

Nomination

*2010 Pulitzer Prize
Life Time Achievement Special Award/Citation*

for

*Kenneth Wooden:
Author, Journalist, Television Producer, Child Advocate
1935 - Present*



Photo Credit: Michael Sinopoli, 2010

Nominated By

Rosemary Wooden Webb & Jennifer Wooden Mitchell

NOMINATION of Kenneth Wooden

2010 Pulitzer Prize Life Time Achievement Special Award/Citation

We, the undersigned, nominate Kenneth Wooden, former investigative reporter for NBC News, ABC News 20/20, special correspondent to the Chicago Sun-Times, free lance journalist, television producer and three time author, for the 2010 Pulitzer Prize Lifetime Achievement Award. This nomination covers 56 years of Wooden's professional career, which we document has made a significant cultural difference in the lives of children.

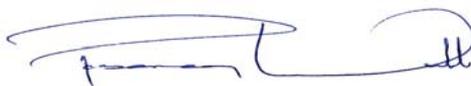
Our professional perspective of Kenneth Wooden is both unique and close-up. For the past twenty-five years, as Ken's colleagues and editors, we have witnessed first hand his ground breaking exposes on juvenile incarceration, the torture of children, institutional corruption and the silent underworld of child sexual abuse and exploitation in America. We've seen Ken's undying determination, his dreams, passion, struggle and ongoing sacrifices over the years to make neglected social issues affecting children and youth a priority in print and television news. We have witnessed how his original ideas for stories and educational programs have bloomed into powerful news with positive results, as documented in the following pages.

We are also the proud daughters of Ken Wooden and know first-hand the reality of those sacrifices, including endless days on the road, long hours on the phone and pounding away at his old Royal manual typewriter. We can still remember the endless clacking of those old steel typewriter keys in the late and early morning hours as he labored to perfect countless drafts on his research and edited by our Mom, for publication in books, syndicated news stories, op-ed articles and TV specials for local, national, and international broadcasts.

Due to his old fashioned muck-raking and exposes on unspeakable crimes against children in his ground breaking first book, Weeping in the Playtime of Others, as well as the exhaustive investigative reporting that followed, many formerly unreported social problems facing children are front and center issues today. At 75-years-old, Ken Wooden can take credit for helping to make our world a safer and better place for children and youth. We sincerely hope the full body of his work will be recognized and honored by the Pulitzer Committee, as he has honored his profession by illuminating the need for the basic Human Rights of Children.



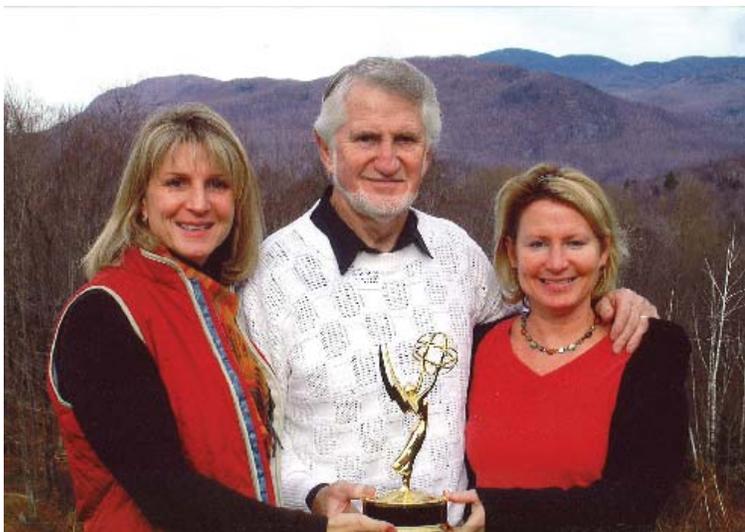
Jennifer Wooden Mitchell



Rosemary Wooden Webb



Rosemary, 18 and Jennifer, 16



Jennifer, Ken and Rosemary, 2006

PROLOGUE

by Kenneth Wooden

My brother, Carl, (whom everyone called Skip) and I were the two youngest in a family of four boys. Growing up in the little river town of Burlington, New Jersey during the Great Depression of the 1930's, Skip became my mentor and best friend. We shared the same bed in a small second story row house.

Many nights Skip would tell me endless stories about history and current events and ask me probing questions my teachers didn't bother to ask a kid whose IQ was 78. Questions like, "Who is our President?" "FDR." "Who is our Vice President?" "I don't know." "It's Harry Truman." Which President crossed the Delaware not far from our town? George Washington. "Where is Canada? England, Korea?" – "I don't know." "I'll show you on a world map." And on and on....Where is....? Who is?.....When?..... Why?....How?" Endless questions in that dark little bedroom.

Skip was my best teacher - save Miss Hazel Holland who painstakingly corrected an embarrassing and crippling speech impediment I suffered with until 7th Grade. Up until age 12, I was mimicked and bullied with the nickname, "too, four, tick, yake, yenny," (2468kenny) but I was never belittled like that by my brother.

Looking back with fond memories, on those early years, I remember my brother as a gifted teacher who had an intellectual presence and a very keen mind. On an unforgettable day that changed my life forever, Skip took me to the Burlington City Public Library. I was seven and Skip was ten as he led me up winding iron stairs to where old books designed for research purposes were kept from the general public. Books so old they could not be checked out. He pointed to a book entitled, The History of Burlington and informed me that our Dad's uncle, William E. Schermerhorn, had written that book on the shelf before my very eyes! I was mesmerized and couldn't take my eyes off it: Nor, could I forget that we had a family member who wrote a book, kept in a special place within our city's library, a historical landmark chartered by the King of England, in 1675.

Though I could barely read and never checked out any books, I would still visit the library and just stare at my grand uncle's published work. When I was older, serving newspapers, I'd glance at the old stone stairs leading up to the stately, white double doors of our library on Union Street and feel a sense of tremendous family pride. I still do. Fifty years later, I donated and placed on the shelves of that same library, three copies of my own published books.

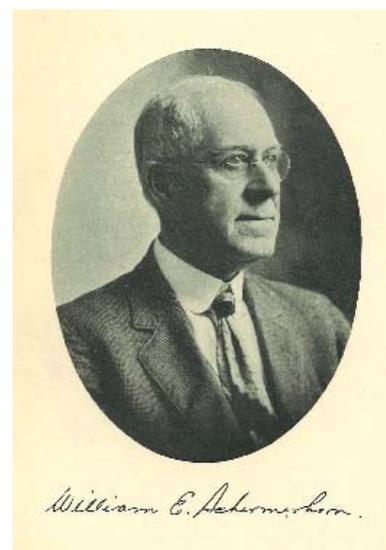
Excerpted from "Undying Determination – A Family Memoir" by Kenneth Wooden.



Brothers, Ken and Skip Wooden



Burlington, NJ City Public Library

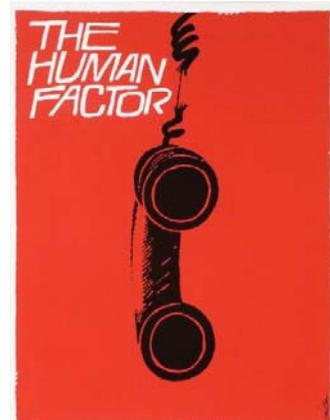


William E. Schermerhorn
Author, History of Burlington

INTRODUCTION:

American film director, Otto Preminger, poignantly summarized Kenneth Wooden's work.....

March 2, 1981



AN OTTO PREMINGER FILM

Dear Professor Kessler,

Few persons can effectively blend the talents of journalist, writer, lecturer, teacher and activist to produce needed social change, especially for children.

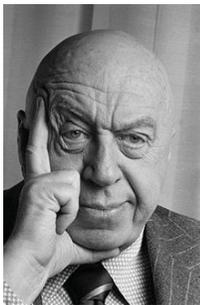
Kenneth Wooden has, over the years, used these multi-talents to make history in the uncharted waters of human rights for children.

Drawing on his past and sustained by the proud heritage of working class ancestors, the labor and writings of Kenneth Wooden will carry on, even as untold millions of children may never know that he touched their lives and made the world a better place in which they may grow and bloom.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Otto Preminger'.

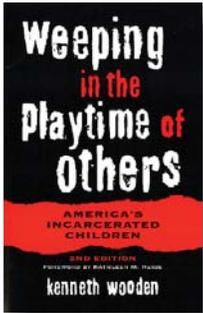
Otto Preminger



129 East 64th Street, New York City, NY 10021
Tel: (212) 535-6001 Telex: 220891

A NARRATIVE of KENNETH WOODEN's WORK: 1970 TO 2010

1971 –1978: Ken's investigative book; a prediction and request by The New York Times reporter, Barbara Campbell; 35 years later - a body of work still respected by his peers, college professors, and their students.



The New York Times, Op Ed by Kenneth Wooden

"For most inmates in New Jersey prisons, there is another prison - its walls more formidable, its confinement more restrictive, its sentence harsh and unjust. The walls are the printed word, the confinement is the inability to read, and the sentence has been imposed by a discriminating judge - American education."

