



Joel Christopher Cooley

March 5, 1952 - November 7, 2024

Joel Christopher “Chris” Cooley was received into the loving and merciful arms of his Lord and Savior in the early morning hours of November 7, 2024 in San Antonio, Texas. He was the firstborn of proud parents JC Cooley and Elouise Cotton Cooley, arriving at the Nix Memorial Hospital on the afternoon of March 5, 1952 in San Antonio.

Chris attended NISD’s original Locke Hill Elementary School, John Marshall High School (member of the great and infamous class of ’70!) and Trinity University. He excelled in school, especially in the areas of math and science, and received his BBA Cum Laude. During his senior year at Trinity and immediately after graduation, Chris gained his first business and marketing experience with the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce which he thoroughly enjoyed. The next few years were spent working with his father and brother in a family endeavor where he gained business experience that would serve him well in his next career move.

It was on March 1, 1999 that he joined the sales force of Ben E. Keith Foods, San Antonio Division. That decision changed the course of his and Debbie’s life. Joining the BEK family was a move they never regretted. BEK afforded them opportunities, experiences and travel they had never even dreamed of enjoying. Chris worked hard to build a sales territory practically from scratch, and in doing so, became a mentor and advisor to many people new to sales. Because of his experience, organizational skills and sales success, Chris was asked to move into a supervisory position as District Sales Manager. His

territory extended far and wide - from San Antonio north to Fredericksburg, west to Del Rio and south to Devine and beyond - and Chris loved traveling to all the little towns and restaurants in between. Meeting new people and advising his sales reps became his new focus. It was at BEK that he adopted and tried to live according to the quote "Positive Mental Attitude" (PMA) which came from a story he heard about another salesman's personal experience in gaining his customers' trust.

Chris lived PMA not only in his business career, but also in his personal everyday living. He has been described as "a gentleman" and was the most patient, kind and gentlest man in a world where those qualities are not always appreciated. In fact, once when coaching his daughter's softball team, he took heated issue with an umpire's call. Amusingly, the team parents forgot to be outraged at the call; they were all marveling at the fact that Chris could actually get mad and yell! It was quite the novel experience for all in attendance! He was thoughtful to a fault, never forgetting family birthdays, anniversaries and other dates of importance to those he loved. He lived to bring delight and surprises to his family, especially to his wife, Debbie, the girl who chased him junior year of high school until she caught him!

His love of the outdoors and the geology of our world began as a young boy when he would collect rocks at all the places to which his family traveled on summer vacations. Chris often regretted changing his college major from geology to business. He was fascinated with rocks, minerals and land formations and was able to indulge that love of geology after retirement when he finally had the time to devote to it. He joined two rock hounding and gem and mineral associations and there found a whole new group of friends with a common interest. He began to travel to the Big Bend area in search of Texas agate, also fulfilling his love of the outdoors, hiking and camping. Traveling was another goal he planned to attain upon retirement. He and Debbie took many trips, as far away as Alaska and Hawaii and as close as Lockhart. However, his favorite places to be were National Parks, and he never tired of repeated trips to Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks as well as the

Petrified Forest in Arizona.

Of all Chris' many loves - rocks, minerals, his yard and plants, cooking, traveling, camping, hiking, photography, friends, Ben E. Keith Foods, National Parks and, yes, the Aggies - none could compare to his love for his family. Beginning with his love for his brother, Craig, and his four Yantis cousins (who were more like brothers and sisters as they were all growing up together) and ending with his five grandchildren (Abby, Caleb, Austin, David and Audrey), his devotion was unceasing and unwavering. He liked to watch out for Craig as only a big brother can; he teased his Louisiana cousin, Cindy, who was like a sister with a Southern accent; he still loved Debbie and welcomed her back with open arms even after she decided they needed a break during freshman year of college; he took such pride and pleasure watching his only son, Christopher, grow into an outstanding man; he adored his little girl, the apple of his eye, who could talk him into anything with a bat of those eyelashes; and, oh! the grandchildren! the beautiful, smart, athletic, hilarious and adorable to whom he passed on his love of plants and rocks and minerals, and who he wanted to go see even when he was so sick - how he loved them! And how they loved him, their "Bida", how we will all miss him, but are assured of joining him one day in the Paradise our Heavenly Father has prepared for all of us.

Chris is survived by his loving wife of 50 years, Deborah Black Cooley; daughter, Jennifer Peace (Tyler); son, Chris Cooley (Elizabeth); brother, Craig Cooley (Diana); grandchildren, Abby, Austin and Audrey Peace, Caleb and David Cooley; cousins, Mike Yantis (Patty), Tom Yantis (Susan), Nancy Austin (Hank), Susan Yantis, and Cindy Clark (Mike); nephew Randy Cooley (Megan) and sons Noah and Hank Cooley; and niece Katy Havelka (Tim).

SERVICES

Visitation will be held on Sunday, November 17, 2024 from 5:00pm-8:00pm, with a Rosary at 6:00pm at Mission Park Funeral Chapels North.

A Funeral Mass will be celebrated on Monday, November 18, 2024 at

10:30am at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church, 13715 Riggs Rd., Helotes, TX. 78023. Interment will follow at Mission Burial Park North.

