21, 1995, and they shared 30 years together. He is survived by his wife Ann, his sons Donovan Christian Zadnichek and Kenneth Stephen Zadnichek, Jr., his grandchildren Dalton and Jacob (Donovan Zadnichek), and Konrad and Kaitlyn Zadnichek (Kenneth Zadnichek, Jr.), his brother Marvin Louis Zadnichek, Jr., nephew Miles Zadnichek, many loving cousins, and his beloved grand-dog, Shug. He was preceded in death by his parents, aunts, and uncles.

A passionate train enthusiast, Kenneth shared his love of railroads with Ann as they traveled the world together, seeking out unique and historic trains in every corner they visited. Kenneth took great pride in owning and operating his authentic steam locomotive, Dame Ann. His mission in life was to bring joy to Baldwin County families, a spirit he carried through his work and community involvement. He was a member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Daphne, Alabama.

A Celebration of Life will be held at the Community Center located at Wales West Light Railway and RV Resort at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Baldwin County Humane Society.

Tribute Wall

SC

“ mean and my friend have been coming to Wales west to see both of the owners for over 16 years we were always welcomed with open arms and seems like they were both family He will be missed the dream of opening a train ride was wonderful for this area once again he will be missed I am praying for comfort for the whole family. Scott Moody

scott - October 28, 2025 at 06:57 AM

JC

“ We are so sorry for your loss. Senior was such a great person. We have been bringing our son to Wales west since he was around 4 years old he is 22 now and still enjoys going there. We haven't had the time to come as much as we would have liked but have many fun memories. My son still remembers senior letting him blow the whistle on dame Ann and all the fun had while camping. We actually were camping there this weekend but didn't find out until we got home that he had passed away. We were all very sad to hear the news and he will be greatly missed.

Jeanette Christian - October 27, 2025 at 09:34 AM

MJ

“ Ken Z. was always a decisive person. And when you make a lot of decisions, you're going to make some mistakes. What I always loved about Ken was his willingness to talk openly about his mistakes, using them to warn others who might not have been down that road as far as he had. Here's one example... If Ken hadn't told me this, I doubt I'd ever have discovered it on my own: "Once you start a pie-fight, you can't stop it until all the pie is gone."

---Mark Johnson

Mark Johnson - October 25, 2025 at 09:27 AM

SJ

Tonight, 11/30/25 we took our grandsons to Wales West and just by accident, happened to meet Miss Ann, whom we never met, and she proceeded to take us on a private tour of the Train Shed and shared with us the history of this unique and magical place. In the midst of this tour and historical background information, Miss Ann mentioned that she had just lost her husband last week.....and we were floored!!! This gracious woman took the time to make sure we were totally enjoying ourselves in the midst of her time of mourning. Miss Ann also shared her challenges after a broken hip injury as she continued showing our family around. Talk about gracious tenacity. As it has been said...."Good wood does not grow with ease, the stronger the wind,.....the tougher the trees. We are deeply sorry for the loss of a great man, and forever grateful for the profile in courage grace and resolve delivered by Miss Ann. GOD bless your amazing family. The Bonfe Family, Fairhope

Samuel Armand Bonfe Jr. - October 30, 2025 at 11:52 PM

KC

“ I will always remember my first cousin with a special place in my heart as a spiritual and loving person that always left you smiling and peaceful. Just the way he has left me now.

ken Cain - October 24, 2025 at 12:55 PM



“ Please feel free to share any photos you all have of Ken Sr



Ken Zadnichek Jr. - October 23, 2025 at 09:42 PM

DS

“ *David and Cindy Sawyer purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of Kenneth S Zadnichek Sr.*



David and Cindy Sawyer - October 23, 2025 at 09:14 PM

DS

“ *David and Cindy Sawyer planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Kenneth S Zadnichek Sr.*

David and Cindy Sawyer - October 23, 2025 at 09:14 PM

GS

“ *My condolences to his family. Wish I had known him. Seems like a very interesting person.*

godbee smith - October 23, 2025 at 07:36 AM