Ken Wooden's first book, Weeping in the Playtime of Others grew out of his experience as a youth on the New Jersey Governor's Prison Reform Commission. He wrote of that experience in an op-ed article for the New York Times (1/22/72) entitled: "Jersey and the Prisoners of Ignorance." (#1) He documented how the vast majority of the prison population read at the third grade level. Knowing New Jersey's long history of political corruption, Ken was intrigued that of the many children placed in punitive juvenile facilities, reform schools and prisons, 90% had committed no criminal offenses.

Supported mainly by his wife, a full time registered nurse, and a one-time Ford Foundation travel and assistance grant, Ken Wooden spent four years traveling the country and investigating child care facilities in 32 states, seeking answers to a number of disturbing questions: One question, of paramount importance was directed to prominent psychiatrist, Dr. Karl Menninger, who responded:



THE MENNINGER FOUNDATION

A NON-PROFIT CENTER FOR TREATMENT AND PREVENTION, RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION IN PSYCHIATRY

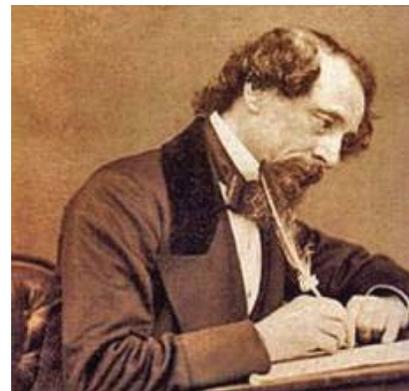
Topeka, Kansas 66601

"Do I have any thoughts on the effects of keeping young people in confinement (Solitary)...I think it's near absolute evil. Expose it if you know about it and don't let anyone say, as a German Citizen of Weimar did to us when we went into Buchenwald, that they didn't know what was going on in there. Keep in touch with me. I want to know what a man like you produces. I know it is going to be great." (#2)

Karl Menninger, M.D. The Menninger Foundation, Topeka, Kansas

Another famous person also documented the effects of solitary confinement on young children and teenagers:

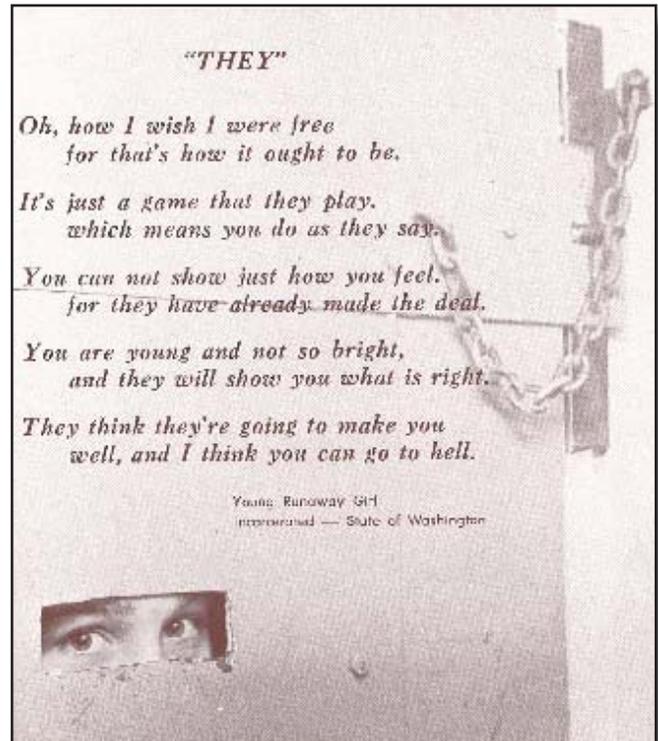
"I believe it, in its effects, to be cruel and wrong...I am persuaded that those who devised this system of prison discipline do not know what they are doing. I believe that very few men are capable of estimating the immense amount of torture and agony which this dreadful punishment...inflicts on sufferers. I hold that this slow and daily tampering with the mysteries of the brain, to be immeasurably worse than any torture of the body."



Charles Dickens

Yet, little if anything was known or done to stop this form of torture on young kids caught up in the child care industry, until Wooden's sweeping research was published. Then, Ken Wooden held the attention of the Congressional oversight Senate Sub-Committee on Education with this testimony:

"Charles Dickens and Dr. Menninger's outrage was found to be justified. There was nothing in my travels to equal the depressive, unhealthy, uncivilized aura of isolation. Here in stark solitude, the young lie (often in the fetal position) or lean against the walls covered with names, dates, and poetry of obscenities, expressing separate and collective rage against the darkness of the nights. But the most powerful, most glaring, most deeply etched in the walls of bricks and stones, most deeply carved in the wood and scratched on the metal is that four letter word we all know and use ourselves from time to time: HELP."
(#3)



Shortly thereafter, on June 1, 1976, New York Times reporter, Barbara Campbell, wrote to Dad's publisher, Howard McGraw, Jr. at McGraw-Hill (#4):

The New York Times
229 WEST 43 STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10036

June 1, 1976

Dear Mr. McGraw:

"I have just finished reading Kenneth Wooden's excellent book, Weeping in the Playtime of Others. I congratulate you, your staff and Mr. Wooden on contributing such a needed and accurate chronicle of the plight of incarcerated children.

"I am deeply involved here at the 'Times' in writing about the problems of children, and I was impressed by the investigative work done by Mr. Wooden in preparing his book. It reflected a deep commitment to exposing the widespread neglect and abuse of thousands of America's Children.

"I hope that Mr. Wooden's contribution does not go unrewarded. It would be quite appropriate, I believe, for his book to be submitted for consideration by the Pulitzer Prize Committee, because I believe his findings will have widespread ramifications."

Barbara Campbell, New York Times Reporter

cc: Frederick Hills, Editor General Books

Little did Times reporter, Barbara Campbell know the full scale of those ramifications, as our Father continued to dig deep into public records for another thirty-four years. Over that time period, he literally saved tax payers untold millions of dollars from corrupt officials in what Ken Wooden called the "Industrializing of Forgotten Children." He systematically compiled solid documentation on widespread kickbacks and sadistic crimes against children that would make Hollywood film writers look like they lacked creative imagination.

For example, the CHAMPUS (Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services) Scandal, as outlined in Chapter 16 of his book: "Due to the nature of these unbelievable and totally bizarre crimes against defenseless children, to say nothing of taxpayers footing the bill for tens of millions of dollars, our father upset his publisher by not waiting with this high profile story until the his book was printed and distributed. Instead, he enlisted the United States Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations * (5), to conduct hearings on his findings before Weeping in the Playtime of Others was published.

Jack Anderson's "Washington Merry-Go-Round" column in the Washington Post on 4-9-74, referred to this \$500 Million probe: "The importance of the study is indicated by the fact that Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash) and Charles H. Percy (R-III) have diverted senior investigators from their vital Fuel Crisis Study (Russian Wheat Deal) to look into CHAMPUS. On March 26, 1974, an investigator from the Senate Subcommittee on Investigations wrote of his appreciation for our father's hard work on the CHAMPUS Scandal:

United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
SENATE PERMANENT SUBCOMMITTEE
ON INVESTIGATIONS
(PURSUANT TO PRC. 1, 5, REG. 19, 20 CONGRESS)
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510
March 26, 1974

..."This case, thanks to you, has all the potential of a real 'barn-burner'—assuming we can run with it in the way we would like to. We are most thankful to you Ken, and hope that our potential will reflect one-half of the significance of your own input into this endeavor." (#6)

Mr. William M. Knauf

The Director of the Fund for Investigative Journalism wrote Ken this encouraging note: Walter Cronkite covered the CHAMPUS Scandal hearings on CBS News for an entire week.

THE FUND FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM, INC.
1346 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20036
—
TEL. (202) 462-1844

"Ken, I have followed the press accounts of CHAMPUS with much interest, knowing and respecting the fellow who is responsible for flogging the whole sordid business for public Scrutiny." (#7)

Mr. Howard Bray

As those national hearings began, Chairman Henry Jackson, Senator, (D-Wash) also acknowledged our father's crucial contribution.

United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON
INTERIOR AND INDIAN AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

December 20, 1973

"Let me acknowledge the generous assistance to the subcommittee in the area of CHAMPUS-supported psychiatric care for children of Kenneth Wooden...He initially supplied the subcommittee with detailed information and documentation which outlined the operation of unlicensed psychiatric care facilities for children, which were funded by CHAMPUS." (#8).

Senator Henry Jackson (D-Wash), Chairman

Columnist Colman McCarthy of The Washington Post also wrote of that effort: "It is hard to get reporters to examine the methods by which politicians, business interests, bureaucracies and the courts institutionalize America's hatred of children, but Kenneth Wooden is one exception." (#9)

2009

Pa. judges accused of jailing kids for cash

Judges allegedly took \$2.6 million in payoffs to put juveniles in lockups

2009

**Luzerne County,
Pa., Judges
Mark Ciavarella
and Michael T.
Conahan Plead
Guilty to Fraud
in Juvenile
Detention Scheme**



1977

".....Juevinle Incarceration is a billion dollar business, and they need lots of kids to make money."

