eulogyai.nz

Family and friends,

thank you for gathering to remember and to celebrate the life of my husband, Peter Alan McKenzie — Pete to most of us.

Pete was born in Dunedin on 22 January 1954.
He left us on 28 February this year, at 72.
In those years he managed to be many things at once:
a measured, principled man with a wry wit,
a meticulous teacher and a deeply caring mentor,
a husband, a dad, a grandad, a brother,
and, to me, a companion who helped navigate life’s challenges with grace and humour.

He grew up in Dunedin and was the first in his family to attend university.
That step mattered to him for the rest of his life.
He believed education should open doors, not sort people into boxes.
In Wellington classrooms for three decades, and as a department head, he taught history —
but more than that, he taught how to ask good questions,
how to weigh evidence,
how to debate ideas without diminishing the person across from you.
There are former students here who once quaked at his raised eyebrow during a dodgy argument,
and later learned it was the kindest nudge toward thinking for themselves.

At home he was husband to me, Julia,
father to Olivia and Ben,
grandad to Isla and Arlo,
and brother to Robert.

Create your own personalised speech at eulogyai.nz

He loved each of you with a steadiness that never announced itself, it just turned up —
with a packed lunch before an exam,
with a late-night proofread,
with a quiet phone call on a hard day,
with those handwritten birthday letters that became small time capsules of care.

When he retired to the Kāpiti Coast, he didn’t slow so much as shift pace.
He read New Zealand history the way other people watch sport — with commentary.
He tracked birds along the shore and out toward Kāpiti Island, content to name and notice.
He played chess with a patience that made you think you’d almost won.
He tended his roses with the same attention he gave a class essay: pruning, shaping, trusting the next bloom.
And he planned rail journeys with exacting delight — timetables, maps, a flask of tea, windows to watch the country pass.

My favourite memory is simple.
Evening walks along Raumati Beach.
Shoes in hand, the sky colouring down.
We would trade notes on whatever we were reading, and by the time we reached the rocks we had half-planned a new road trip.
He had a way of making a horizon feel like an invitation.

What defined Pete were values that wore well with time:
integrity in small choices,
curiosity about people and ideas,
service to others without fanfare,
and the conviction that education is a pathway to opportunity.
He kept his humour close — never the loudest laugh, always the line that arrived one beat late and landed perfectly.

We will miss his wise counsel — the kind that started with listening.

We will miss those birthday letters, shaped by his careful pen.
Create your own personalised speech at eulogyai.nz
We will miss the dry jokes that softened hard moments and kept us honest.

To Olivia and Ben:
your dad’s best lessons were never only in a classroom.
They were in the way he showed up.
To Isla and Arlo:
Grandad was proud of the questions you asked; keep asking them.
To Robert:
he treasured the long family threads you kept strong.

Grief is real today.
So is gratitude.
Pete’s influence is not a statue we visit, it’s how we carry ourselves —
how we argue well,
how we keep our word,
how we notice the birds on a windy day and the child who needs a hand.

Before you leave, there is a table of Pete’s favourite books.
Please take one, read it, pass it on if you wish.
He would have liked that —
ideas moving through hands and homes.

Pete, my love,
thank you for the walks, for the letters, for the laughter held just behind your smile.
We will keep walking.
We will keep reading.
We will keep opening doors.

This speech was created with eulogyai.nz.Answer a few questions and generate your own personalised speech now ateulogyai.nz

Create your own personalised speech at eulogyai.nz