

Do you have some exciting news (engagements, births, marriages, etc.) that you would like to share with your extended NTA family? If so, simply e-mail your information and a high-res photo (if applicable) to familynews@NTAstaff.com.

REMEMBERING AKINS

NTA lost a long-time supporter and friend when LeRoy B. Akins Jr., 66, died Aug. 10 at his home. A funeral mass was held in Glens Falls, New York. Akins spent more than 30 years in the tourism industry, starting out in 1974 with the Warren County (New York) Tourism Department. He took a position as the Olympic tourism coordinator in 1979, just before the 1980 Winter Olympics were held in Lake Placid. For the remainder of the 1980s and '90s, Akins worked in various positions from New York City to Albany for the state's tourism and economic development department.

After 25 years with the state's tourism program, he retired and began his pursuit as a mayoral candidate for the City of Glens Falls. He won that 2005 election, and was serving as the city's mayor when he died.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to the family at 26 W. Notre Dame St., Glens Falls, NY 12801-2818.

BIRTHS

Congratulations to Susan Damon, director of sales with Flemming Tours, and husband, Greg, who welcomed Daniel Lee into their arms Aug. 19 in St. Louis. Daniel came into the world weighing 8 lbs. and 2 oz. Nick is the proud big brother.



The late LeRoy Akins spent 25 years with New York state's tourism program before he retired and became mayor of Glens Falls. Susan Damon of Flemming Tours recently gave birth to Daniel, who is being held by older brother, Nick.



RETIREMENTS

Ed Kramer with Kramer FunTours, based in Portage, Wisconsin, retired Aug. 4 after 33 years in the travel and tourism business. Ed started the tour business in 1975 with a four-day motorcoach tour to Nashville as a radio promotion on WPDR-WDDC, which he owned at the time. He quickly realized there was a niche in the area and started tours to Washington, D.C., New England, Florida and other destinations.

During the early years, when he offered eight to 12 tours a year, a full-service travel agency made the arrangements based on a rough itinerary provided by Ed who would then promote and escort the tours. In 1983, Ed began doing tours via Amtrak, which soon became his signature.

He offered Amtrak tours all over the United States and Canada until his retirement. Ed said those tours were especially successful because he "learned quickly how to work with Amtrak people and found them great to work with."

Ed joined NTA in late 1999 and said, "I can't say enough about how important our membership in NTA was to me and to our business for contacts, for reliability of supplier and DMO members and, of course, for the friendships with good people that were developed."

With one full-time employee and several part-timers, Kramer FunTours arranged and operated eight Amtrak tours, 12 to 15 overnight motorcoach tours in the Midwest and about 30 one-day tours annually. ■



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