



## Naaman Elwood Nickell

November 15, 1933 - April 29, 2022

Naaman Elwood Nickell, retired Arizona Republic Business Columnist, died peacefully at Northern Cochise Community Hospital in Willcox, AZ on April 29, 2022 at the age of 88.

Naaman was born on November 15, 1933 in Webbville, KY to Irene (Thompson) and Naaman Elwood Nickell. Naaman's father died in a tragic accident before Naaman was born, and Naaman became his namesake.

He started school at age four in Webbville, graduated from Louisa High School in Louisa, KY and received his degree in journalism from the University of Missouri.

Naaman had a passion for small-town sports, having traveled the back roads of Eastern Kentucky with his high school teammates to play against other small-town teams.

He was attracted to the small towns in West Texas where Friday Night Lights ruled the communities that spread outward toward El Paso.

He was sports editor at the Odessa American in Odessa, TX and worked at the San Angelo Standard Times in San Angelo, TX twice in sports writing and editing capacities.

Naaman met the love of his life, Anna Murphy Kinsey, in the Standard Times newsroom where she also worked during the second time he was employed there. When Naaman married Anna in 1968 in Lamesa, TX, Naaman, an only child, became big brother to Anna's three younger sisters.

After Anna and Naaman married, they moved to Houston, TX where Naaman worked at the Houston Post. Their daughters Dawn and Amber were born in Houston.

In 1972, the family moved to Tucson, AZ during a time when a group of reporters ventured from Texas westward to Arizona. Naaman took a sports writing position at the Tucson Citizen. In the seventies, newsrooms began giving up typewriters and adapting to new computer technology. Naaman got the job of convincing the reporters that computers were better than typewriters. It was a hard sell for the old timers in the newsroom.

Fatherhood transformed Naaman from a stereotypical sportswriter into a hands-on dad. In the seventies at Dietz Elementary School in Tucson, AZ, he became a parent helper and took great delight both in sitting on the small classroom chairs to help students with art projects and in being the only daddy who came to school as a helper.

With his new-found computer skills, Naaman discovered that he had a real knack for working with computers, and he began to concentrate on business reporting.

Naaman took a job with the Arizona Republic in Phoenix, AZ in 1980. Business writing continued to be his focus, and eventually Naaman became business columnist for the paper. In addition to the Arizona Republic, he also worked for the Phoenix Business Journal. After retirement, he was a

consultant for the Greater Phoenix Economic Council.

In 2001, Naaman and Anna discovered the village of Sunsites, a small development of homes built around a golf course and with views of Chiricahua National Monument and the Cochise Stronghold in the southeastern corner of Arizona. The self-sufficient village welcomed volunteers, and Naaman and Anna began an active retirement lifestyle in the community. Naaman worked at the Sunsites Community Library until he decided to retire again at age 80.

Their love of the little village and of the history of the area led them to be two of the writers for the book Pearce and Sunsites, and they collaborated on Arizona Sunsites: An Anthology.

Naaman was a mentor and role model for countless reporters who worked with him. He will be remembered for his work ethic, his attention to detail, his sharp wit, and his disarming ability to separate the wheat from the chaff during discussions. His love of country music and corny jokes reflected his Appalachian roots.

When reminiscing about his life, Naaman proudly remembered his Air Force years as a photo interpretation specialist during the U-2 era.

For the past three years, Naaman courageously battled complications after three hip surgeries and the devastating diagnosis of throat and neck cancer. He was a hero to his doctors and to all who knew him. The family is grateful for the loving care provided by Charles Wm. Leighton Jr. Hospice and the Northern Cochise Community Hospital in Willcox, AZ. He will be buried in the historic Old Pearce Cemetery.

A remembrance of Naaman's life will be held during regular services at The

Church of Sunsites where Naaman was a trustee and a charter member on Sunday, June 12, 2022, at 11:00 a.m.

Naaman is survived by his wife of 54 years, Anna, and by his daughters Dawn Nickell (Dean Kratzenberg) of Dillon, CO and Amber Nickell of Atlanta, GA.

Honor Naaman with donations to The Church at Sunsites, PO Box 727, Pearce, AZ 85625 or through the Northern Cochise Fund, You can mail a donation made payable to the Arizona Community Foundation of Cochise with the Northern Cochise Fund on the memo line of your check to:

ACF of Cochise

400 W. Fry Blvd., Ste. 6

Sierra Vista, AZ 85635

# Cemetery Details

## Pearce Cemetery

Memorial Drive  
Pearce, AZ 85625

# Previous Events

## Remembrance

JUN 12. 11:00 AM (MT)