Courier-Post Photos by Ron Karain

March 28, 2009

Despite Red Flags About Judges, a Kickback Scheme Flourished By Ian Urbina (#10)

The Chicago Sun-Times wrote: "Wooden has done extensive research. With smooth and professional writing, he never twists the facts or alters his prose to elicit mere shocks. He doesn't have to." (#11)

He discovered and reported on a vast "Interstate Commerce of Children," (Chapter 15) the practice of shipping status offenders (non-criminal youngsters) to costly but inhumane out-of-state treatment facilities. He gave shocking evidence that over 15,000 kids were sent to for-profit centers in 28 states that existed without licenses and/or had questionable credentials - but powerful political connections. Fifty-five (55) of those kids vanished, and there is no record what-so-ever of their fate. His indisputable reporting led to a major lawsuit in Federal Court, Gary W. vs. Louisiana, that resulted in higher standards for care of incarcerated youth, as well as heightened awareness and accountability.

Along the way he collected poetry like these lines from a “mentally retarded” girl locked away in the State of Kansas:

*“From the cities dark and gray
They send their children far away.”*

Weeping in the Playtime of Others broke new human rights ground and awareness in many other areas confronting incarcerated children:

- Chap 3: Initiation into Criminal Life: Status Offense Laws
- Chap 5: Life Imprisonment for Delinquents: Walls of Illiteracy and IQ Testing
- Chap 10: The Sexuality of Punishment: The Juvenile Female Offender
- Chap 11: The Old Solitary Confinement: Steel, Concrete and Obscenities
- Chap 12: The New Solitary Confinement: Thorazine to Electro-cell Implants
- Chap 13: Beyond the Free World: Suicide

Twenty-five years later, Ms. Laurie Avery of the Ohio State University Press would write of the 2nd Edition of Weeping in the Playtime of Others, “This critically-acclaimed work is still in demand by universities and colleges across the country. Time-tested, the book now stands alone as a classic within juvenile justice professions.”

So it was with Sofia Laurenzna of the Comanche Indian Tribe from Lawton, OK who wrote Ken on 12/28/82:



The following passage (Page 89) from Weeping... deeply touched Ms. Laurenzna:

“Countless thousands of children were locked up for running away from home, often from sexually abusive situations. However, within the Native American community, the children from reservations were placed in federally-supported Bureau of Indian Affairs Schools, and they reversed the trend. These kids were running away from institutional horror back to their homes.

Some didn't quite make it home... In early January of 1973, three Navajo boys ran from the Chuska Boarding School and were lost in the mountains of New Mexico. Four days later, rescuers found John Marvin High, 7, his brother Johnny Mike, 8, and Allison Bryant, 10, near the top of 8,795' Mt. Chuska Peak. Allison was lying on the younger High boy, trying to keep him warm with his body. A few days later, the children's frozen feet were amputated.

Another child, Eddie Pinto Sandoval, a seventh-grade student at the Dzilth-Na-O-Dithle Boarding School near Bloomfield, New Mexico was found frozen to death when he attempted to flee....”



Expert Congressional Testimony
by Kenneth Wooden
1973-2008



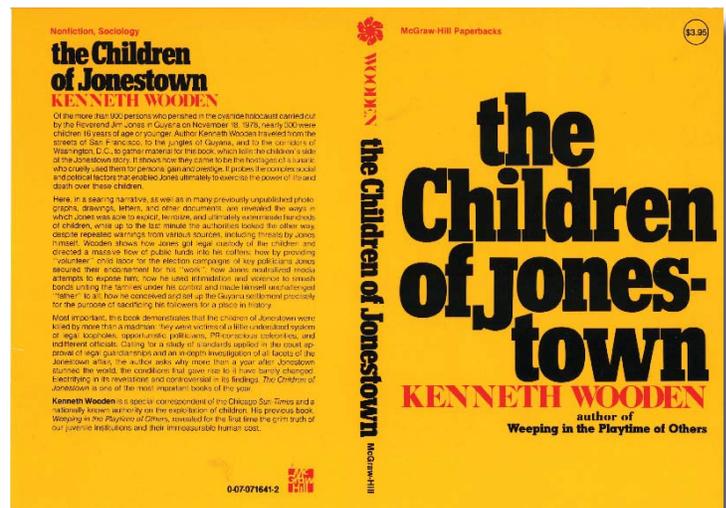
The impact of Weeping in the Playtime of Others did not go unnoticed in Washington, D. C., or in State Capitals. What was truly remarkable was the fact that Ken Wooden - who 24 years earlier, couldn't obtain work in a soap factory because he could not read or spell - was now being courted by the likes of Senators Eagleton, Kennedy, Bayh, Thurmond, DeConcini, Paula Hawkins and Reps., Peter Rondio, Dan Flood, Millicent Fenwick, Paul Simon, George Miller and Ron Dellums to provide expert testimony before fifteen separate congressional committees/sub-committees. (#13) and ten state legislative bodies. He was also invited to the White House by senior staff members serving three different Presidents, as well as by dozens of Governors throughout the nation.

1979-1989: Investigative reporting on the Jonestown, Guyana "suicides," the Children of Jonestown: A 7-part nationally syndicated series.

Seven million subscribers of the Reader's Digest Vote, including The U.S. Secret Service; National Recognition from the American Psychological Association.

276 children of Jonestown:
How they were
exploited, tortured
and murdered

Exclusive series now in the **CHICAGO Sun-Times**



Wooden's syndicated series (#14) was carried in the Philadelphia Bulletin, the Cleveland Press and many other major U.S. papers. Our Dad wrote his second investigative book, based on the physical, psychological and financial exploitation and murder of those 276 children. "The Children of Jonestown: Anatomy of a Cult," McGraw-Hill, is an account of how Jim Jones used children as hostages to exploit taxpayers, destroy biological family bonds, and impress politicians, from local political wards to the White House.



Ken documented how the Rev. Jim Jones and his lawyers corrupted California State Guardianship Laws in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Mendocino, Alameda, and Contra Costa Counties. In 1981, at the invitation of Los Angeles Superior Court, our father assisted legal staff in correcting legal loopholes in California's Guardianship Laws in an effort to protect future generations of California children.

First reaction to the Jonestown series came November 12, 1979 from U.S. Dept of State Attorney, Charles M. Wyman, who wrote to Sun Times publisher and editor, James Hogue:



United States Department of State
Foreign Service Institute
1496 Key Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22209

Dear Mr. Hogue:
"Much was written on Guyana and I've read most of it. Off all the articles I have read, I selected Mr. Wooden's articles to be the most accurate, most scholarly, and the most journalistically responsible; and I so advised others in the Department of State." (#15)

Charles M. Wyman, Esq.

Two years later on June 2, 1981, a Harvard Medical School Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Massachusetts General Hospital wrote:

HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY



Massachusetts General Hospital
Fruit Street, Boston, Mass. 02114

"In my opinion, Kenneth Wooden has displayed the intelligence, scholarly writing skills, and human sensitivity in the Children of Jonestown that deserve Recognition and reward not only because of his talents, but because humane and caring institutions must identify themselves with him."

*John C. Clark, Jr., M.D. (*16)*

Our father was at Dover Air Force base when the bodies of 276 murdered children from the Jonestown tragedy were returned to the United States. He shared with us a solemn pledge he made to those children: "I promised never in my lifetime to forget them." As his daughters and colleagues, we can attest that Ken Wooden has kept that promise, regardless of untold obstacles.



Photo Credit: Michael Abramson, 1979

Being a freelance reporter and writer most of his career, nothing was ever easy. Not having the legal umbrella protection of large news outlets, it was especially difficult when he had to face, alone, a major lawsuit for his investigation and congressional testimony of a private child care facility in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Dreske vs. Wooden (Case No.79-CT-046) would drag on for three long years. It nearly financially broke our parents, yet our Dad did not give up. He continued his research, breaking new stories about the crimes and serious challenges facing at-risk children. After Mr. Dreske's death, the lawsuit was dropped by his family.

Thanks to the kind and timely assistance of Senator Ted Kennedy and his brother Bobby's top investigator, Walter J. Sheridan, (#17) it was proven that our Dad was correct in all his reporting and testimony. The facility was discredited, and a consent decree was issued that would reduce the use of psychotropic drugs and eliminate use of a locked ward." Staff attorney, John Franz of the Youth Policy and Law Center in Madison Wisconsin wrote on 12/3/80:



Walter J. Sheridan, Senate Investigator

YOUTH POLICY AND LAW CENTER, INC.

