



Arthur King Keith

January 1, 1926 - January 31, 2026

Arthur King Keith Sr.

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Arthur King Keith Sr. peacefully entered the presence of his Lord and Savior on January 31, 2026, in San Antonio, Texas, just weeks after joyfully celebrating his 100th birthday surrounded by the music, family, and love that filled his life. He carried the wisdom of a century and a spirit that refused to grow old.

Born in Leming, Texas, to Thomas Jefferson Keith and Martha Fredona Suggs Keith, Art was the fifth of eight children. Raised on a small rural farm, he learned early the values of hard work, responsibility, and caring for others. By age 14, he was managing the family's cattle, dairy, and meat delivery business, showing early maturity and a deep devotion to his family.

From the beginning, Art's life was closely connected to a girl named Josephine Bronder from a nearby farm, who would one day become his wife. He loved to share the story of how his own aunt delivered her into the world and remembered the horn-honking that celebrated her birth. What began in those quiet country fields grew into a love that would endure for nearly 74 years of marriage.

As a young soldier in the Army during World War II, Art proudly served with the 63rd Infantry Division. He trained at Camp Van Dorn, Mississippi, and fought in the European Theater, including the historic Battle of the Bulge.

Among his military decorations was the Bronze Star with Combat “V” for valor, awarded after he carried a wounded fellow soldier to safety under enemy fire, saving the man’s life. He later honored two close friends who were killed beside him in combat by naming his firstborn son in their memory.

Art believed in preserving history for future generations. From genealogy to weather patterns, he was a fastidious record keeper by nature. Though he rarely spoke about the details of his military service, he felt a responsibility to put them in writing, knowing they reflected not only his own life but the story of an entire generation. He spent years composing his wartime memoir, *Chariot Through Hell*, which was accepted into the Library of Congress in 2019.

After returning home from war, Art married his “sweet Josephine,” and together they built a life of unconditional love, laughter, and adventure for their three children. He taught by example, modeling hard work, faithfulness, and quiet strength. With little more than an atlas and determination, he and Josephine spent summers driving their children around the country, visiting places such as Big Bend, the Grand Canyon, Disneyland, Colorado, Connecticut, Mexico, and Boulder Dam, ensuring they could see a world far beyond their beginnings.

Art built a distinguished career as an aeronautical engineer at Kelly Air Force Base in San Antonio, where his exceptional mechanical skill led to advancement working on emerging jet engine technology. Committed to excellence, he pursued night classes to deepen his education and refine his craft. He retired on January 1, 1981, his 55th birthday, concluding combined military and federal service to his country.

Yet his desire to serve others did not end with retirement. He became a school bus driver for Northside Independent School District, faithfully driving the same children for 12 years and walking with them through their journey to graduation. He treasured their notes, conversations, and trust, and in later years often shared how much he missed driving and seeing those young faces each day.

Faith and music were central to Art’s life. He served as a deacon and early

member of Oak Ridge Baptist Church. Alongside Josephine, he founded The Western Stars, a classic country gospel band devoted to bringing comfort, joy, and what he lovingly called “old-time fun” to nursing homes and senior communities in and around San Antonio. A gifted musician, he primarily played the pedal steel guitar, which became the heart of the band’s sound. Week after week, for more than four decades, he played faithfully for residents, and the music continues even now as part of the ministry they began. Through song, presence, and compassion, he fulfilled his lifelong calling to lift the hearts of others.

Art’s gentle spirit found happiness in life’s simplest rhythms. From pre-dawn coffee and his familiar “shave, shower, and shine” routine to a nightly bowl of HEB’s 1905 vanilla ice cream doused with milk, he lived every day with intention. He delighted in being “PawPaw” to so many, solving crossword puzzles, cheering for the Dallas Cowboys, watching bluebonnets grow around his flagpole, and even building a small backyard basketball court so he could watch his great-grandchildren play from his rocking chair on the porch. His family takes comfort in imagining him, now whole and joyful in heaven, already at work on a Thunderbird with his son Art Jr.

In his later years, he was blessed by the compassionate care and friendship of his devoted caregiver, Sharon Arguello, whose kindness and presence brought comfort, dignity, and companionship. The family is deeply grateful for her loving care.

Art was preceded in death by his wife, Josephine; his son, Arthur King Keith Jr.; his former son-in-law, Mark Jehl; his parents; his siblings Ralph Keith, Marion Holloway, Martha “June” Chesser, Tommie Edwards, Raymond “Earl” Keith, Merton Keith; an infant sibling; and his cherished dog, Carolina Murphy. He is survived by his son Rodney Keith and wife Brenda of Bryan; daughter Jill Keith of Helotes; daughter-in-law Phyllis Keith of La Vernia; grandchildren Jason Keith Jehl (Ashley Moreno) of Helotes, Ashley Moncus (Shane) of Pflugerville, Jenna Allen (Jeremy) of Tully, New York, Michelle Ondechek

(Ron) of La Vernia, and Lauren Harvey (Patrick) of La Vernia; great-grandchildren Mia Moreno, Corbin Keith Jehl, Eve Moncus (fiancé Tristan Potts), Finley Allen, Atticus Jefferson Allen, Bryce King Harvey, Oliver Allen, Trevor Keith Jehl, Andrew Harvey, Ronnie Ondechek III, Jackson Arthur Ondechek, and countless other family members and friends who became family.

Visitation will be held at Mission Park Funeral Home, 3401 Cherry Ridge Drive in San Antonio, on Monday, February 23, at 11 a.m., with funeral services at noon. Interment with full military honors will follow at 1:30 p.m. at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, where he will be laid to rest with his sweetheart and near his son.

Pallbearers are Jeremy Allen, Denny Fisher, Patrick Harvey, Corbin Jehl, Jason Keith Jehl, Shane Moncus, Charlie Pedrotti, and Ron Ondechek Jr. Honorary pallbearers include seven of his great-grandsons, Atticus Allen, Bryce Harvey, Oliver Allen, Trevor Jehl, Andrew Harvey, Ronnie Ondechek III, and Jackson Ondechek, as well as members of The Western Stars, past and present.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations in honor of Art's life be made to the Longhorn Museum, 1959 Highway 97 East, Pleasanton, Texas 78064 (830-569-6313), a place close to his heart that celebrates his lifelong love of history, heritage, and country.

If you knew Art, you loved him. When asked the secret to his long life, he might smile and say, "Besides ice cream?" Then he would offer the wisdom he lived by: "How old would you be if you didn't know how old you were?"

The chapel service will be livestreamed and can be accessed at www.missionparks.com

Cemetery Details

Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery

1520 Harry Wurzbach
San Antonio, TX 78209

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 23. 11:00 AM (CT)

Mission Park Funeral Chapels Cherry Ridge
3401 Cherry Ridge Dr
San Antonio, TX 78230
(210) 349-1414
<https://www.missionparks.com/>

Chapel Service

FEB 23. 12:00 PM (CT)

Mission Park Funeral Chapels Cherry Ridge
3401 Cherry Ridge Dr
San Antonio, TX 78230
(210) 349-1414
<https://www.missionparks.com/>

Interment

FEB **23** (CT)

Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery
1520 Harry Wurzbach
San Antonio, TX 78209

Tribute Wall



“ *Mission Park Funeral Chapels & Cemeteries created a Webcast in memory of Arthur King Keith*



Mission Park Funeral Chapels & Cemetery - February 23 at 01:25 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Arthur King Keith.*



February 18 at 09:36 AM