The Church at Sunsites  
995 N. Treasure Road  
Pearce/Sunsites, AZ 85625

# Tribute Wall



“ *Naaman Elwood Nickell*

January 30, 2023 at 12:50 AM



“ *I am saddened to learn about Naaman's death. I worked with him for about two years at the Citizen. In fact, I drove him to the airport after his interview. I thought we were lucky to have a veteran of the Houston Post join our sports department. Naaman was a deft copy editor who helped me sharpen my writing skills. I loved his sense of humor and laugh. My condolences to the family.*

**Steve Kelley** - May 12, 2022 at 08:54 PM



“ *Anna, Jo Anne and I are so sorry to hear about Naaman, and are sending our sincerest condolences. I didn't spend a lot of time with him, but he became a significant role model for me in our similar careers. During family reunions I had several interesting discussions with him about our work in the journalism field. I am grateful for his expertise he so willingly shared with me. My advisor at the North Texas Journalism School was a good friend of Naaman also. They both helped with the forming my career choices. Sending love and prayers to you and family. Danny*

**Dan Biser** - May 07, 2022 at 08:58 PM

DK

“ I met Naaman when I first started working at Junior Achievement of Arizona in 1989. He wrote many times about our organization when with The Arizona Republic. He was especially kind to a newby just getting her feet wet in the business world. My thoughts and prayers are with Anna and family.

*Dena Kidd still with Jr. Achievement.*

dena kidd - May 06, 2022 at 07:10 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Naaman Elwood Nickell.



May 05, 2022 at 01:16 PM

KK

“ Dear Anna,  
I so enjoyed knowing Naaman. I have thought of you two often. He was so intelligent and had a fun personality. Just an all around great guy.  
Kathy Klump

Kathy Klump - May 03, 2022 at 01:33 PM

DL

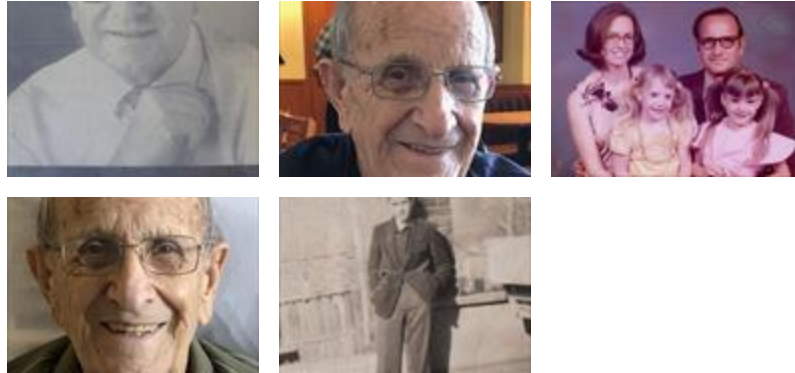
“ Dakota Levine lit a candle in memory of Naaman Elwood Nickell



Dakota Levine - May 03, 2022 at 11:17 AM

WC

“ 6 files added to the album Memories Album



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**Westlawn Chapel** - May 02, 2022 at 03:29 PM

CW

“ *Naaman was such a kind and generous man. Rest in peace Naaman.*

*- Chet Williams*

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**Chet Williams** - May 01, 2022 at 07:28 PM

BB

“ *I am sorry, Anna. I remember Alex and I socializing with you and Naaman. Alex died unexpectedly in 2003, so I know your loss. Betty Beard*

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**Betty Beard** - April 30, 2022 at 11:12 PM

AW

“ *Such an amazing, kind and helpful to all. I know you all will miss Naaman, as will all who met him. Prayers and hugs to your family.*

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**Ainslee Wittig** - April 30, 2022 at 09:03 PM

MM

“ *Rest in eternal peace Naaman.*



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**Melissa Mayer** - April 30, 2022 at 06:23 PM

JL

“ *Jessica Lincoln lit a candle in memory of Naaman Elwood Nickell*



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**Jessica Lincoln** - April 30, 2022 at 12:06 PM

JL

“ *My dear Anna, let your heart know that Naaman, is with our lord. may he rest in peace. Jessica Lincoln.*

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**Jessica Lincoln** - April 30, 2022 at 12:06 PM

JW

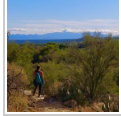
*Oh SO sorry, Anna, to hear about Naaman--he put up a good fight to stay with you as long as he could. You both worked so hard to support our community. I send my love and deepest sympathy to you. Jill Williams*

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**Jill Williams** - April 30, 2022 at 02:57 PM

JC

*Anna Murphy, I am so sorry about the loss of Naaman. Prayers for you and the family. God bless you. Jane Shipley Co*

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**Jane Cox** - May 02, 2022 at 03:12 PM



*Our sincere sympathy, Anna and daughters, on the loss of beloved Naaman. Thinking of you -- The Northern Cochise Fund Steering Committee*

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**Angie Laskarides** - May 24, 2022 at 05:23 PM