December 3, 1980

30 West Mifflin Street, Room 304
Madison, Wisconsin 53703
(608) 283-5533

"Dear Mr. Wooden...In addition to the above consent decree,...the outcome of our lawsuit (against Eau Claire Academy) is that the state agency supervising child care facilities is preparing new legislation which will eliminate locked rooms and significantly limit the use of psychotropic medication..."

Thank you for your pioneering work in bringing change to alternative care facilities for children. We hope you will continue to bring the plight of children in institutions to public attention." (#18)

Mr. John Franz, Esq., Staff Attorney

While being hit with the Dreske law suit, and upon completion of his Children of Jonestown series for the Chicago Sun Times, Dad told us how he was confronted by a man who forced himself into the newsroom of the Chicago Sun Times and challenged Ken to look into the murder of children in our country - not just in Jonestown, Guyana. It got his attention.

As Ken traveled the country speaking at colleges and universities, he scoured the "clip files" of local newspapers in small towns and large cities. He interviewed local police, district attorneys and state police investigators. This research culminated in an April 8, 1981 Washington Star article, entitled: "Perils Stalk Children Beyond Atlanta." He wrote:

Perils Stalk Children Beyond Atlanta

"Atlanta and murdered children are now synonymous....But Atlanta is not unique. Across the nation, children, like debris washed upon the shores of the great sexual revolution of the 70's and 80's are being sexually assaulted, murdered, forgotten. Some are as young as 3, or 8, or 15. Unfortunately, the press, law enforcement officials and the general public are unaware of just how common the problem is in every part of the country, and many children die singly and obscurely, their silent deaths lost to the American conscience." (#19)

Shortly thereafter, the father of a murdered child wrote our Dad:

"You were the first voice to ring the alarm on the rising violent death of our children. Your research, writings, and training of police officers and anyone who would listen, was at first, the voice in the wilderness, the pioneer who would not give up." ~John Wash (future host of America's Most Wanted)

"No good idea ever dies." ~General Hugh Shelton

The highly emotional issue of missing and murdered children was beginning to make headlines across the country, leaving local police and distraught parents with limited means, save posting flyers of young victims on telephone poles. (It was against the law to post missing children posters in post offices, but the FBI's Ten Most Wanted flyers were allowed!) Ken Wooden put down his pen and found his creative Irish activist roots. He came up with an idea to create a computer program prototype that would include a shared database, streamlining communication between law enforcement around the country, and helping to locate missing kids and identify murdered kids across America.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, 1983

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

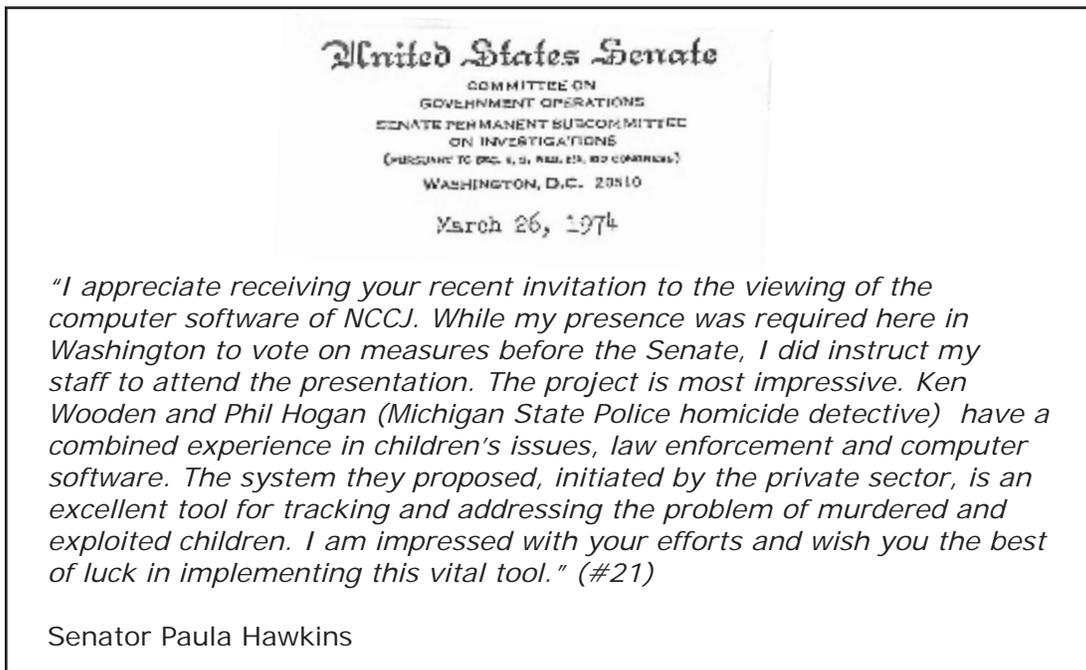
SEARCH FOR KIDS MAY BE AIDED BY COMPUTERS (#20) by Andy Pasztor
Computers May Help Police in Investigations of Missing Children

A front page Wall Street Journal article quoted our Dad on those ideas and concepts: *"We use computers to land airplanes, trace stolen cars and even find missing stocks....why not apply the same principles to match up child homicides around the country? The evidence is all out there, just waiting to be raked in once police abandon their Stone Age methods." The Journal reporter documented our Dad's foresight when he cited our father's prediction: "Ken Wooden compares his idea to a modern, up-to-the-minute electronic bulletin board... it will allow police to discard outdated techniques such as circulating fliers with pictures of missing youngsters or rummaging through huge batches of index cards containing information obtained from witnesses. As the system becomes more sophisticated, it could expand to include voice patterns, dental records and even wrist prints, which like fingerprints are used for identification..."*



...Mr. Wooden compares his idea to a "modern, up-to-the-minute electronic bulletin board." He says it will allow police to discard outdated techniques such as circulating fliers with pictures of missing youngsters or rummaging through huge batches of index cards containing information from witnesses.

Twenty-seven years ago, Ken Wooden was on to something. The Wall Street Journal also quoted federal officials in the Justice Department, "There isn't any question that somebody needs to plug the information gap....police are desperate to find better ways to track people who are murdering or stealing kids as they move across the country." Our father pushed himself into high level meetings with the FBI and leading homicide detectives from around the country. He attempted to work with the FBI in Washington to further his progressive ideas about using the computer to help solve crimes, especially those against children. Dad said law enforcement treated him like a leper, just another "goddamn reporter" at heart (true) and they didn't trust him or his ideas. One United States Senator, who revealed to the country that she was molested as a child, did believe in his powerful new idea. On December 8, 1973, Senator Paula Hawkins (R-FL) wrote to George Gallup of the national Gallup Poll - a major supporter of Ken Wooden's efforts:



Still the national, state, and local law enforcement community would have nothing to do with Ken Wooden's ideas. Unphased, our father knew about roadblocks and disappointments, but much more importantly, he knew first-hand that child sex predators were making great advances in using the new computer age to expand their criminal sexual appetites. Dad enrolled in two computer courses but dropped both, because he didn't have a clue what they were talking about. Perhaps his early learning disabilities were holding him back, but he didn't stop.

Resourceful as ever, he obtained by way of Seattle District Court Judge R. Joseph Wesley, the computer-savvy services of an 18 year old convicted high school hacker named Michael Princeton Wilkerson. Wilkerson had hacked into Boeing Aircraft's computers as well as a new computer software company called Microsoft. He was facing a two-year jail sentence. Judge Wesley, who had read our father's book, court-ordered Michael Wilkerson to work 200 community hours with Ken Wooden, assisting him in his work protecting children. (#22)



Ken was wise enough to know Michael had friends – about 300 in fact, teenage hackers around the world. Two of them – one from Philadelphia and another from London - agreed to come to Vermont with Michael to assist our Dad. In our little Vermont office, those three kids had a ball creating new software to challenge the threats of cyber child molesters around the world. With their youthful and creative expertise, a new world of information opened up to our hound dog reporter Dad who had an excellent scent for major emerging national stories.

Five years later, greatly upset by the merchandising of pictures of missing children; our Dad wrote an opposing view for USA Today entitled, “Hype and Publicity are Harming Children.” (January 23, 1986) (#23)



OPINION
The Debate: MISSING CHILDREN
“Hype and publicity are harming children”
by Kenneth Wooden

“Because this issue has been so inflated (missing children), the media has now begun to cast serious doubts on its legitimacy. And an army of child-saving charlatans is marching over the newly turned soil of parental fears with an array of unlimited, quick-and-easy solutions....Promoting the publication of pictures of missing children on milk cartons, posters and grocery bags only gives the media a sharp knife to discredit and government an excuse to be irresponsible.”

Back then, many child advocates were not happy with that article, but our dad couldn't have cared less. He wasn't about to be snookered by an emotional issue that was making basic truth a victim too. This issue would surface again in future years when the issue of Internet predators became blown out of proportion with the popular TV program, “To Catch a Predator.”

