



Lester Charles Kish

June 11, 2025

Lester Charles Kish January 4, 1944 – June 11, 2025 Lester Charles Kish, a devoted father, grandfather, coach, teacher, and friend, passed away on June 11, 2025, at the age of 81. Born and raised in Phillipsburg, New Jersey, Les was the second child of Geza and Elizabeth Kish. His early years in “P-burg,” as locals fondly call it, were filled with music, faith, and a close-knit Hungarian-American family that treasured tradition and laughter.

A proud graduate of Phillipsburg High School, Class of 1962, Les earned seven varsity letters in football, wrestling, and baseball. He served as class president, student council vice-president, and was a disc jockey on “The Teenage Review.” He was a player on the 1960 football team that won the state championship and was honored as a New Jersey All-State quarterback and second baseman, as well as Lehigh Valley Scholar-Athlete of the Year.

Les continued his athletic and academic journey at Lehigh University, where he earned six varsity letters in football and baseball. He was the first sophomore named Outstanding Player of the Lehigh-Lafayette Game and was recognized multiple times as ECAC Player of the Week. A true scholar-athlete, he earned both a bachelor’s and a master’s degree and was known for his leadership, tutoring, and deep sense of integrity.

After college, Les turned to coaching and education, guiding young athletes at

Lehigh University, Dieruff High School, and then as head football coach at Allentown's Allen High School. His 1973 Canary team won the Big 6 Championship with a historic 8-2 record. In 1982, he became the school's Athletic Director, serving with distinction for over 17 years. He was the founder of the Allen High School Hall of Fame and a pillar of District XI athletics, honored by peers and players alike.

Beyond titles and accolades, Les was a devoted father to Corey and Bryan, and a beloved grandfather to Mason, Elya, Baylee, and Zoey. He made life rich with family traditions, photography, backyard games, travel, and music. A lifelong disc jockey, he joyfully played the soundtrack of his generation at reunions and gatherings. He delighted in Coca-Cola, cigars, and collectibles—his home a playful museum of memory and nostalgia.

Les was inducted into the Lehigh Valley Chapter of the National Football Foundation Hall of Fame (1997), the Northeast Region Pennsylvania Sports Hall of Fame (1998), the Allen High School Athletic Hall of Fame (2016), and the Phillipsburg-Easton Football Hall of Fame (2022). In 2025, his 1960 Phillipsburg team was enshrined in the Phillipsburg Athletic Hall of Fame.

He found deep joy in his heritage, tracing family roots in Hungary, volunteering at the Lehigh Valley History Center, and preserving stories with care. His friendships were many and enduring—he was a constant presence at reunions, poker games, porch talks, and local sports banter.

Lester Charles Kish leaves behind a legacy of loyalty, warmth, and wisdom. He was a man of enduring faith, who served as an Elder at Alpha Presbyterian Church, where his spiritual roots first grew. He will be remembered for his boundless heart, his booming voice at the sidelines, his steadfast support, and the joy he brought to all who knew him. He lives on in the laughter of his grandchildren, in the proud echoes of every game he loved,

and in the grateful hearts of family and friends.

He is survived by his son Bryan G. Kish, husband of Melissa, Orefield; daughter Corey E. Bergstein, wife of Joseph; grandchildren Mason, Elya, Baylee, and Zoey; Paulette J. Kish, the mother of his children.

A funeral service will be held on Monday, June 16, 2025, at 12 Noon at the J.S. Burkholder Funeral Home, 16th and Hamilton Sts. Allentown. A calling hour will be held on Monday, from 10:30 A.M. to 12 Noon in the funeral home.

Cemetery Details

Cedar Hill Memorial Park

1700 Airport Rd.
Allentown, PA 18109

Previous Events

Calling Hours

JUN **16**. 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

J S Burkholder Funeral Home Inc
1601 W Hamilton Street
Allentown, PA 18102
(610) 433-5161
info@jsburkholder.com
<https://jsburkholder.com>

Service

JUN **16**. 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM (ET)

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Tribute Wall

AG

“*Lesther was one of the coolest guys I ever met. From his interest in rare antique, his athletic career, up to his taste in music ! I listen to 60’s rock on my own time now, and I never did before. He left such an impression on all the hearts he came across.*

Ailice Gonzalez - June 20, 2025 at 09:41 AM

MI

“*My sympathy and prayers to the family. Les was a very special friend as our families went back for generations. I will never forget him. Brian, you probably remember me when you came to Steve's Cafe and barber shop selling ad's for the newspaper. I will have a remembrance for Les at the Alpha Presbyterian Church.*
Maryann Ignatz.

Maryann Ignatz - June 19, 2025 at 11:10 AM

LJ

Maryann, I remember coming to the Café with Lester Kish, and his uncle, Lester Horvath. Memorable times of conversation about “the old days”— rich with stories and laughter. —Diane Horvath Johnson

L Diane Johnson - June 20, 2025 at 09:42 PM

RC

He was my coach. Had a big impact on my life.

Rick Calvert - August 14, 2025 at 08:30 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Lester Charles Kish.*



June 16, 2025 at 07:04 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Lester Charles Kish.

June 16, 2025 at 07:04 AM



“ *Cousin Diane contacted me to let me know of my wonderful, handsome cousins passing! I will never forget him taking me and my girlfriend and Uncle Lutz on a tour of New York City and lunch at a fancy restaurant in Central Park. Only wonderful fun memories in my heart!*

Wendy L Wilkins - June 14, 2025 at 08:11 AM



“ *Bill Troxell purchased the Be My Love Bouquet with Red Roses for the family of Lester Charles Kish.*



Bill Troxell - June 13, 2025 at 01:26 PM

WT

“ Les was my best friend and the greatest friend I ever had. We were inseparable in high school. We cruised together endlessly in his beloved car, Lil Audrey. We worked together in the summers. We played on teams together and won the State Championship and the Easton games. We were the best man in each other’s weddings. We went through everything that life threw at us, thick and thin, and through the years always remained very close. I was very proud of Les’s career accomplishments. His passion for coaching was one of a kind. I loved how much he loved his family, they were everything to him. I send them all my deepest sympathy. I am heart broken as I feel the world is not as good a place without Les in it. I know my life will be harder without him in it. I believe in my heart that I will someday reunite with “The Kid” in heaven. We are friends forever, Bill Troxell

William Troxell - June 13, 2025 at 12:35 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Lester Charles Kish.

June 12, 2025 at 04:12 PM



“ Heavenly Grace Spray was purchased for the family of Lester Charles Kish.



June 12, 2025 at 04:12 PM

DG

“ *I am sad and sorry to read of Les passing. We taught together in the mid-1960's at Dieruff High. He was a true colleague and friend. My best to all his family. David Gaskin, Alameda, California*

David Gaskin - June 12, 2025 at 11:03 AM