



William C. Kelsey

MAR 31, 1921 - JUN 13, 2015



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Funeral Directors

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William C. Kelsey

MAR 31, 1921 - JUN 13, 2015

William “Bill” or “Coach” Kelsey of Eustis, Florida and St Paul Park, Minnesota passed away quietly on Saturday, June 13th in his home in Eustis. He was born in Grand Forks, North Dakota on March 31, 1921 and grew up in Saint Paul Park, Minnesota. Bill was a loving husband, father, grandfather, and great grandfather. Bill served in the Navy as a Pilot from 1941 until 1947 and then attended the University of Minnesota. He graduated and began his teaching career in 1950 in Valley Springs, South Dakota. He moved to Eustis, Florida in 1951 and was a beloved teacher at Eustis High School from 1951 until he retired in 1983. He also coached many different sports, but is mostly remembered for his Swim Team. He received his Master’s Degree in Oceanography in 1967 and began teaching Marine Biology at Eustis High as well as running a summer marine biology camp in Crystal River for many years. Bill studied and took up photography in 1974 and handled many weddings and proms. He was active in the United Methodist Church where he could be seen singing joyfully in the tenor section of the choir for years. In his retirement he and his wife took up RV’ing and traveled all over the United States and Canada enjoying a well-earned and long retirement. Bill is survived by his wife of 70 years, Alva Deane “Deanna” Kelsey, his sister, Marlene, Brother, Curtis and his four children, Carol Kelsey Bozeman, David Terrell Kelsey, Patrick Robert Kelsey and Susan Kelsey Jackson, 13 grandchildren, and 20 great grandchildren. He has been influential in many young lives and will be remembered with love and respect. May God always hold him in the palm of his hand and may he rest in peace knowing he lived a life filled with kindness and compassion and left a legacy of love.

Memorial services with U.S. Navy Honors and Rev. John M. Brackman officiating will begin at 2 PM on Thursday, June 18th in the Hamlin & Hilbish Chapel.

In lieu of flowers memorials may be given to the Jayne Hatfield Brackman Memorial Scholarship, sent to; Asbury University, One Macklim Drive, Wilmore, KY 40390

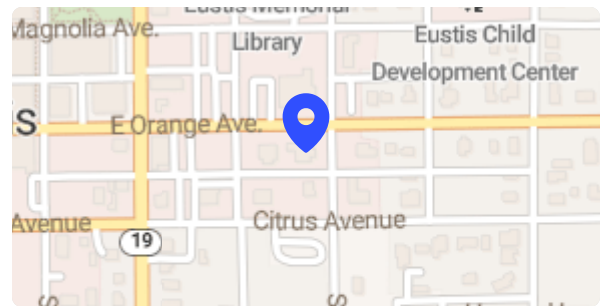


Events

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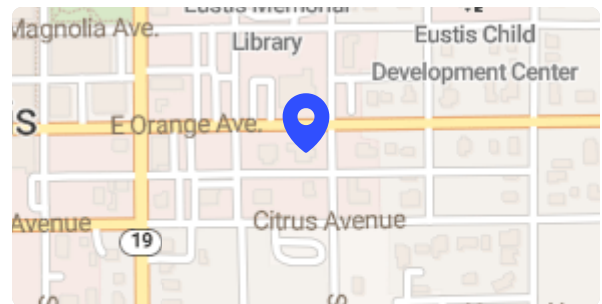
Memorial Service

- Thursday**, June 18, 2015
- 2:00 PM ET
- Hamlin & Hilbish Chapel**
326 E. Orange Avenue, Eustis FL 32726



Military Honors

- Thursday**, June 18, 2015
- 2:30 PM ET
- Hamlin & Hilbish Chapel**
326 E. Orange Avenue, Eustis FL 32726





Tribute Wall

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RR

R. A. Robinson lit a candle in honor of William.

With Deepest Sympathy retired Deputy Chief R. A. Robinson.