Politicians quickly passed legislation without knowing the true reality of the problem. Ken Wooden was the lone voice arguing that the issue of cyber predators was being overstated. His instincts were again right on target. A January 14, 2009 article in The New York Times reported on a Harvard University study, “Report Calls Online Threats to Children Overblown.” A high-profile task force concluded that the sexual solicitation of children online is not a significant problem, despite years of parental anxieties.

Shortly thereafter, Ken Wooden was nominated for an Honorary Doctorate from his Alma Mater, Glassboro State College. Numerous journalists, educators, and film directors who had worked with and admired Ken's work, wrote letters of support, some of which we include with this Life-Time Achievement Nomination. (#24) Tom Wicker of the New York Times, Bob Greene of Newsday, Gil Spencer of the Philadelphia Daily News, John Seigenthaler of the Tennessean, Bob Clampitt of Children's Express, James Polk of NBC News, Studs Terkel, Otto Preminger and Arthur Krim from the film world, George Gallup, Jr. of the Gallup Poll, and many others. We are pleased to say, Glassboro State College did indeed award Kenneth Wooden the Doctorate, and of all those kind and gracious letters of support, the following two stand out:



NBC News

A Division of
National Broadcasting Company, Inc.

4001 Pabst Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20015 202-636-4200

March 26, 1981

"I invited Ken as a panelist at the national conference of Investigative Reporters and Editors. On a program crowded with Pulitzer Prize winners and prominent journalists such as Mike Wallace, Ken's presentation on what reporters might do to inquire into abuses and injustices toward children was among the most astute, inspiring and practical commentaries I have had the privilege to hear."

James Polk, Chairman, Investigative Reporters and Editors, Inc
3/26/81 (#25)



STUDS TERKEL

(312) 761-7125

"...I think Ken Wooden is the most perceptive and compassionate chroniclers of the dilemma of the troubled young in our society. He impressed me in his personal odyssey and his reflection as much as any guest I'd ever had on my radio programs."

Studs Terkel 3/4/81, WFMT, Chicago 's Fine Arts Station/98.7 – (#26)

The personal odyssey Studs Terkel wrote of had many more decades yet to play out. It was at this point in his career that our Dad conceived an idea to prevent crimes against children. Being a free lance writer most of his career, Ken had to be resourceful and up front on the source of his funding for prolonged periods of time. As mentioned, in addition to his loyal wife, some foundations and a few individuals did help from time to time. However, the real life saver were the well over 150 universities and colleges that invited him to speak for a fee and travel expenses. That was our Father's lifeline of support for more than 20 years.

The timing could not have more perfect, yet it was a paradox. While speaking at small colleges like Slippery Rock, Amarillo, Modesto and Davidson, as well as major universities like Oklahoma Michigan, Princeton, Harvard, Notre Dame, Penn State, Univ. of Pittsburgh and Yale, he made time to interview incarcerated child rapists and murderers and serial rapists of children in nearby jails and prisons. This came about when a Chief of Police who heard our Dad lecture at Indiana State University invited him to examine confiscated child porn from a recent arrest stored in his evidence room. Therein, Ken came across a pedophile newsletter called PIE – Pedophile Information Exchange – with a column entitled, "The Lure of the Month."

What got his absolute attention was how these organized pedophiles were informing others that soap crayons were "...a sure fire way to get kids to undress and then they are there for the pickings." He had just a few days prior purchased soap crayons so my sisters and I could have fun during bath time.... Alone in that small Indiana police station's evidence room, the direction of our father's reporting - and his life - would change forever. He would blend investigative reporting with advocacy, without shame or professional hesitation.

In spring, 1986, the American Psychological Association, Division of Child, Youth, and Family Services, presented Kenneth Wooden its "Distinguished Contributions to the Case of Child Advocacy" award.



AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

The APA's Director, Brian L. Wilcox, Ph.D. wrote: "As Director of Child, Youth and Family Policy for the American Psychological Association, I was extremely pleased to learn that the APA Division of Child, Youth, and Family Services will be presenting you with the Distinguished Contributions to Child Advocacy Award in August. Over the years, I have read your works and found them inspiring, thought- provoking, occasionally depressing, but always insightful and well-researched." (*27)

At this point of our narrative on our Dad's accomplishments, we ask the reader to ponder:

With all the law enforcement personnel in this country, from local policemen to the FBI and the U.S. Secret Service - all armed with billion dollar budgets annually; as well as professors and academic leaders in the study and research of Criminal Law and Justice - Not one of them ever considered it worthwhile to spend time with sexual offenders to learn how they prey on defenseless youngsters. Not until our Father did his research on "Child Lures."

It took our father, Kenneth Wooden, armed only with a reporter's notebook and a caring and inquisitive mind, to live off the land, with no steady income or legal protection to accomplish what the entire national and international law enforcement community had neglected to do for generations. The same is true of our educational system that was still locked into teaching our kids "Don't talk to Strangers." Meanwhile a diverse group of sex offenders were using very effective lures to groom/blindside children and teens into becoming victims. Ken Wooden was out to change that. It would take four years to compile his data research on those lures and to develop a counter strategy of personal safety prevention, again on his own dime. And he did it so well that even the U.S. Department of State wanted to use his findings to protect government employees preparing for assignment abroad.



United States Department of State

Foreign Service Institute

1400 Key Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22209

11/28/90

"I learned about your program...while watching the Today Show on NBC...Evaluations show that this material was well received and we plan to incorporate it more fully into next summer's program."

Judy Ikels, Director, Security Overseas Briefing Center
U.S. Department of State, Washington, D. C. (#28)

Wooden did not rest on success or what appeared to be success. He kept working, digging, writing, and was always on the cutting edge of breaking news with his research, like the article he did for the Cleveland Plain Dealer 8/25/87: "Molested Children Put at Risk of AIDS." (#29)

WEDSDAY, AUGUST 25 1987

THE PLAIN DEALER

Molested children put at risk of AIDS

KENNETH WOODEN

Within the medical profession, despite its riveted concern for the AIDS epidemic, there is a strange conspiracy of silence toward the molestation of children and its causal relationship to AIDS....

It is one thing to marshall national resources to

fight the AIDS epidemic. It is quite another thing to be negligent in the basic safety of 63 million children who will not be protected merely by the thinness of a condom and its related mentality.

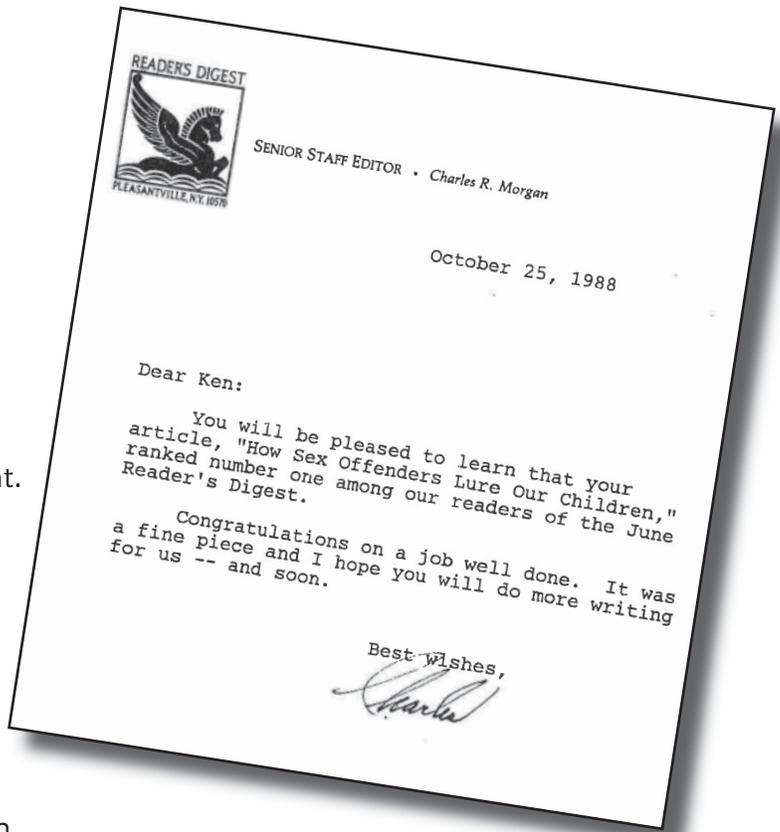
Kenneth Wooden in an investigative reporter and TV producer who has written two books on injustices suffered by children.



HOW SEX OFFENDERS LURE OUR CHILDREN

Another important article by Ken during that period of time was one that reached millions of readers entitled, "How Sex Offenders Lure Our Children." 6/1/88 (#30) The reaction to its effect on readers is documented on right. (#31):

By the mid 1980's, in a desire to reach more educators and parents with his now proven approach to child personal safety, Wooden decided to combine the power of printed word with the far-reaching power of television. From the time of his first published article in the New York Times in 1972, Wooden made all his basic research on crimes against children and youth available to NBC News Today Show, CBS Sixty Minutes, and ABC News 20/20 – first as a guest, then a paid consultant, and finally as an investigative reporter working under contract.



