



## Mr. Kenneth William Houlton

November 14, 1930 - April 6, 2026

It is with great sadness that the family of Ken Houlton of Nanton, AB, announce his passing on Monday, April 6, 2026 at the age of 95 years.

Kenneth William Houlton was born on a farm in the County of Middlesex, Ontario on November 14, 1930. He remained a farm boy at heart throughout his life. As a child, he loved tapping the Ontario maple trees to make syrup in the crisp early spring air and cinching up a team of horses to work the fields with his dad. At sixteen, Ken's first job was as a pin boy at the bowling alley. He earned three and half cents per game for resetting the pins, on a good night that meant \$3.50 plus tips.

At the wise old age of seventeen, he ventured west to Alberta and found work on ranches. As an eighteen-year-old, he returned to Ontario by train, traveling with some prized Hereford cattle back for the Toronto Royal Winter Fair. Along the way, he and a buddy thought it was great fun to heave shovels of manure out of the train, aiming for the hoods of passing cars.

There was nothing Ken loved better than music, especially if it involved dancing. It was a lucky thing that he played the accordion, because a young Shirley Culver, an accomplished accordionist herself, needed a partner. And the rest, as they say, is history. Ken was able to convince his new bride that she would love the west as much as he did.

The next five years would welcome four little girls to the family; Marilyn, Ann, Lori and Janet, all in quick succession. By then they had moved to a quarter section farm west of Nanton, soon to be known as Houlton's Corner. An agricultural career followed with a position as a promotional representative for a herbicide company. It was a perfect career for an outgoing, charismatic man who loved meeting people and sharing stories. He was well regarded in this field, travelling across the prairies meeting with groups of farmers.

Ken valued his community. He was a Boy Scout leader, taking boys on overnight mountain trips, volunteering on the local hospital board and being an active member of the Nanton Lion's Club. On weekends he could often be found playing the piano in a local dance band.

As a widower, Ken found the second love of his life, Esther. They lived the retirement dream, traveling south for the winters, dancing and partying the cold months away. The two of them were always up for a card game, filled with plenty of bantering and a lot of laughs.

He continued to dance, amuse everyone with his quick wit, and spend hours on his beloved piano well into his nineties. His motto could be: Grab the stuff of life with all your being.

Ken is survived by his loving wife, Esther, his four daughters Marilyn (Bruce), Ann (Scott), Lori (Harry) and Janet (Randy), stepson Neil (Carron) and his sister Janet (George). In addition, Ken was a proud grandparent to eleven grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by his wife Shirley in 1982.

A Celebration of Ken's Life will be held on Wednesday, April 15, 2026, at the Nanton United Church (2121 21 St, Nanton, AB, T0L 1R0) at 1:00 P.M.

Immediately following the church service, please join the family for a time of fellowship and reception at the Kozy Korner (2211 20 St, Nanton, AB, T0L 1R0) to further share memories of Ken.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to a charity of your choice.

Caring for the family is Lyle Reeves Funerals of High River (Craig Snodgrass) 403.652.4242.

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life Service

APR **15**. 1:00 PM (MT)

Nanton United Chutch  
2121 21 Street  
Nanton, AB T0L 1R0 (CA)

## Reception

APR **15** (MT)

Kozy Korner  
2211 20th Street  
Nanton, AB T0L 1R0 (CA)

# Tribute Wall

LM

“ *Les & Joan Marles lit a candle in memory of Mr. Kenneth William Houlton*



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**Les & Joan Marles** - April 14 at 07:00 PM

RT

“ *Dear Esther,  
I remember meeting you at Claresholm General Hospital about 2 1/2 years ago and have appreciated seeing you every day since until last Thursday when we passed in the hallway. It wasn't until I noticed Ken's picture in the cabinet that I realized that we both had just experienced the same thing. Thank you for daily being there for your precious husband, lovingly serving him. You were such an example to me and seeing you there encouraged me.  
I feel a special connection to you and mourn with you. May you feel peace and comfort in the days ahead.*

