

Don D. McChesney

September 4, 1942 — November 6, 2025

Munden

Don Dwayne McChesney was born on September 4, 1942, to Chester A. and Nellie C. (Hogle) McChesney in Belleville, Kansas. They first lived west of Narka, moving in March 1943 to the Hanel farm north of Munden.

Don attended Rose Creek Center country school followed by Munden schools, where he graduated in 1960 as valedictorian. Following high school, Don attended and graduated from Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia in 1964 with a Bachelor's degree in Secondary Education. During those years, Don was on the Dean's Honor roll four times.

In April 1964, he met Karol Gatewood. They were married in January 1966, while teaching in Deerfield, Kansas. Don went on to teach and coach basketball and track for 22 years at Osborne, Courtland, North Central, and the last 8 years of his teaching career were spent as the K-12 Principal at Hillcrest Cuba. While teaching, and with Karol's help, Don earned his Master's degree from Fort Hays State University in 1974 and was recognized as one of the many Outstanding Secondary Educators of America. Don farmed with his father Chet while teaching, and he continued to farm until his retirement. Don also drove a school bus for USD 429/107 from 2001 to 2013.

1970 saw Don as one of the organizers of the Republic County ARC (special needs children). Along the way, he enrolled in courses from Kansas State University, Kansas University, and was selected by the Kansas American Legion Auxiliary to attend Lehigh University.

Don and Karol purchased, and eventually moved to, the Floyd Handley farm north of Munden. The couple was blessed with two sons that they have always been very proud of, Marc Robert born in December 1968, and John William in June 1977.

Through all of these years of teaching and farming, Don was a big fan and participant of auto racing. Don's parents took him to the races when he was very young, and his uncles Jack and Jim McChesney continued the trend. During the late 1950's and into the 1960's, he worked on and traveled some with the Goodrich race team of Belleville. In 1965, he bought and drove his first race car after racing go-karts. His first race car cost \$200, and included one spare tire and the trailer. He continued to drive various cars from jalopies to sprint cars until 1977. He helped to organize the Jayhusker TQ Racing Organization in 1980, and served as its President until 1992. From 1988 – 1996, Don and son Marc raced sprint cars, and son John raced a go-kart along the way.

In 1997, Don became involved with the High Banks Hall of Fame & National Midget Auto Racing Museum in Belleville. He was selected for induction into the HBHoF in 2003, and has been a member to this day. He was also the President and/or Vice President for 10 years, and then Curator of the HBHoF & NMARM Museum from 2014 until present. Further, he participated in Kansas Antique Racers Vintage Exhibitions, and along with sons Marc and John, and friend Mike Thompson, were the backbone of the family vintage operation.

Don passed away at his home on November 6, 2025, at the age of 83 years, 2 months, and 2 days.

He was preceded in death by his parents. He is survived by his wife Karol of the home, son Marc and

his wife Clara of Oklahoma City, son John and his wife April of Belleville, grandsons Maxwell and Jack McChesney, bonus grandchildren James Doyle, MacKenna Doyle Rundus, Shanna Doyle, Owen Doyle, Brody Knox, and Jacie Knox. He is also survived by his sister Sally Splichal and her husband Phil of Munden, nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family and many, MANY friends.

Don was proud of his family, his coaching accomplishments (230+ wins in basketball), his attendance at all of the open wheel races at the Belleville High Banks since 1951, and equally important, the friends he leaves behind, and those who went before him, all whom probably knew that one never had to wonder where Don stood on most issues.

A Celebration of Don's life will be held on Friday, November 14, 2025, at 10:30 a.m., at the Central Christian Church in Belleville.

Visitation will be Thursday, November 13th, from 9:00 am – 8:00 pm, with the family greeting friends from 6pm – 8pm, at Tibbetts-Fischer Funeral Home in Belleville.

Memorials are requested to the High Banks Hall of Fame Museum, and may be mailed to Tibbetts-Fischer Funeral Home, PO Box 566, Belleville, Kansas, 66935.

Tibbetts-Fischer Funeral Home is assisting the McChesney family with these arrangements,
www.tibbettsfischerfuneralhome.com