



## Kenneth William Threlkeld

July 4, 1935 - May 23, 2024

Kenneth William Threlkeld came out like a firecracker on the 4th of July 1935 in Ladonia, Texas (or Muddig, depending on who you ask) to Louise and Quincy Threlkeld. He passed away on May 23, 2024.

As a child growing up in Muddig, he walked across his father's cotton and cattle farm carrying his lunch in a syrup bucket to attend school with 15 classmates. After high school, he served in the Army. His GI bill provided the opportunity to attend East Texas State College (now Texas A&M Commerce) where he earned his bachelor's degree in business in 1960. He came to the big city of Tyler in 1961 to work as an accountant for Milton Vanderpool at Ideal Baking Company. Later that year, he joined Squyres, Johnson, and Squyres as an accountant and auditor.

Ken began his insurance career with a short-lived stint with State Farm in June 1964. After five months, he was fired and told he would never be successful in the insurance industry, but Ken knew he just hadn't found the right fit. In January 1965, he went to work for the Clyde-Prestidge Insurance Agency and within the year, he bought half interest in the agency and owned the agency by 1974. He continued to build the business, merging with other companies, and was strictly on his own by 1982. When asked about his occupation, he often replied that "the insurance business was tough, but it can be luuuuuucrative." His son, Todd Threlkeld, continues to run the company

that Ken successfully built. In 2006, Ken was the first recipient of the Paige Eiland Political Action Award recognizing the person whose political involvement most benefited independent insurance agents.

Ken was a man who wore many hats. While he loved the insurance industry deeply, he also cared just as much about his community and his family. He believed that you have to give into the community in order to receive anything back. He served as president, chairman, and board member of several Tyler and East Texas-based organizations, the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership program at Texas A&M College Station, the American Cancer Society, and the Texas A&M Commerce Foundation. He was passionate about the Tyler Cattle Barons' Gala, which he hosted at his farm twice, and he gave the annual chairperson a pair of custom-made Lucchese boots. In 2008, Ken received the Build East Texas Award of Excellence from the State of Texas House of Representatives. He also received the Bill and Mary Clements Memorial Award for Outstanding Leadership in Agriculture and the Cystic Fibrosis Breath of Life Award in 2010.

Ken never forgot his agricultural roots. In 1977, he bought the Vanderpool Dairy Farm in Flint and helped his in-laws settle there. He loved the cattle business, even though he said "it was tough, hoss" to anyone who would listen. At one point he owned more than 600 head of cattle and ran a hay business on the farm. Ken never did anything halfway and it shows in the well-kept farm that the family still owns today.

Of all the causes and activities that Ken was involved in throughout his years, there was one cause, one hat, that he loved the most, and that was the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. When Ken's granddaughter, Grace Knight, was diagnosed with the disease in 1999, he immediately got to work fundraising for a cure. Ken's daughter, Lori Knight, learned her skills in garnering community support and funds from her father. Ken told her that "raising money

is just like selling insurance. The best way to do it is eyeball to eyeball. You've got to get personal." Ultimately, that was Ken's mission in life: to get personal with the people around him to make positive change in the community. And Ken was very good at it. The first Cystic Fibrosis Foundation event in Tyler, the 1999 Great Strides Walk, raised a record \$100,000 which was the most for any first-time walk nationwide. Ken increased his support for that cause for the rest of his life.

Ken loved the complex challenges of poker, and enjoyed the weekly games and fellowship with his poker buddies. He accomplished his dream of playing in the World Series of Poker in Las Vegas, where he advanced several rounds with some of the world's best players.

More important than anything was the time he spent with his family. Cherished memories were made while sharing a pew with his family each week at church, traveling with them on exciting trips, and coming together to eat and celebrate holidays, birthdays, especially the Fourth of July, and any other opportunity to spend time with them.