In lieu of flowers, Chris' desire was for donations to The National Park

Service: <https://home.nps.gov/getinvolved/donate.htm>

Or The National Park Foundation: https://give.nationalparks.org/site/Donation2?df_id=3144&mfc_pref=T&3144.donation=form1

Cemetery Details

Mission Burial Park North

20900 IH 10 West
San Antonio, TX 78257

Previous Events

Visitation

NOV 17. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

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

Rosary

NOV 17. 6:00 PM (CT)

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

Funeral Mass

NOV 18. 10:30 AM (CT)

Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church, Helotes
13715 Riggs Rd.
Helotes, TX 78023

Interment

NOV 18 (CT)

Mission Burial Park North
20900 IH 10 West
San Antonio, TX 78257

Tribute Wall

AN

“ I am so lost for words in the passing of our Helotes neighborhood. I just recently found out about his passing, and was just stunned, and heartbroken. His beautiful wife Debbie called me about my dogs, she was concerned that one of them got loose from our yard..we talked for a good 15 minutes until she broke the news to me about Chris-I was totally lost for words, I was having a hard time processing it, my heart truly hurt for Debbie. He was the nicest guy to ever meet! He always showed interest and concern for anybody in our neighborhood-I always felt at ease knowing we had such a great neighbor, and human being as a caring, and concerned friend in our neighborhood. Rest in Beautiful Heaven, and in Peace Chris, enjoy the presence of our Heavenly Holy Father-Enjoy your family members and friends that left before you. Til God calls upon us to meet again 🙏🙏 your neighbors Abby and Armando Niebla

abby Ortiz Niebla - December 18, 2024 at 09:57 PM

WM

“ I was a DM with Dart Container and had many great experiences with Chris and calling upon his Districts customers with my reps. Chris was a great person and was well respected at BEK. My wife, Pat and I would run into him and Debbie at various restaurants. Macaroni Grill used to be one of our favorites and it seemed like every time we went they would be there. I wished I had the opportunity to pay my respects to his family, as he was one of the great guys in the business world. My blessings to his family . Bill and Pat Miller

William Miller - November 19, 2024 at 05:56 PM

DM

“ My family and I lived next door to the Cooley family for many years in Helotes and I have been thinking of what a gracious person Chris was. He was a kind and gentle man who always seemed to say just the right things to make you feel a little bit better about life. Even though we were Longhorns, he would often congratulate us on a good game....and I tried mightily to say good things right back when the Aggies did well. I always thought he was especially kind to my children. He was a grace-filled presence in our lives and we will remember him always as a special blessing.
Our memories, hearts and prayers go out to Debbie and Christopher and Jennie -- Dee Mullins, Dave Woodring, Griffin and Suzannah Creech

Dee Mullins - November 17, 2024 at 08:30 PM

“ Chris Cooley

Such a wonderful person. Such a genuine person. My memories of Chris go back to the early 1990's. Chris and I were both board members of the famous Helotes Little League. The board required 2 board members to be on duty the nights there were games. We opened up the park early in the evening, and locked up the park after all the games ended. Chris and I arranged our schedules so that we always did it together.

We bonded! Whenever there was an upset parent, kind Chris was there to be the peace maker. Little League parents often vent their frustrations at their children's games. Chris and I would end our evenings chuckling over the evenings events as we locked the gates and went home.

After our Little League years ended, we would continually run into each other at H-E-B, Walmart, and Home Depot. For me, it was always such a delight, to have a relationship with a person who was always smiling and had something positive to share.

The Methodist Men's Group made a couple of weekend "fishing trips" to the Cooley family house at Copano Bay, in Rockport. How gracious the family was for hosting us. Such wonderful memories.

Just recently, I once again ran into Chris at Home Depot. Favorite place for old men to hang out and share stories about our kids and grandkids. Chris shared with me that he had cancer. I was concerned, but his appearance and his forever positive attitude, left me with the feeling he was on the road to recovery. When I heard that Chris had passed, I was so saddened. The community has lost a wonderful person.

Bob Cage

Bob Cage - November 16, 2024 at 07:34 PM



“ *Enduring Grace was purchased for the family of Joel Christopher Cooley.*



November 15, 2024 at 11:26 AM



“ *Mike, Cindy, Libby and Hannah Murray purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Joel Christopher Cooley.*



Mike, Cindy, Libby and Hannah Murray - November 15, 2024 at 11:17 AM



“ *Magnificent Life Spray was purchased for the family of Joel Christopher Cooley.*



November 15, 2024 at 10:11 AM



“ *Be My Love Bouquet with Red Roses was purchased for the family of Joel Christopher Cooley.*



November 13, 2024 at 11:05 PM

AA

“ *Abby, Caleb, Austin, David and Audrey purchased the Rainbow Of Remembrance Spray for the family of Joel Christopher Cooley.*



Abby, Caleb, Austin, David and Audrey - November 13, 2024
at 09:37 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Joel Christopher Cooley.*



November 12, 2024 at 08:02 AM

HF

“ *I worked with Chris at Ben E. Keith. He was such a nice person. Always seemed to care. I send my deepest condolences to Debbie and the rest of the family. Helyne Frischenmeyer*

Helyne Frischenmeyer - November 11, 2024 at 05:05 PM