



## Kenneth Joel Walker

July 29, 1923 - January 16, 2005

Kenneth J. Walker, founder of Advantage Rent-A-Car died Sunday, January 16, 2005.

Kenneth Joel Walker, patriot soldier, entrepreneur, visionary business leader, beloved husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather passed away at home Sunday January 16, 2005 at 81 years of age.

He was born to Joel Walker and Edith Rasmussen Walker in Sparta, Wisconsin on July 29, 1923. He grew up in Waukegan, Illinois. Ken started his first career at age 7, as a newspaper boy - nicknamed "Peanuts" by his older peers. He graduated from Waukegan Township High School and stopped selling papers in order to join the Army in 1942 after World War II broke out.

On December 28, 1944, Ken was on board the British L.S.I. - Empire Javeline crossing the English Channel from Spithead to Le Havre when it was torpedoed and sunk. He and his fellow soldiers were saved in a daring rescue by the French Frigate L'Escaramouche. Ken went on to serve with the U.S. 5th Army Occupation Forces in Germany.

After the War, Ken returned to Ft. Sam Houston and San Antonio. After his Honorable Discharge, he resumed his newspaper career in San Antonio, attended college and married Helen Lee Pike from San Antonio. He graduated from Trinity University in 1949 with a degree in Accounting.

At this time his old Waukegan newspaper buddies recruited “Peanuts” to help them in a new greeting card business. After a few years, Ken struck out on his own and founded Pleasant Thoughts Greeting Card Company. The company was very successful and was sold in 1962 to Gibson Greetings.

In 1963, Ken moved his wife and family back to San Antonio and started his third career - a rental car company called \$3.99 Car Rentals. During the 1960's and 70's the company consisted of a number different franchises acquired during this period. In 1984, Ken consolidated all operations under the name Advantage Rent-A-Car, and began the next chapter of one of the most dynamic and successful transportation companies in the world.

Today, Advantage Rent-A-Car is the largest independently owned car rental company in the United States with tens of thousands of vehicles and thousands of dedicated employees. Ken's company now has over 150 locations in the Western U.S. and licensees and affiliates in 24 countries world wide. Additionally, Advantage owns and operates Star Shuttle & Charter and Abbey Walker Executive Cars & Limousines in Central and South Texas. All companies are still family owned and operated by Ken's and Helen's children and headquartered in San Antonio, Texas.

Ken is survived by his wife Helen Lee, children Lee Walker Cowley and husband Warren of Austin, Jimmy Walker and wife Kay of Lake McQueeney, Bob Walker and wife Pattie of San Antonio, John Walker and wife Suzie of San Antonio, and Mark Walker of San Antonio. Additionally, Ken is survived by 17 grandchildren and 4 great grand children. Ken was preceded in death by all 4 of his siblings, Helen, Shirley, Earl and Beverly.

SERVICES

Visitation will be held on Thursday, January 20, 2005 from 6:00 PM until 9:00 PM at Mission Park Funeral Chapels North. There will be a Graveside Service conducted on Friday, January 21, 2005 at 2:00 PM at Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery. A Memorial Service will be held in Kenneth's honor on Saturday, January 22, 2005 at 11:00 AM at Covenant Presbyterian Church, 211 Roletto Dr., San Antonio, Texas 78213. There will be a reception at the church immediately following the service.

Memorial donations in lieu of flowers may be made to the Presbyterian Children's Home 6355 Whitby Rd, San Antonio, 78240 - 210 558-4770 or the SAMM Shelter / SAMMinistries, 5254 Blanco Road, San Antonio, Texas 78216-7017.

# Tribute Wall

HK

“ *Dear John, Suzie and Family,  
We sincerely send our prayers in hope that they will give comfort  
during this hard time. We are thinking of you. With love,  
Howard & Tinker Kochwelp and family*

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**Howard & Tinker Kochwelp** - January 22, 2005 at 12:00 AM

MN

“ *Extending our heartfelt condolences on the loss of your loved one.*

*Directors & Staff at Mission Park Funeral Chapels North*

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**Mission Park North** - January 18, 2005 at 12:00 AM