



Tom J. Keith

November 12, 1938 - June 23, 2020

Tom J. Keith, 81 of Bentonville, Arkansas died of a brief illness at his home on Tuesday, June 23, 2020. He was born November 12, 1938 in Dutch Creek, Arkansas in Yell County as the son of Elder Wesley J. Keith and V. Elaine (Stanberry) Keith. He was preceded in death by his parents.

Tom leaves behind his loving wife of 25 years Henri Kemper Keith and Izzie, his precious dog, of the home; daughter Lynn E. Keith and partner Cathi McMahan of Morrilton; son Sean T. Keith and wife Amy of Rogers; and daughter Jacqueline E. Bridgers and husband Sam of Canton, North Carolina; stepdaughters Linda Owings Beatty and husband Denver of Richmond, Texas and Beth Owings Repke and husband John of Whitefish, Montana. He leaves eight grandchildren, Patrick and Mallory Keith of Rogers, Chrystian and Zoey Bridgers of Canton, North Carolina, Danielle and Forrest Beatty of Richmond, Texas and Rachel, Meredith, and Jack Repke of Whitefish, Montana.

He is survived by one sister LaRhoda Murphy of Napa, California, one brother W. Daryl Keith (Katie) of Searcy, Arkansas, and aunt, Evie Keith Clemons of Waldron, Arkansas. He will be missed by a large circle of adoring nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Tom started his career as a newspaper reporter following his honorable discharge from the United States Marine Corps. At the age of 28 he enrolled as a student at the University of Arkansas while working at the Northwest Arkansas Times and graduated with his Juris Doctorate in 1973. He moved to Rogers to start his law practice. He was Benton County's first Public Defender. In 1982 he was elected Municipal Judge of Rogers and subsequently elected as a Circuit Judge where he served as Senior Circuit Judge until his retirement in 2008.

His younger years were spent on the softball field either pitching, umpiring/announcing, and coaching local youth. You could find him every Monday night at his bowling league. He loved the law and ensuring that justice was found in front of him- either through fair and appropriate punishment or compassion of which he gave out a healthy dose of both. He was well respected and held in high esteem by hundreds of attorneys across the State. He was a member of the Tuesday Noon Men's Bible Study Group and Keypoint Church of Bentonville, Arkansas

A family graveside service will be held this Saturday under the direction of Stockdale-

Moody Funeral Services and a celebration of life is being planned for the future. Donations in lieu of flowers can be made to the Arkansas Bar Foundation in Little Rock.

Cemetery

Little Flock Cemetery

Little Flock, AR, 72756

Comments



“ Henri, I was so sorry to hear of Tom's passing. Although we had not seen each other a lot in the last few years I always considered him a close friend. We became friends in the mid 1980's when we were both on the Democratic Central Committee and I was always amazed at his legal mind while at the same time calm understanding of how the law affected real people. Above all he was a kind soul and I will miss not being able to talk to him. Elvis Moody

Elvis Moody - June 29 at 04:07 PM



“ Dearest Henri, Sean and entire Keith family.
My heart is heavy with thoughts of you all going through the loss of our dear husband, father, family member and great friend to so many. I know we can't live forever, but in his case you never thought about him ever being GONE! He was always full of stories and words of knowledge to our questions. On the other end of the phone line I could always imagine that “grin” when he answered instead of Terri. I could never say anything at first. So many memories.

Dearest Henri, you will have the hardest time of us all. I wish I could take the pain and loneliness away but I can't. You will be in my prayers and my thoughts as you continue your life's journey without your dear sweetheart.
I considered him my friend, my mentor and MY JUDGE! One day we will all rejoice together. What a beautiful time to look forward too.

I consider it a privilege to have known and loved him!!!
Ladeana Hency—

Ladeana Hency - June 29 at 03:08 AM



“ Thank you for your wonderful thoughts and prayers and we appreciate your appreciation for caring and loving Dad!

Thank you for your memories of him you're memories are truly precious to my family!