60 MINUTES



Sixty Minutes aired four different segments on major national scandals originally uncovered by our father in Weeping in the Playtime of Others, : 1.) Nobody Coddled Bobby - Anatomy of a Suicide; 2.) The Interstate Commerce of Children; 3.) Kiddie Porn; and 4.) Brother Lester Roloff.

All too often, individual credit for breaking stories on network TV is lost and denied to the foot soldiers of news reporting who do the hard day-to-day ground work. The powerful segment, Kiddie Porn, which aired on Sixty Minutes on May 17, 1977, came about as a result of our Father travelling the country and helping to uncover the awful truth about child pornography in America. The impetus for that segment was a letter he received on 10/6/76 from the Rev. Bud Vermilye, Director of the Boys Farm Inc. in Mont Eagle, Tennessee, "Supported Entirely by Private Donation," who wrote: "Dear Mr. Wooden, Just finished your book "Weeping"....."Would like to put you on my mailing list as we go thought a law struggle with the State of Tennessee for Ricky Southerland?" Sincerely, Bud Vermilye

Our father would later discover that the Rev. Vermilye was running a boys sex ring for wealthy business types who worked for major American businesses. His investigation with the help of New Orleans DA Harry Conkkin would uncover a national cobweb of organized pedophiles who were setting up fake schools and churches to get to young children, especially boys. To this day, our Dad still has in his files the outstanding arrest warrants of four multi-millionaires who were involved in that scandal he under covered. They fled the country with their assets and moved to Europe. Those warrants are included with this nomination (David Elliott Houstle, #78-0248 US Dist Court/Md; Richard C. Jacobs Case#259222 State of La.; Dyer Grossman, Case #CRI8008, State of Mi and Francis Shelden from Michigan. (#32)





Ken produced an additional four segments from his extensive research and writings with ABC News 20/20. On March 10, 1984, 20/20 broadcast "The Lures of Death," a story incorporating the bulk of our father's research on the actual lures used by sexual predators. Three months later, he helped produce, "Murderers: Can They Be Caught?" (#33), giving 20/20 its first ever #1 national rating.

During that period, Ken was lecturing at Iowa State University on his investigative research of sexual crimes against children. After his presentation, a man shared this very personal story with Ken: *"When I was a young boy in New York City, I was forced into child prostitution and was abused many times by an organized crime kingpin - until the man was murdered. Years later, my children would say to me, 'Pop, you never talk about your childhood.'" The man sharing his story looked at Ken Wooden, tears covering his face and cried out in anguish, "How could I talk to my kids about my childhood? I never had one!"* How many victims did that man represent? Our father pressed on with his important work to prevent these very crimes.

In 1993, Ken Wooden moved the country when he appeared on Oprah.

From: VAUGHN 9/27/93 5:05PM (866 bytes)
 To mailing list: #HARPO CHICAGO
 Subject: Outside telephone lines today



-----Message Contents-----

Reg. Ken Wooden/Child Lures Prevention appearance on the Oprah Winfrey Show, 9/27/93

For your information - today's TOWS were so good, **the entire country called** to get the number for the video and ask for a copy of the show. There were over 1000 attempts at approximately 4:23. All boards were working diligently (even I took some calls) to try to alleviate tying up all possible lines into Harpo. **We were unable to keep up with the awesome amount of calls coming in to free lines going out.** (#34)

That Oprah response confirmed more than ever that television could indeed increase the exposure and national impact of Dad's prevention education efforts. As the public grew more aware of his Child Lures Prevention Parent Guide, requests came from all corners of the country, including from the United States Secret Service (#35):

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
 UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE
 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20223
 OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR



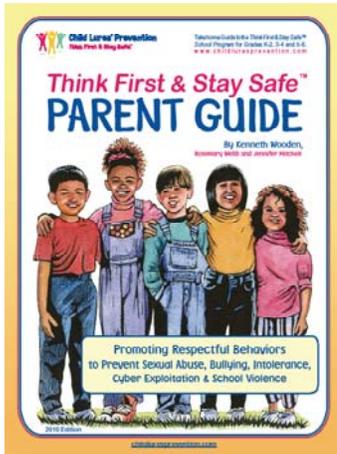
June 5, 1984

Dear Mr. Wooden,

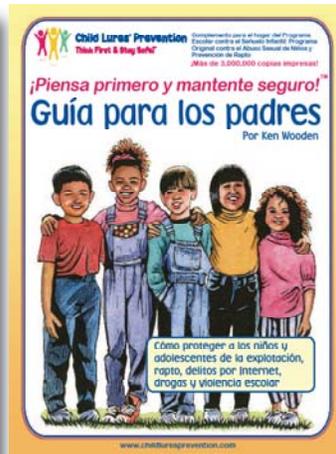
I recently read your publication, Child Lures: A Guide to Prevent Abduction (#36), and found it to be extremely informative. As I am certain many others would greatly benefit from your guide, I would like to request your permission to reprint it for inclusion in one of our in-house publications."

Robert R. Snow, Assistant to the Director
 Department of the Treasury, United States Secret Service

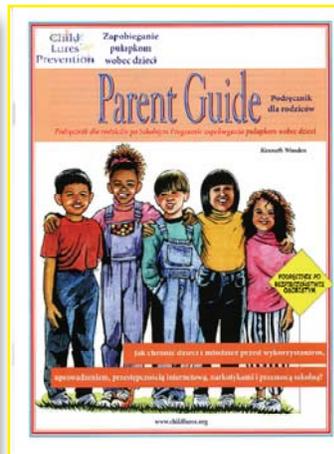
Child Lures Prevention's Think First & Stay Safe PARENT GUIDE
1983-2010



English



Spanish



Polish



Japanese

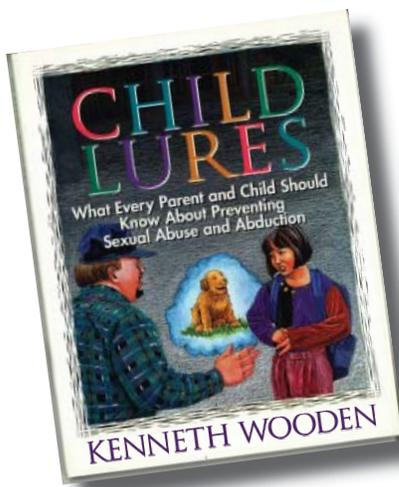
STETSON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LAW

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Brandi Palmer

Ken Wooden to Speak to Stetson Law Students on Personal Safety

“Earlier in the year, I was really bothered by all the child abduction and abuse issues in central Florida,” said Katherine Hurst, a member of Stetson’s Family Law Society. “I remembered that **when I was a little girl, Ken Wooden came to my elementary school and did a Child Lures presentation. I still remember his name, his program and I really believe it has kept me safe over the years.**” (#37)



Helping Kids Read

From: Linda Marshall (Teacher, Buffalo, NY)
To: Ken Wooden
Subj: Your book, Child Lures

Dear Ken,
You’re not going to believe this!! I had another breakthrough with my students today with your book.

...One boy in particular has been failing all subjects and I couldn’t get him motivated at all. I couldn’t get him to read or write anything, but somehow **your book and its topic got this kid to sit down on his own and read the book.** He started reading some pages to me and was excited while reading. Even though he struggled with some words, he was still reading. I couldn’t believe my eyes!! **What a miracle.** The students were asking me where to get the book.

One boy opened up and told me he was abused and abducted at 3 years old. Another boy and girl told me they were almost abducted. Another boy told me a molester lives near the school. Many kids opened up and some had similar situations as described in your book. (#38)

1990–2005: “Never Forget”

In Ken’s long quest for children’s justice, some issues are filed as **“Never Forget”**:

Trips back to his “Never Forget” file resulted in projects such as a first-time national survey addressing teen suicides, as well as translating his parent guide into Braille to better safeguard blind children.



