

Kenneth Talley Bio

Kenneth Talley was born to Oliver and Hazel Talley and raised in Arroyo Grande. He attended elementary, junior high and high school in Arroyo Grande. After graduating from Cal Poly and marrying Karen Foster, whom he met while at Cal Poly, he returned to the family farming business, Talley Farms, to work alongside his father, Oliver and his older brother, Don.

During those years Ken and Karen started a family and jumped into serving the community. Ken and Karen were co-founders of the South County Historical Society shortly before the United States celebrated its bicentennial in 1976. Ken served on the Arroyo Grande Chamber of Commerce board of directors and he was involved with many organizations that supported the youth in our area. He also was past president of the Arroyo Grande Lion's Club where he received Lion of the Year for a couple of years. Through the Lion's Club, Ken specifically worked with blind children in our area teaching them baseball. Ken loved working with youth with his own two children being a real priority for him in his life.

Ken's community service, however, was cut short when in 1975 he was diagnosed with cancer. After a yearlong battle with cancer he passed away at the age of 30 leaving behind Karen and their sons, Todd and Ryan, who were 5 and 4 years old at the time. Ken came to a saving faith in his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ during his year long battle with cancer and this commitment to Christian faith has been carried on by Karen, their two sons and their wives and multiple grandchildren.

Shortly after his death, the Arroyo Grande Chamber of Commerce approached Karen and asked if they could give out an award in honor of Ken that would go to a local community member who was dedicated to serving our area's youth just as Ken had done. The Talleys were honored and excited when the first Ken Talley Award was given to dear family friend, Vard Loomis, for his years of service to area youth. A few years later, the Talleys contributed to a fund that donates money each year to the non-profit of the Ken Talley Award winner's choosing.

It has been an honor to recognize so many in our community who are giving of themselves to support our local youth. The recipients of the Ken Talley Award are those who make Arroyo Grande the truly unique and vibrant place it is.