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**Rita Toone** - April 14 at 12:57 PM

PA

“ *Dear Esther, Marilyn, Ann, Lori, Janet and families,  
I was saddened to hear of Ken's passing, but know his life has not recently included the joy he once cherished. Saying that final good-bye is so difficult. May knowing others will remember Ken fondly, and care for you be of some comfort. I am not home so will be unable to attend his service. I would love to have connected with you even under the circumstances. Please take care of each other as you grieve your loss.*

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**Patty Atkinson** - April 14 at 10:42 AM

KP

“ Dear Janet, Lori, Ann, Marilyn, Ester and families. So sorry to hear about Uncle Ken. When I lived with Aunt Shirley and Uncle Ken for a few months, Uncle Ken would come up behind me and shake the green easy chair I was in to mimic me falling backwards. He LOVED playing that joke on me whenever he could because I would always yell. He loved a good joke and loved to laugh until the tears rolled. Our sincerest condolences, Craig and Karen Piett.

Karen Piett. - April 13 at 11:19 PM

RG

“ My sympathy to the Houlton family. I have fond memories of Ken when I ran Country Boy Motors in Nanton years ago. Rick Guitton

Rick Guitton - April 12 at 03:06 PM

LJ

“ Lynn Johnson lit a candle in memory of Mr. Kenneth William Houlton



Lynn Johnson - April 12 at 02:28 AM

LJ

*My sincere condolences to all the family.*

Lynn Johnson - April 12 at 02:28 AM

RQ

“ Condolences to the Houlton family. At the same time, 95 is pretty good innings. If uncle Ken calculated all the merriment experienced throughout his life, I doubt he'd feel shortchanged. But the world is now shy a canny cribbage player and pianist, so that's a loss.

*R. G. Quinn*

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**Robert Quinn** - April 11 at 09:36 PM

NH

“ Thinking of the Houlton family. Lovely memories of time spent at Houlton's corner. Sincere condolences to the family. Nancy Heidmiller

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**Nancy Heidmiller** - April 11 at 04:55 PM

BY

“ Our sincere sympathy to Esther and Families on Ken's passing. Our thoughts and prayers are with you at this difficult time. Marion, Barb and Sue Young

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**Barbara Young** - April 11 at 04:08 PM

MP

“ I remember Ken's twinkle, and crinkly disappearing eyes so well as he always shared jokes, stories and coffee, (and maybe a bit of politics) when I was growing up nearby. I always left visits with Ken, smiling. Sincere condolences to the family.

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**Monica (Lowe) Paslawski** - April 11 at 03:29 PM

AR

“ We will always remember the many card games and sing songs. You are greatly missed. Dennis & Audrey

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**Audrey Rose** - April 11 at 11:31 AM

DG

“ We always enjoyed the dances with Ken & Esther.



Doug & Judy Green - April 10 at 04:59 PM

VK

“ Ester, Marilyn, Ann, Lori, and Janet, and Family's Condolences . May your memories keep him close Violet and Jerry Kautz

Violet & Jerry Kautz - April 10 at 07:46 AM

KC

“ A valued neighbour, a helping hand, a laugh and a twinkle in his eye. Esther, and family- he will be missed- I can hear those piano keys dancing, and the accordion in the background. Thank you Ken, for your friendship- Karen Crawford and Brian Morasch



Karen A Crawford - April 09 at 11:00 PM

SM

“ Sheila Macklin lit a candle in memory of Mr. Kenneth William Houlton



Sheila Macklin - April 09 at 01:37 PM

AW

“ Thinking of Esther and family at this difficult time.



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**Alana Williamson** - April 09 at 12:31 PM

BL

“ Barb Lyall lit a candle in memory of Mr. Kenneth William Houlton



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**Barb Lyall** - April 09 at 09:46 AM

DM

*What a lovely story of a man who lived his life to the fullest. Blessings to all his family.*

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**Donna Morrison** - April 11 at 03:34 PM