September 6 at 7:05 AM



TC

Tessa Clark posted:

Mr. Kelsey was the reason I pursued science education as a career. I remember touring lake Eustis to see all the alligators and learning how to take water samples. He always made science engaging and he gave us students plenty of hands on experiences. Because of him I am a better science teacher. His memory will forever be in my classroom as I continue to apply his methods to make science as thrilling as he did. Ms. Tessa Clark

June 26 at 8:20 AM

BH

Barbara Houlberg posted:

It has been too long ago to remember specifics, I just remember that he was the greatest. If any student needed a helping hand or a kind word, Mr. Kelsey was your go-to source, any day any time. He will be missed.

June 19 at 9:47 AM

OF

One Of Many Friends posted:

Anybody that knew Bill knows that not only was he a man of honor and one of the finest men you will ever meet but he had some of the funniest and most unusual expressions. Like, when he wasn't sure what to do next, you might hear him say "I don't know if I should scratch my watch or wind my butt!" What a sense of humor. It was as great as many of his other qualities. Our lives are better for having known him and our world has been deminished by his loss.

June 17 at 8:14 PM



Tribute Wall

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DL

David Lawrence, Ehs posted:

Well Mr. Kelsey taught me a lot of things, like the time he gave me a pink belly for acting up on a field trip to his Limnology lab on Lake Eustis "I'll never forget that". I fell in love with the guy, because he showed he cared about everyone, and wanted everyone to be as smart as he was. I haven't seen him in many years, and I never got the chance to tell him, but I created a whole Scuba Diving Educational program based on the things he showed and taught me about a place he loved FLORIDA! The program reaches all over the state and its called DIVE into BIOLOGY. His teaching truly lives on!

June 17 at 6:02 PM

KT

Kevin Torman posted:

The last time I stopped by the Kelsey home to visit Bill, he no longer remembered me specifically, but was more than happy to see and talk with me. It's hard to accept that I had become just another student in his long career, but he will forever have a special place in my heart. I was grateful for the opportunities to attend Crystal River multiple times, as well as serving as a counselor at Doe Lake. Bill also sponsored the Brain Bowl team during my years at EHS, often picking me up and taking me home. His lab was my lunch spot most days, talking with him, or helping with some project he was working on. I'm sure there are hundreds of students with similar stories throughout his long career. I hope knowing that his students remember him so fondly, in some small way, eases the pain for the Kelsey Family. My sincere condolences at the passing of one of my favorite teachers and a man I was proud to call a friend. Kevin Torman '82

June 17 at 5:54 PM

HZ

Hank Zaleski posted:

Mr. Kelsey was a multidimensional man and typifies the quality of teacher that Eustis High School was blessed with. Hank Zaleski EHS 1962

June 17 at 1:06 PM



Tribute Wall

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WK

Winnie Kelsey posted:

I remember the first time I met my father-in-law. He was so smart, kind and wise; a born teacher with a twinkle in his eye. He gave me a hug and whispered in my ear, "You know, you've got the best man in the world there", referring to my wonderful husband and dearest friend David/Terry. I whispered back, "I know, he's just like you." We smiled deeply at each other and, as we were leaving, a great grandson was making a beeline toward Bill and, with a huge smile and open arms, I heard him say endearingly, "C'mere knucklehead"... It was an honor to know him and I know he will live in our hearts forever.

June 17 at 7:00 AM

KW

Kathy Strickland Williams June 17 at 5:08 PM

The best memories of Science lab at Crystal River.. what a cool place. My senior year my boyfriend broke up with me and I was bummed. I wasn't even in that class but he noticed me and arranged for me to be his assistant for the trip. I'll never forget his kindness...

