

KEN KUNKEN - BIOGRAPHY:

Ken Kunken broke his neck on October 31, 1970, while making a tackle during a college football game at Cornell University. The injury severed his spinal cord, leaving him almost totally paralyzed from the shoulders down.

Ken spent more than nine months in various hospitals and rehabilitation centers undergoing treatment. In 1971, while still a patient at the Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine in New York City, Ken testified before the United States Senate Health Subcommittee chaired by Senator Edward Kennedy.

Ken returned to Cornell where he completed his Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering and a Master of Arts degree in Education. He also earned a Master of Education degree in Psychology from Columbia University.

In 1977, Ken worked as a vocational/rehabilitation counselor for people with disabilities at Abilities Inc. in Albertson, New York. He became a nationally certified rehabilitation counselor and made numerous public presentations on non-discrimination, affirmative action, and employment of the disabled. Ken was named the Long Island Rehabilitation Association's "Rehabilitant of the Year."

In 1979, Ken was the subject of one of the Reverend Norman Vincent Peale's nationally syndicated radio broadcasts, "The American Character."

Ken earned a Juris Doctor degree in 1982 from Hofstra University's School of Law. He went to work as an assistant district attorney in Nassau County, Long Island, where he eventually became a Deputy Bureau Chief of the County Court Trial Bureau.

In 1996, Ken received the Honorable Thomas E. Ryan Jr. Award presented by the Court Officers Benevolent Association of Nassau County for outstanding and dedicated service as an assistant district attorney. In 1999, Ken was awarded the George M. Estabrook Distinguished Service Award presented by the Hofstra Alumni Association Inc.

In 2009, Ken became a member of the Board of Directors of Abilities Inc., and in 2017, he became a member of the Board of Directors for the parent company of Abilities Inc., the Viscardi Center.

Beginning in 2005, for eight consecutive years, The Ken Kunken Most Valuable Player Award was presented annually by The Adirondack Trust Allegiance Bowl in Saratoga Springs, New York, in recognition of Ken's personal accomplishments, contributions to

society, and extraordinary courage. In 2020 Ken was inducted into the Susan M. Daniels Disability Mentoring Hall of Fame, as a member of the class of 2019.

Ken retired in 2016, but has continued to work in a part-time capacity as a consultant to less-experienced attorneys in the Nassau County District Attorney's Office.

Ken has delivered motivational talks to a variety of groups and organizations.

Ken lives on Long Island with his wife Anna and their triplet sons: Joseph, James, and Timothy.