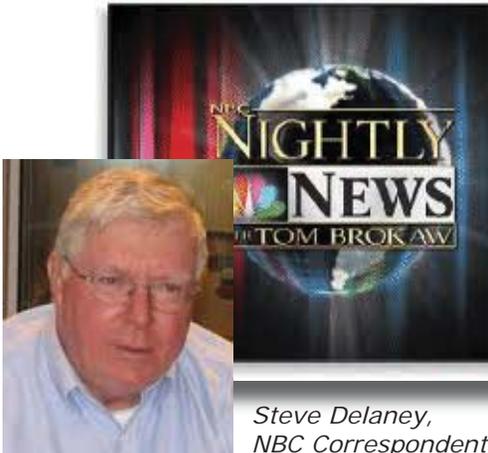
Never forgetting the untold number of teen suicides he wrote about in his first book, our Dad assisted with a CBS “60 Minutes” segment concerning the suicide of Bobby Nester at Camp Hill, Pennsylvania. He then assisted the Gallup Organization in developing and conducting a national survey on this silently sad and tragic issue in January of 1991 entitled, “Teenage Suicide Study in the United States.” (#39)



The New York
Institute for
Special Education

*Founded in 1831 as The New York Institute
for the Education of the Blind*

Ken never forgot the pleas of parents. For years, he attempted to get the National Association of the Blind to donate a Braille translation of his Think First & Stay Safe Parent Guide, because of the countless blind parents and parents of blind children who wrote him concerning the increased sexual abuse risk factors for the blind. Eventually, Dad teamed up with the New York Institute of Special Education, releasing his copyright at no cost so that his research finding and proven prevention strategies would be in available in Braille to assist the most vulnerable of children from being sexual exploited. (#40)



*Steve Delaney,
NBC Correspondent*

Ken never forgot those who betrayed their trusted position of power. It was Ken Wooden who pieced together scattered lawsuits against schools and individuals for the sex abuse of children in their care. His research on out-of-court settlements (#41a) and related short articles drew a pattern of widespread abuse in two institutions, which were engaged in covering up the number and degree of sex abuse for years. One was Boy Scouts of America and the other Institution was the Roman Catholic Church. In 1987, Ken brought his research on the Roman Catholic Church to the attention of NBC News correspondent, Steve Delaney. Together, they broke the first story on child sexual abuse within the church on NBC Evening News, revealing the \$750 million the church had already paid out in out-of-court settlements. It was a story that would not go away. Nor would the future court-ordered massive settlements against Boy Scouts of America.

Development of the Child Lures Television News Series:

Educating one television market at a time about child sexual abuse prevention.



Child Lures Television News Series

During this period of Ken’s professional life, he also developed and produced the award-winning Child Lures Television News Series.

While appearing on numerous national TV talk and news programs to discuss child personal safety, Ken financed with his own limited resources the Child Lures Prevention TV News Series and related Televised Town Hall Meeting in an effort to “broaden his classroom.” (#416)

Ken's ten part TV News Series and ten additional TV Public Service spots were initially sold for a fee to local TV Stations, to cover the major production cost of the segments. Once those costs were covered, Wooden provided the TV News Series free of charge to TV stations in more than 70 ADI markets across the US and Canada. (#42) Without inflating the numbers, the Child Lures Prevention TV News Series reached over 50 million viewers with personal safety information from 1990 to the present. A Nashville, Tennessee news director and a reporter from CFCF-TV in Montreal, Canada gave an early assessment on the News Series' impact in their viewing areas:



"The Child Lures News Series is one of the most successful campaigns this station has ever produced. Even initial critics came around to say it was a needed service, beneficial to the community, and good quality broadcasting. Rarely do we ever get a real measurement of news impact in a community. This time we did -- and it was great!"

~Bill Lord, News Director
WKRN-TV, Nashville, TN

"In the nine years that I have been a reporter, I have never experienced public reaction to a story that comes anywhere close to the response we have received on this project...we have received more than five hundred letters and two thousand requests for the "Child Lures Prevention Parent Guide"...Mike Boone, a TV critic for the Montreal Gazette wrote: "... absolutely essential viewing for concerned parents, and vulnerable youngsters." (#43)

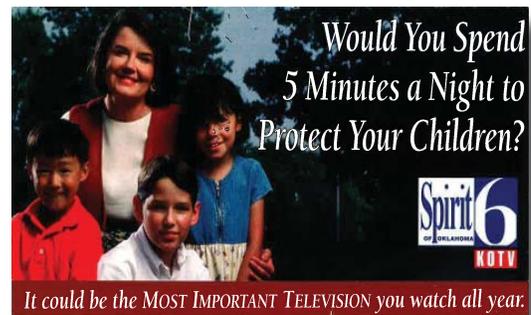
~Sandi Krawchenko, Reporter/Producer;
CFCF-TV, Montreal, Canada



Child Lures...the most important television you'll ever watch with your children.

The Child Lures TV News Series and its related televised Town Hall Meetings would go on to win many impressive awards, including an Emmy Award. (#44)

Better than all the plaques and award statues were comments like these, from stations like WTEN-TV, in Albany and KXAN-TV 36 in Austin, Texas:



"As a journalist and mother, I was fascinated by how much I learned. The reaction of educators, parents, and even hardboiled TV folks at the station (WTEN-TV Albany, N.Y.) were stopped in their tracks-and hungered for more...And the best part about the Child Lures TV Series is that the information will never become outdated."

~Elisa Streeter, Reporter, WTEN-TV, Albany (#45)

"In November 1992, KXAN News 36 first aired the Child Lures Prevention reports, and now, in 1995, we are still receiving phone calls from viewers requesting more information on this very important and life-affecting program. We consider this to be remarkable. Never before has one issue made such an impact on a community."

~Jane Wallace, General Manager, KXAN-TV (#46)



Reaction from Educators:



Vermont-NEA has endorsed Child Lures. We consider Child Lures to be an important broadcast service to Vermont communities, a service which could save young lives. (#47)

California Teacher's Association's State Council of Education approved endorsement of Child Lures TV New Series...Teachers were pleased with the program and felt it definitely fills a need that has not been sufficiently addressed...one member asked when it would be available for every classroom in the state. (#48)



2005-2010 – Safeguarding older children: From College Students to U.S. Troops to Lures used by Terrorists



College Kids Easy Prey For Abuctors

New York, Sept. 27, 2006

In the summer of 2006, CBS News contacted Ken Wooden to conduct an experiment. They wanted to know if our Dad, using the Lures he discovered being used on young children, would be effective in luring college students. The two locations were Ivy League Princeton University and the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City. Ken not only lured countless students into his van at these two locations, but in some cases, drove away with the student. With one student's permission, Wooden duct taped his hands together. Of all the students approached, one in four fell for the lures. For a visual account visit: www.childluresprevention.com and www.teenluresprevention.com. In lieu of payment, Ken requested CBS's permission to freely share the footage with colleges and universities across America. *CBS News Press Release 9/27/06 (#49)

During the same period the TV News Series was being broadcast across the US and Canada, it was also aired in every U.S Army hospital by the U.S. Army Health Command. In addition, at the request of Mr. Rich Crower of Fort Meade, MD, our father developed - at no cost to the American Taxpayer - a personal safety program for our troops (www.avoidthecon.us) which he has presented on his own time and nickel to countless military bases and at conferences in the states, Europe and Asia (Okinawa).

As Ken stated at the 2002 Special Operations Medical Conference, *"The power of the lure gives the extremist the advantage of being able to cross almost any barrier that safeguards human life. In any assassination - be it king, despot, tycoon, or an American President - a lure is used to successfully move the assailant closer to his prey. All that is needed is a critical moment to seduce and disarm the best protection and make the most powerful naked in death."*

Award Bestowed Upon Kenneth Wooden from all four branches of the United States Armed Forces



"Thank God we have someone like you on the front lines of the war that is being waged against our children." (#50)

Major General Mitchell H. Stevenson, US Army

An outstanding evaluation by more than 2,500 troops was also submitted to Ken, along with these words from a Sergeant and a Colonel, both with years of combat experience:

"...Very knowledgeable and very informative. Mr. Wooden's subject matter is thoroughly researched. Great! Outstanding...Your training will save lives. Feel free to use me as a reference. I am happy to share my professional assessment of your AV-CON Training." (#51)

Our father turned 75 on October 18th and has had his recent share of medical challenges, including advanced prostate cancer (twice!), three stents for 99% blocked arteries, as well as severe pain due to a herniated disc in his neck. He beat all three and is currently conducting in-depth interviews with a young Florida inmate who murdered two college kids in cold blood, (#52) because he “wanted to kill someone who had something to live for.” Prior to the murder, this young man was the longest serving youth in the Florida juvenile justice system.

In addition, our father is writing and documenting that Childhood Sexual Exploitation is a core social problem (#53) that impacts education and health reform. His goal is for national educational policy makers to acknowledge and address this critical issue that previous generations failed to act upon. (“WE DO BESHRI IT,” which is Yiddish for “Don’t talk about it, don’t temp it and it will go away.”)

Because crimes against children are not going away, Ken Wooden doesn’t slow down in seeking answers to complex problems and social issues about kids and youth. We might add that he gets frustrated with his computer when it crashes or the Internet service is down. At those times, he remarks with strong, colorful language about the computer age and ends with: “My old Royal typewriter never broke down.” We can only add, neither did Ken Wooden.