MK

Mike And Janine Kester posted:

From the Lester and Pickens families, a big smile in remembrance, and a big hug for the family Bill left behind. He was unique, fun, inspirational, and one happy fellow. From Mike and Janine Lester. rockzack@me.com

June 17 at 4:58 AM

BC

Bob Casey posted:

Hands down, the best teacher I've ever known. He CARED about his students and always kept it INTERESTING. His manner and style made him a favorite topic of student discussion after class. Great trips to Crystal River. He will be missed ... the dork. (I hope you all "get" that one, because it was a riot when he was informed of one of the "meanings" of his favorite catch phrase O.o)

June 17 at 4:46 AM

EJ

Eric Johnson '85 posted:

Wild Bill Kelsey, what a phenomenal educator. I took summer marine biology camp with him over a few different summers in high school at Crystal River. Because of those summer camps I went on to earn my B.S. in marine biology from UWF. I'll never forget him running around town on his moped, his rye smile, great laugh, and big heart. Thank you coach for shaping my life.

June 17 at 4:25 AM



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Yvette Bittner Moore posted:

To the most amazing man I've ever known. My memories of him teaching my brother and me how to swim at a very young age, all the practices, swim meets, bus rides playing the guitar and singing songs. He mentored me through high school, Marine Biology class, and Crystal River class trips (he gave me my first raw oyster on one of those trips). Spending many sleepovers with Susan, I felt especially close to the whole family. Brant and I were so glad to share our tribute and appreciation of him a few years back; he was such a wonderful person and mentor. He will be sorely missed, but always remembered with love and fond memories. Rest in Peace, Uncle Bill. Yvette Bittner Moore

June 17 at 2:57 AM



Larry Coddling June 17 at 4:27 AM

Ditto Yvette..I remember him giving me sugar cubes down at the pool... And he was the swim coach to my brothers and sister..and they were 10 years ahead of me



Cindy Gunter posted:

Coach you were a great teacher,mentor,photographer. You will be missed by all who walked those EHS halls.

June 16 at 10:41 PM



Jill (Neimeyier) Shelton June 17 at 12:23 PM

Coach was the best teacher and he always listened and help when he could. He made the greatest photographs. What wonderful person he was. We are all better people because of our coach. Class of 1978 loved him so....



Cindy Gunter lit a candle in honor of William.



June 16 at 10:35 PM



Tribute Wall

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DB

Debbie Griffin-Bruton posted:

He was a great teacher, a kind and special man. He always had a smile and a sense of humor. I am sure we tested his patience on many occasions, but he was there for all his students and we knew it. Coach Kelsey touched so many lives... He will be missed.

June 16 at 5:27 PM

TK

Teresa Koss posted:

Coach Kelsey always made each of us kids feel special, even when he was disciplining us, we knew he cared. Kids can tell when an adult genuinely likes children, and Coach loved all of his kids. Having Coach Kelsey as a teacher made learning fun and the trip to Crystal River will live in my memory as one of the best experiences I had from high school. To Coach's "real" kids, especially Susan and Pat, thank you for sharing your Dad with the rest of us. I'm crying now, but whenever I think of Coach Kelsey in the future, there will always be a smile on my face. God bless you, Coach. May you rest in peace. Teresa Koss, E.H.S. Class of '72

June 16 at 5:13 PM

BP

Betsie Phillips posted:

How do you begin to talk about someone who shaped so much of your life. From 8 to 18, I was being molded by his goodness, his energy, and his love. He also left me with a dislike for the song ..the lion sleeps tonight. So many of us learned so much about life while swimming laps and riding the bus. Thank you coach. You will be missed. Thank you Kelsey family for sharing him. Betsie Phillips. 65

June 16 at 4:57 PM

GW

Gary Welbon posted:

A true legend has passed - and the world is a less pleasant place. He was never without a smile or a stern word - whichever was appropriate. He always seemed to intuitively sense what was needed at the time. I saw him last in 2011 and was glad to be able to thank him for the guidance he gave not only me but countless others. It is amazing the scope that this man had in his life. We could all be so lucky. R.I.P. Coach..... a true and noble servant. You have run your race and have won with honors. Never another like him.....

