

Kenneth Robert Ballou, 59, of Framingham, passed away unexpectedly on April 16th, 2021. Ken was born in Rhode Island and has been a Framingham resident for some 20 years. He graduated from [Massachusetts Institute of Technology \(MIT\)](#) with degrees in mathematics and physics. He subsequently spent five years at [UC Berkeley](#) while working towards a Ph.D. in mathematics.

Ken did not have a lot of family, but he more than made up for it with friends. He will always be remembered for his kindness, brilliance, wit, sense of humor and his willingness to mentor. We all have our favorite “Ken Quote”, but this one stands out: “Be curious, people!” The only thing larger than Ken’s intellect was his heart.

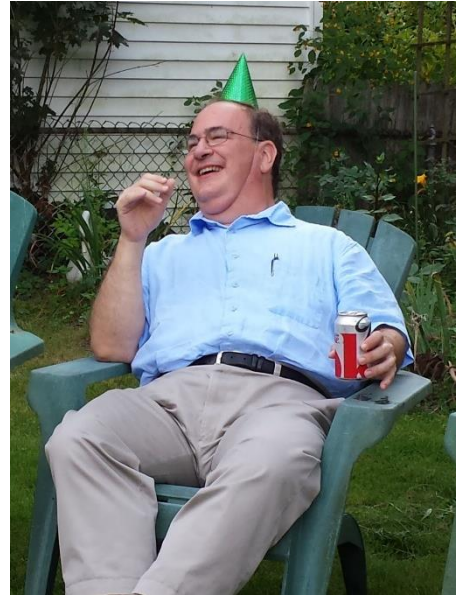
Ken had a long a distinguished career in software engineering with notable contributions in the areas of networking, security & cryptography.

Ken was a life member of US Chess. He directed 291 tournaments according to [US Chess records](#), with a total of nearly 1,400 sections under his oversight. Ken, aka. "Chief TD" began directing tournaments at the MetroWest Chess Club (MCC) in 2005 and quickly progressed to the highest levels of chess officialdom. Ken was a US Chess National Tournament Director, and a FIDE International Arbiter. He was also Chair of the US Chess Rules Committee, and Elections Committee. He served on four other US Chess committees and was the US Chess Parliamentarian, running the Annual Delegates meeting. Along with countless MCC and other local events, Ken was the Chief TD/Arbiter for the 2018 US Championships, Millionaire Chess 3, and the 2017 Champions Showdown at the St. Louis Chess Club featuring GMs Carlsen, Caruana, Nakamura, Liren, So, Grischuk, Topalov, and Dominguez. His contributions to MCC are immeasurable. Most recently he served on the Club's Board as Treasurer, but he will be remembered as a constant presence, running nearly every tournament.

At the beginning of 1983, while an undergraduate at MIT, Ken discovered hand bell change ringing, an obscure art form, rooted in the physics of how English church bells are hung, which combines music and mathematics. Ken was instantly hooked, ringing regularly with the MIT Guild of Bell Ringers. He rang in his first peal, a major accomplishment, the change ringer’s equivalent of a marathon, the middle of that same year, exhibiting his shockingly rapid progress as a ringer. In 1985 Ken learned change ringing on tower bells as well. After moving to California for graduate studies in mathematics at Berkeley, Ken helped grow a successful change ringing hand bell band in the Bay Area, for which he was a natural leader. Upon moving back to New England, he became a mainstay of the bands at both Boston churches with change ringing bells, The Church of the Advent and the Old North Church, as well as remaining a keen hand bell ringer. Through the late 1980s and 1990s he was one of the most prolific peal ringers in North America and took part in some of the most noteworthy



performances rung here, both in tower and in hand. He was part of the most advanced hand bell band North America had then produced, usually ringing one of the more difficult, inside pairs of bells. From 1988 to 1989 Ken served as the Education Officer of the North American Guild of Change Ringers. Ken was also elected a member of the Society of Royal Cumberland Youths, an international society based on London that both encourages advanced ringing and serves as a sort of honorary society for change ringers. Ken charmed his fellow ringers, and was tremendously fun to ring and be with, combining his brilliant skills as a ringer with a wonderful, infectious sense of humor, often self-deprecatory humor. Change ringing bands, particularly in hand, are similar to chamber music ensembles, closely knit with dynamics in many ways like families. Ken was loved and valued by those he rang with and is sorely missed.



Donations to a foundation in his name dedicated to the advancement of underserved youth are welcome in lieu of flowers.

At this time service information is still incomplete. Tentative plans are for **Wednesday 4:30-6:00pm** at John C. Bryant Funeral Home:

John C Bryant Funeral Home

56 Pemberton Rd, Wayland, MA 01778

508-653-4220

<https://johncbryantfuneralhome.com/>