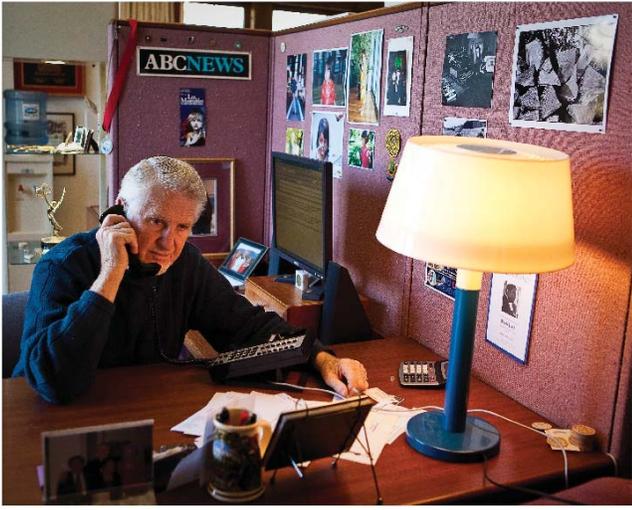


Photo Credit: Michael Sinopoli, 2010



Photo Credit: Michael Sinopoli, 2010

Summary: A Review of Responsible Reporting for Four Decades and Counting

Ken Wooden was the first author/journalist/activist who consistently carried out his investigative research and reporting, with total emphasis on the Basic Human Rights of Children.

- Wooden was the first to question, document, expose and challenge the financial purpose and structure of the child care industry, which incarcerated and kept under lock and key children and youth. 90% of these youngsters had committed no crimes, yet were treated like hardened criminals, in punitive and inhuman conditions;
- After Ken exposed conditions in juvenile detention centers, reform schools, prisons, jails and residential treatment centers, he motivated Congress to look into those institutions and the rights of children where cruel and unusual punishment was common fare for young inmates;
- Wooden tapped into and exposed the corruption and abuses of federal and state tax monies, the sole purpose and lifeline of the institutions that were warehousing young wards of the state for profits and jobs;
- Wooden revealed the same in human conditions and sources of public tax dollars that insured and entrapped children and their families into abusive and deadly religious cults;.

26 He kept at it over the years, despite lack of steady income, legal protection, or retirement benefits.

- Wooden alone exposed how sexual predators groom, share techniques and stalk victims: from pre-school to college, to our young recruits at military bases here and abroad. He returned to those same educational institutions and gave the gift of prevention to our young children and older youth;
- He used the power of the written word and far reaching power of TV to help educate the children and parents of America.
- 27 years ago he created an early prototype of instant computerized information gathering to replace age old methods of slowly gathering paper data on crimes against children.
- He kept his foot on the pedal in Washington, D. C. and numerous state capitols for those kids who had no paid lobbyists on K Street. He was and still is their unknown and unpaid lobbyist, working toward a better world for all children.
- He maintained a focus on reporting for kids – clear and steady and has never given up to this day;
- Lastly, Ken Wooden has been the keeper of the private poetry of kids who dared to secretly hand him their hand written poetic indictments of how they were being mistreated in countless institutions he visited across America.

We leave the collective poems of those children as the last word in our nomination of Kenneth Wooden for a Life Time Achievement Special Award/Citation. We thank you for reading this nomination for our father, Ken Wooden.

THE POEMS - 1975 to the present:

I live in a house called torture and pain
 It's made of materials called sorrow and shame.
 It's a lonely place in which to dwell,
 There's horrid room there and they call it hell.
 From the faucets run tears that I've cried all these
 years,
 And it's hated by my heart made of stone.
 But the worse part of it is that I'll die in this place
 And when I die, I'll die all alone.

*~Author unknown.
 Copy of Poem sent to a young Lawyer, Steve Bercu,
 who won girl's release and over 800 other children in
 the State of Texas because they had no legal
 representation when sentenced.*

"From the cities dark and gray
 They send their children far away."

~A "mentally retard" girl – State of Kansas

"Dandelions are so like myself..
 Just an ugly weed nobody wants."

*~A young Runaway Girl from Sex Abuse at home
 to a youth Isolation unit in Texas*

"I walked down a very lonely street
 There was no one there – Just
 Stillness in the lonely street
 The Wind whistled there.
 I was lost – I know."

*~David Chaikin, Age 15
 Murdered by Rev. Jim Jones
 With 275 other children in Guyana*

There is a crack in the Earth and I'll have fall in.
 Down in the darkness where I have never been.
 People are looking, starting at me;
 I lie here and wonder what do they see?
 Shall I be here forever – I can not climb back?
 Rotting and dying in this horrible crack;
 Am I alive or am I dead.
 Oh God, who will save me from this crack in my
 head?

~Sixteen year-old female – Illinois Institution.

Childhood

As the drying carcass
Bears its teeth into the sand
I, too, bear mine into your arm.
And beg....to be more part of you.
As the dried carcass shatters into dust
So would the image of myself,
While in my heart
Bees flutter round spring flowers
.....unrozened violins....
What are these walls....with walls within?

~ Chicano girl, Court Ordered into a private facility in Arizona

For me life turned out so damned bad.....
And it's made me so sad.
People say I'm cute and kind,
But they don't know what on my mind.
Why is it that they're so blind?
Tell me, God: What am I looking for?
Is it the way of life, the door?
Or is it trouble for evermore?
Would it help if I pray,
And to mean every word I say?
My life was wasted the day I was born,
My life, my heart, it was all torn.
Why did everything go wrong?
Was it because I had no Mom?....

~ Author – A young boy, Arizona Youth Center

Two Poems written by a courageous youth who testified in a Federal Court against the Texas Youth Council for beating of children:

The Man

Hey, hey check out the man
He'll do it to you if ain't got no stand
Hey, hey check out the man
He'll kick your ass
If he get the chance.
The man have no regrets
The man has no sorrow
If he don't get you today
He will get your tomorrow....

Gatesville

I don't know but I have been told
When you run from Gatesville
You are subject to come back
Without your soul.
Be it true or be it not
They'll never beat me up
And leave me to rot.
When you run be slick
Be fast
Cause if they catch you
That's your ass.

Loneliness

Be alone by yourself.
With no one with you.
Having no one liking you,
Liking someone, But not
Getting it returned
Not knowing why someone hates you
And calls you names.

~ Author – a young girl – Vermont Institution

They

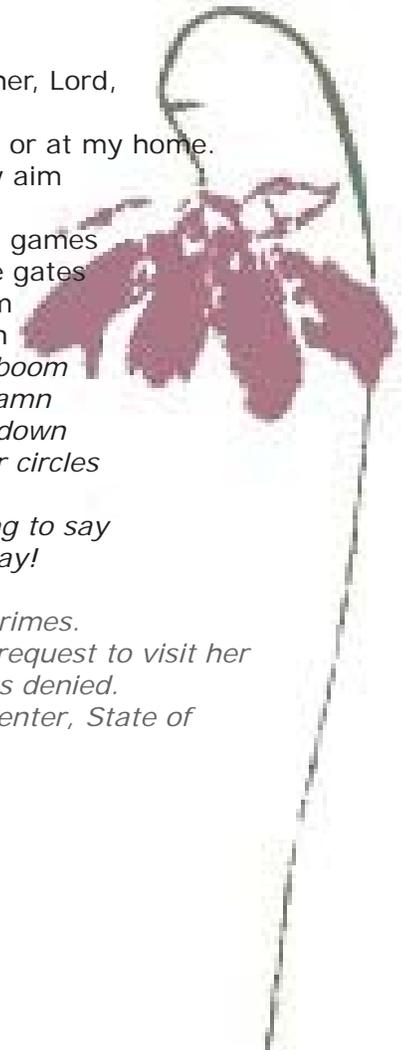
Oh, how I wish I were free
For that's how it ought to be.
It's just a game that they play.
Which means you do as they say.
You can not show just how you feel.
For they have already made the deal.
You are young not so bright,
And they will show you what is right.
They think they're going to make you
Well, and I think you can go to hell.

~ Runway Girl, Incarcerate – State of Wasington

Christmas Eve 1972

As I set at Maple Lane
On Christmas Eve
I'm thinking about my aim,
To leave.
As long as I'm here
And we're fighting together, Lord,
I'm not alone
I can't very well be near, or at my home.
You have blocked out my aim
And made me wait.
Until I play your damned games
I'm not getting out those gates
Well send me to my room
And strip it while you can
As your going to hear a boom
Because I don't give a damn
Handcuffs may hold me down
You may take me in your circles
Round and round
But let me have one thing to say
You'll never keep me away!

*~ Author committed no crimes.
After eight months. Her request to visit her
Mother for Christmas was denied.
Maple Lane Treatment Center, State of
Washington.*



FOOTNOTE SOURCES

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You Are A Marvel

Each second we live is a new and unique moment of the universe, a moment that will never be again . . .

And what do we teach our children?

We teach them that two and two make four,
and that Paris is the capital of France.

When will we also teach them what they are?

We should say to each of them:

Do you know what you are?

You are a marvel. You are unique.

In all the years that have passed,
there has never been another child like you.

Your legs, your arms, your clever fingers, the way you move.

You may become a Shakespeare, a Michaelangelo, a Beethoven.

You have the capacity for anything. Yes, you are a marvel.

And when you grow up, can you then harm another who is,
like you, a marvel?

You must work - we must all work –
to make the world worthy of its children.

~Pablo Casals

"How wonderful it is that nobody needs to wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."

Anne Frank,
Teenage Diarist and Holocaust Victim (1929-1945)