June 16 at 4:55 PM



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WP

William Peacock posted:

Summer swim team, shop class, earth science, and marine biology, I was extremely fortunate to have his influence in my life. Best teacher ever! Bill Peacock

June 16 at 4:41 PM

BV

Bill Vantassell lit a candle in honor of William.

coach Kelsey was like a father to me and my brother Jim speedy Van Tassell we lived back to back as kids his son Terry and Jim were best of friends. His son Pat is I consider one of my best friends in life he lead both us to be better men. Bill Van Tassell class of 1970 E.H.S.



June 16 at 2:36 PM

RL

Richard Lobinske posted:

Mr. Kelsey's dedication and love of teaching coupled with his ability to draw the best out of his students made him one of the most memorable and effective teachers I had the honor to know. Richard Lobinske

June 16 at 2:09 PM

TP

Tim Phillips posted:

Always loved and respected, wish there were more teacher's like you !!!!!

June 16 at 1:06 PM



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Betty Ann Slaven Morris Mckelkan lit a candle in honor of William.



The City of Eustis pool shared from Coaches talent as a shop teacher. Those kick boards we held, the racing blocks we charged from and for the February cold morning swim practices were blocked by clear plastic panels blocking the bitter cold wind that was blowing off the lake. Swimming lessons with Coach gave me a new change in 1972 as I returned to Eustis I was quickly back in the pool assisting Coach as my two children were now his students. What an honor! Life with Coach as class of 59 sponsor gave our homecoming floats the most unusual spectiular ones every seen. Picking moss from trees, poking it through chicken wire as a silver spray coated the outer float. The genius shop coach amaze everyone with styles such as a rotating birthday cake that classmates enjoyed riding round as the float move forward My respect for coach continue as we shared choir practices and performances with his awesome tenor voice . The was never a dull monomer as Mr. Bill could pop out a joke when least expected. I have a confession as time after time he would called out here comes Mae West! Only Years later did I realize who I was nick named after. Thanks Coach Kelesy for all the memories!

June 14 at 8:50 AM



Vicki Hollenbeck Pentecost posted:

mr kelsey was such a wonderful teache! he made class so interesting, there are some teachers that you always remember and he was the one!vicki hollenbeck pentecost

June 16 at 12:24 PM



Randy Register posted:

He was one of the best teachers ever to Bless the halls of Eustis High School! I will miss him dearly!

June 16 at 12:06 PM



Stanley Wade June 16 at 3:41 PM

Coach Kelsey was one of those teachers that had the ability to make a seventh grader feel like he could survive the hallowed halls of high school.



Tribute Wall

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Charles Fraser shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.



Coach Kelsey picked me out of a swim lessons class as an eight year old to complete his ten and under relay that needed a fourth person and I cherished that summer of blue ribbons. Carol and Pat showed me the bomb shelter he built and I went fishing once with his family off the Daytona Beach Pier. Like my parents, Malcolm and Janet, he understood I would have to carve my road independently. He is a part of the guts, drive and focus on goals that made me. Crying for Coach Kelsey is a privilege. Happy Charles Malcolm Fraser - Class of '75

June 16 at 10:05 AM



Tom Taber posted:

Mr. Kelsey was hands down one of a kind and very influential in my high school studies. I was a "c" student in science until I talked to him about marine biology. His challenge to me to get A's in biology my final semester or forget making his class worked. Crystal River was great and I couldn't wait to be a certified diver after that. Loved his teaching method and his ability to bring out the best in a student..

June 16 at 9:58 AM



Anonymous sent an Arrive in Style to the Kelsey family.