Lynn Keith

Lynn - July 09 at 11:26 AM



“ Our condolences to Henri and the Keith Family. I worked with Judge Keith on a couple of occasions and knew him personally in some political situations...great to work with...very straightforward.
Duane and Mary Neal

Duane & Mary Neal - June 27 at 12:34 PM



“ Our condolences to the Keith family on the loss of a great man. We will remember him for his sincerity and service to the community.
Maritza and Robert Klock

Maritza and Robert Klock - June 27 at 11:50 AM



“ Henri, Sean, Lynn

The three of you who I have been honored to meet over the years. I want to write to extend my sincere sadness to you and your extended family. Henri, we now have fond memories of our past dinners we shared with the Karren's and especially the one when Tom invited us to Mcdonalds for a dessert after dinner and continued with the many stories in his life. And I have to let you know how privileged I was to take over the Baillif position after Chuck left. That was a huge highlight in my career working close with Terri, Kathryn and Sandra behind the front line of the court room. My most funny moment was my first Civil trial (of which I learned later he hated) he was taking a "Judicial" break as I opened his private door I asked him if he needed a few minutes to make his decision and his response, Hell No, I did that an hour and a half ago. I cracked up after that. We sure had a great relationship and I sure enjoyed serving lunch with a one burner cook top which forced my ideas what to serve but it seemed we all enjoyed it. Barbara and I both want to say we will think of the two of you often. With Love, Scott

Scott Turner - June 27 at 09:22 AM



“ Judge Keith was special man. I was proud to have been his Court Bailiff for three years. I will always cherish our court days in Carroll County and our breakfast get togethers at the Blue Plate across from the Eureka Courthouse. Having known and worked for the man will always be a blessed time in my life. I will always remember him as a good friend, a great boss, and an honest and fair judge. Tom Fortune

Tom Fortune - June 26 at 02:46 PM



“ I DID NOT KNOW MR. KEITH WELL, BUT HE WAS ALWAYS CORDIAL AND FRIENDLY WHEN I WAS IN HIS PRESENCE. PROUD THAT HE WAS A FORMER MARINE. SEMPER FI !
GENE BLAND

GENE BLAND - June 26 at 02:17 PM



“ Dan and Janet Ford purchased the Sacred Duty Spray for the family of Tom J. Keith.



Dan and Janet Ford - June 26 at 02:17 PM

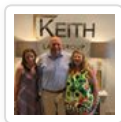


“ Judge Keith, known to me in law school as Tommy Keith, was truly one of the best men I have ever known. His obituary gets it right. He was filled with compassion, but he had the strength to enforce the law — and he had the deep intellect possessed by the most revered judges in our judicial system.

David Hargis

Little Rock

David Hargis - June 26 at 09:39 AM



“ Thank you David for your kind words and you have known him almost as long as I have and I remember you as one of his closed friends in law school! There are no words to express how much I will miss him and all the way he raised me to think and care about people. I'm very proud and thankful to have been his daughter. Thank you for being one of his oldest friends!

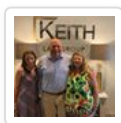
Lynn Keith

Lynn - July 09 at 11:35 AM



“ The Judge was often the source of great advice when I was publisher of the Bentonville newspaper. His early experience as a newspaper man was a rare perspective from an attorney. Besides that, he had a great sense of humor. I never left his presence without a laugh and a smile. A life well lived. Steve Trolinger

steve trolinger - June 26 at 09:31 AM



“ Absolutely and thank you for the wonderful articles written by and about him. It is obvious you appreciated his stories and his sense of service and duty along with his sense of humor! He was an incredible storyteller and thankfully as his family we were privileged to hear so many of them! It is one of the many things I will miss most about him. I'm the oldest and I remember him being a newspaper man and I always loved the field trips we took to the newspaper and was so proud of him! Thank you again!

Lynn E. Keith

Lynn - July 09 at 11:49 AM