



James "Buddy" Keller Jr.

January 12, 1941 - January 28, 2023

James Smiley Keller, Jr. 82, passed away January 28, 2023, surrounded by his loving family, following a courageous four-year battle with prostate cancer. A native of Greenville, SC, son of the late James "Smiley" Keller, Sr. and Earline Sloan Keller, he was a United States Marine Corps Veteran and a member of Taylors First Baptist Church for 55 years.

Buddy was a man of many titles. Faithful Husband, Father, Grandfather, Great-Grandfather, Faithful Brother, Marathon Runner, Mountain Cyclist, Fitness Guru and Inspiration, Mayor of Pivotal Gym, a Gold's Gym Legend, and a faithful Servant of Jesus Christ.

He attended Berea High School through his Junior year and then transferred to Travelers Rest his Senior year to prepare for entrance to Clemson College in 1959. There, he met Pat Murphy, his wife of over sixty years, with whom he got a date on a bet. From then on, they never loved another.

Married in June of 1962, their covenant marriage remained until death parted them last Saturday morning.

He was a third generation, 42-year employee of Norfolk Southern Railroad. Starting as an 18-year-old brakeman, he rose through the ranks to the position of Road Foreman of Engines, where he trained, qualified, and supervised locomotive engineers for the Piedmont Division.

For the last ten years of his career, he had the only job on the division that still gave him butterflies. He was the man who took the coal trains down Saluda Mountain, the steepest grade east of the Mississippi River. With tons of coal

pushing and tons of engines, he had to keep the downhill speed below 15 miles per hour to keep the train under his control. He was an expert who never lost control of his train.

After retirement he began a 22-year career in charity work as a Sunday School teacher of elementary and preschool children at Taylors FBC. He was a leader for Child Evangelism Fellowship at the Good News Clubs at Taylors Elementary, Woodland Elementary in Greer, and Bob Cashion Elementary in Simpsonville.

He was a 22-year Red Kettle Bell volunteer at Christmas for The Salvation Army, drove a route for Meals on Wheels, and supported many missionary groups locally, in the United States and Alaska, and in Africa.

In his spare time, Buddy loved to play music – country, bluegrass, and gospel songs. He was a self-taught musician. He played the guitar, banjo, mandolin, and harmonica, often playing for and entertaining residents at a nursing home in Marietta. He also played for his children and grandchildren at Christmas time, at the beach, and any chance he could. He especially loved when his wife, Pat, and other family members would play along with him.

A born-again follower of Jesus Christ, he was devoted to memorizing Scripture, even whole books of the Bible that he would recite on his 100 miles-per-week cycling excursions, in order to keep God's Word fresh in his mind. Surviving are his wife, Pat Murphy Keller of the home, three sons, John K. Keller (Kim) of Greer, James "Bo" Keller of Taylors, and Clifford K. Keller of Arlington, VA; one daughter, Mary Keller of Greenville, SC; three brothers, Ronnie Keller (Cheryl) of Greenville, SC; Ricky Keller (Linda) of Honolulu, HI, and Donny Keller of Pickens; three sisters, Janice Durham (Darrell) of Taylors, Cherrylle Collins of Travelers Rest, and Belinda Rubio (Gus) of Travelers Rest; eight grandchildren, Keller DeBruhl (Meghan), Jay Keller (Maddie), Carly Douglas (David), James Keller, Rachel Langel (Patrick), Elizabeth Keller (Zach Keels), Hope Ennis (James) and Joshua Keller; and eight great grandchildren.

Funeral services will be held at 11 am, Wednesday, February 1, 2023, at

Taylors First Baptist Church, conducted by Dr. Doug Mize. Burial will follow at Mountain View Memorial Park, Travelers Rest, SC.

Visitation will be held prior to the service, 9:30 - 10:45 am, at Taylors First Baptist Church.

The family will be at the home of his son and daughter-in-law, John and Kim Keller.

Memorials may be made to: Child Evangelism Fellowship, 4 W. Main Street, Taylors, SC
Taylors Free Medical Clinic, 400 W. Main Street, Taylors, SC
Greer Community Ministries Meals on Wheels, PO Box 1373, Greer, SC,
Brown Family Ministries, PO Box 638, Travelers Rest, SC

Online condolences may be made to www.thewoodmortuary.com

Cemetery Details

Mountain View Memorial Park (formerly Grandview)

7 Duncan Road
Travelers Rest, SC 29690

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 1. 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM (ET)

Taylor's First Baptist Church
200 West Main Street
Taylors, SC 29687

Service

FEB 1. 11:00 AM (ET)

Taylor's First Baptist Church
200 West Main Street
Taylors, SC 29687

Tribute Wall



“ *Ocean Breeze Spray was purchased for the family of James "Buddy" Keller Jr..*



January 31, 2023 at 10:46 AM



“ *My condolences to the family. Love and prayers.*



Dolly Lynn - January 31, 2023 at 08:47 AM



“ *John, Jay and the rest of the family. May God be with you all during this sad time.*

J.C. Crenshaw - January 31, 2023 at 07:56 AM

JP

“ I remember as a young child being in awe of Aunt Earlene's family, especially Bud and Janice. The whole family was wonderful.



I remember meeting Pat for the first time at Grandma and Grandpa Sloan's anniversary dinner under the sycamore tree. She had proudly cooked fried chicken. Buddy actually beamed with joy that day. They were both so beautiful and sincere.

Time slips away, and I kept hearing stories of their lives from Sis, Maurice. She told me of Buddy making music at locsl nursing home, and she would go.

God has a plan for each of us, and just know, Keller family and extended families, that Buddy is today with Jesus. Persevere Pat and family, you will see him again.

God Bless. From your Cousin Joyce Sloan Park and family in Oregon.

Joyce Sloan Park - January 30, 2023 at 08:17 PM

RR

“ Mrs. Keller!!!! I am so sorry to hear of your sweet husband's passing!!!! I know you are hurting now!!! I love you and I want you to know that I will be praying for you and your family during this time!!!



Love Rachel Howell Rashad- SFCS

Rachel Howell Rashad - January 30, 2023 at 07:08 PM



“ *Divine Light* was purchased for the family of James "Buddy" Keller Jr..



January 30, 2023 at 08:05 AM