Ken is survived by his daughters, Lori Knight and her husband Scott; Mandy Lohner and her husband Mike; and his son, Todd Threlkeld. He is also survived by six grandchildren, Brandon Threlkeld, Grace Knight, Ken Knight, Will Knight, Michael Lohner, Maggie Lohner; and the mother of his children, Cheryl Threlkeld. He was preceded in death by his parents and his sister, Sue Cox, and husband, Billy Cox.

Ken's family would like to thank Angie Martin and Nancy James, along with the staff of Hospice of East Texas, who assisted him the past few years. They were his support system when he could no longer take care of himself and brought him so much joy and laughter in the last few years of his life.

Graveside services will be held at Rose Hill Cemetery at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, May 29, 2024. A Celebration of Life will be held afterwards at 2:30 in Pirtle Hall at Marvin Methodist Church, 300 W. Erwin Street, Tyler, Texas. A reception will be held thereafter at Willow Brook Country Club, 3205 W. Erwin Street. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, 2248 Central Drive, Suite 107 Box 246, Bedford, TX 76201, or a charity of your choice.

# Previous Events

## Graveside Service

MAY 29. 1:00 PM (CT)

Rose Hill Cemetery  
2400 S. Donnybrook  
Tyler, TX 75702

## Celebration of Life

MAY 29. 2:30 PM (CT)

Marvin Methodist Church  
300 West Erwin  
Tyler, TX

# Tribute Wall



“ Stewart Family Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Kenneth William Threlkeld



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**Stewart Family Funeral Home** - May 26, 2024 at 06:10 PM

SM

*Kenneth would have been proud of his life story and all the memories of his life. I believe you captured his life story with the memories he had of growing up. He told me his memories through the years of growing up. It's amazing how much he accomplished and how much he gave with expecting anything in return.*

*He is an amazing man and father. I know all of you are proud. He lives all of you so much, and he was always bragging on all of you. My prayers are with you, and may the Lord give you peace.*

*Deepest Sympathy  
Sheryl Miller*

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**Sheryl Miller** - May 30, 2024 at 02:46 PM

BS

“ Ben S. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Kenneth William Threlkeld.

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**Ben S.** - May 29, 2024 at 01:24 PM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray* was purchased for the family of Kenneth William Threlkeld.



May 29, 2024 at 11:28 AM



“ *Sweet Tranquility Basket* was purchased for the family of Kenneth William Threlkeld.



May 29, 2024 at 10:35 AM



“ *Amy and Bill Lively planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Kenneth William Threlkeld.*

**Amy and Bill Lively** - May 29, 2024 at 10:27 AM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet* was purchased for the family of Kenneth William Threlkeld.



May 29, 2024 at 10:27 AM



“ *Prayers for peace and comfort for his family.*

**Christine Crosby** - May 28, 2024 at 09:53 PM

SM

“ *Sheryl Miller lit a candle in memory of  
Kenneth William Threlkeld*



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**Sheryl Miller** - May 28, 2024 at 04:40 PM

SM

*Words of sympathy feel inadequate in expressing grief and sorrow for a loss so great.*

*Kenneth, was a close friend and he could always put a smile on your face. He was a good Christian man and always put God and his family first.*

*My deepest condolences to his family and friends. I pray his memories will bring you comfort. He contributed so much while he was here on this earth and enjoyed every moment he was doing for others. May he rest and peace.*

*He will be missed by all who knew him.*

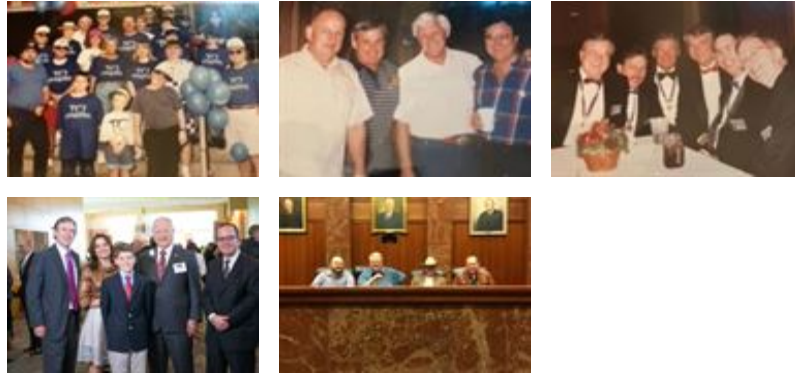
*Sincerely  
Sheryl Miller*

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**Sheryl Miller** - May 28, 2024 at 04:49 PM



“ 19 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Stewart Family Funeral Home - May 28, 2024 at 01:35 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket* was purchased for the family of *Kenneth William Threlkeld*.



