Kent loved to tell stories. He was masterful at it. He'd even tell you how masterful he was if you gave him the chance.
He would tell stories about TV.
About his current students.
And definitely about his former ones.
About politics.
About his co-workers and friends.
About his friends that he would go to Cardinals games with.
About his kids and wife.
And especially about his grandchildren.
And while this story may not have had the ending we were wishing for, I hope each of you will think about your own story of Kent tonight.
In February, our Dad was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. He kept it very private, with only a handful of colleagues and immediate family members knowing. He didn't want the well-meaning but endless questions to come his way about how he was feeling.
The past few weeks, his health took a bad turn and he was admitted to the UMC hospital a week ago.
He passed away peacefully late Wednesday night, surrounded by his family.
It's hard. Very hard. Especially for our family.
But it's also a time of tremendous reflection and wonderful memories.
I hope that over the next few weeks and months, each of you will recall your favorite Kent Collins moment.
There will be a time in the near future that we will announce a funeral/memorial. But as he joked with me in March, "If I die in February, May, July, or November…nobody in TV is gonna' show up at my funeral."
Think happy thoughts.
Without a doubt, his entire family is tonight.
Below is our Dad's final story that he wanted us to email to family and friends, and to post on Facebook upon his passing...
If you'd like to mark his passing, he requested donations to the J-School scholarship in his name:
Kent Collins Student Enhancement Fund
https://mizzougivedirect.missouri.edu/Item.aspx?item_id=525

Our father is gone. Kent Stowe Collins died July 13, 2022.

Dad often said, “Journalism is my religion." He learned this religion by "osmosis at the dinner table.” Both his parents were newspaper journalists. And they seemed modestly proud that one of their children caught the excitement of it and understood the worth of it. Dad loved the Missouri School of Journalism — and the places it took him, like newsrooms and college classrooms in Russia, China, Europe, the Middle East, and all across the U.S.A. His favorite newsrooms were KOMU-TV and KBIA-FM at the Journalism School. And he found great satisfaction encouraging the students.
Dad came to believe with all the fervor of a zealot that good journalism made for good government, which in turn contributed to a good society, which made for a happy and healthy citizenry.
But if journalism was his religion, family was his greatest pleasure. Family made his good spirit. Family was the peace in his heart. Over the years, he kept — and treasured — files of notes and letters, anniversaries and events that contributed to his rich family life. We will be finding those things in the weeks to come. And each one will remind us that he was a usually good and always a well-meaning brother, father and husband. He came to marriage at a young age, but came to be a good husband later, as he understood the rich personality and wholesome spirit of his wife, Bee.

Our father figured out some time ago that Heaven is not a place, or something mystical. Heaven for Kent Collins is in our hearts — and in your hearts. He left here hoping that in our hearts and yours we will all recall the spirit and the lessons of our time with him.

From his wife Bee, his three children and their spouses: Justin & Lisa, Jeremy & Ashley, and Summer & Nick, and his grandchildren, Lucy, Kate, Austin & Evie