May 28, 2024 at 11:48 AM



“ *Cole Hefner and Family* purchased the *Basket Full of Wishes* for the family of *Kenneth William Threlkeld*.



*Cole Hefner and Family* - May 28, 2024 at 11:41 AM



“ *Enduring Grace was purchased for the family of Kenneth William Threlkeld.*



May 28, 2024 at 08:42 AM



“ *Tejas/Sig Eps. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Kenneth William Threlkeld.*

Tejas/Sig Eps. - May 27, 2024 at 01:16 PM



“ *Tejas/Sig Eps. purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Kenneth William Threlkeld.*



Tejas/Sig Eps. - May 27, 2024 at 01:16 PM



“ *1 file added to the album Life Tributes*



Stewart Family Funeral Home - May 27, 2024 at 12:55 PM

SH

“ My memories of Mr. Threlkeld started when I was a child. He was always welcoming when Lori had slumber parties. As an adult, I worked with and learned from him when I chaired the Cystic Fibrosis Walk in 2003 and the Cattle Barons Gala in 2005. We had a fun adventure to the “Boats” asking for donations full of lots of laughs. He always was the top Chance Drawing Ticket Seller! He led by example in his charitable works always with his cute smile. My Gala Chairman Boots from Mr. Threlkeld will always be a cherished treasure. I will carry forward the charitable lessons that I learned from Squinch and never forget his friendship!

Stacey Hardin Hiles - May 27, 2024 at 01:54 AM



“ Mouthwatering Meat and Cheese Gift Tower was purchased for the family of Kenneth William Threlkeld.



May 26, 2024 at 04:32 PM

WB

“ Wendy and Steve Bratteli planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Kenneth William Threlkeld.

Wendy and Steve Bratteli - May 26, 2024 at 04:32 PM

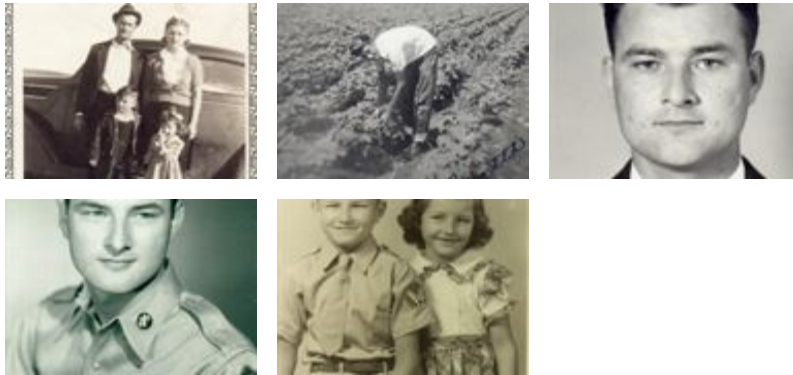
WE

“ *Mr. Threlkeld made a lasting impact on my life and changed the trajectory of my family's future, through his encouragement, patience kindness - and opportunity to be successful, through Hard Work! He truly cared for every person he encountered, to include his employees, who he also cared for like family. He wanted the best for them - and I will forever be grateful for the time I had under his leadership; but I am most grateful to call him my friend. Tyler lost a great man and a true Patriot this week. I believe, this is only "see you later" KWT! Much love to your family from ours, Wendy Bratteli*

Wendy - May 26, 2024 at 04:30 PM



“ 105 files added to the album LifeTributes



Stewart Family Funeral Home - May 26, 2024 at 01:42 PM