June 16 at 9:23 AM



Sarah Kelsey Jones posted:

Let's see... How I remember my grandfather...football in the backyard, orange groves, being pulled by his tractor in a wagon, dozens of surprise packages usually including monkey post cards and silly pictures, very creative style of clothing consisting of stripes, plaid, floral, paisley, and polka dots (many times mixed together) , he taught me how to dance polka, he taught me what wild fruits I could eat and about, what at the time seemed super cool, that you could chew on sour grass with the little yellow flowers, his absolute love of animals and life, and the traveling RV. So many great memories!

June 16 at 9:16 AM



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KS

Karen Leheup-Smith posted:

Music playing and kicking the metal trash can in class...boat rides at Crystal River....learning when I didn't know I was doing so. Senior pictures. Coach Kelsey was one of THOSE teachers that remain in our collective memories as an inspiration, a kick in the pants when we needed it and will be missed in his physical form. Keep an eye on us sir. Karen LeHeup - Class of '75

June 16 at 7:37 AM

CR

Char Rivero posted:

He was an awesome teacher and he photographed my wedding also. He will be greatly missed.

June 16 at 7:20 AM

LS

Laura Semento posted:

He taught with a passion, kept things light and always laughing at the silly stuff. He was very inspirational. Great man.

June 16 at 6:32 AM

CT

Candy Allen Trospen posted:

So sorry to hear. Even though I was a Umatilla girl, we all knew Coach Kelsey through his biology camp and swim team. Much later I worked with Deana for several years at Gaylord's law office. My thoughts and prayers are with her and her family.

June 16 at 5:08 AM

BO

Becky Ostic posted:

He taught me how to swim when I was little then taught me about marine biology when I got older he was a great teacher!! Will be missed

June 16 at 4:27 AM



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MT

Margaret Legg Tate lit a candle in honor of William.

I was so sorry to hear of Mr. Kelsey's passing. He was a great teacher, a funny and awesome person. He will be missed.

June 15 at 7:11 PM



MA Midge Abston June 16 at 1:28 PM

Mr. Kelsey was an amazing person. He knew his students and what motivated them, whether catching them off guard with a question or a flying eraser. He provided me with a great deal of information, and advice. He was a great mentor and photographer, he also took my wedding pictures. He will be missed. Midge Hollenbeck Abston

JP Judy Roth Phelps June 16 at 8:16 AM

Whenever I called on Sunday mornings and asked for a ride to church, he never said no. Guess he figured I needed all the help I could get.

LG

Leah Griswold posted:

Rented his house on Pine St. When I first moved to Eustis. Was a great landlord for 4 years. My condolences to his family.

June 15 at 6:06 PM

CC

Cathy Clark posted:

Coach Kelsey was a great teacher and so full of personality! EHS students were blessed to have him. He photographed our wedding. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends.

June 15 at 6:04 PM

KM

Kelley Eveland Mcmanaman posted:

Along with everyone else who knew Coach Kelsey, I loved this guy. Swim team, Crystal River, marine biology class, flying chalkboard erasers, and all. I have several photos he took around campus of us students being silly and one of Mr Hamilton walking a panther on a leash around a pep rally. Fun, wholesome, straight up kind of man who will be missed. The world could use more Coach Kelseys.

June 15 at 1:40 PM



Tribute Wall

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NT

Nola (Pam) Smith Tart posted:

Thanks for the memories in Marine Biology Class, and your photo shop in the closet of the room. Going to Crystal River and diving for sponges! You always had a smile and always listened to all your children. It didn't even stop after we graduated. I remember you took our wedding photos for us. I know there is a special place in heaven for you and the angels are glad that you are finally home. Our condolences to your family and friends may they be comforted just knowing where you are. With deep sympathy and love, Jim and Pam Smith Tart

June 15 at 1:29 PM

FM

Ford Matthews posted:

Swim team, Crystal River, Rock Springs, Earth Science in 7th grade, Marine Biology. I taught Oceanography, I still love to swim and visit Crystal River to fish when I get to Florida. Thanks for the wonderful wedding pictures you took for Karen and I. Just a few memories. I will miss you but will always have a place on my heart. Thanks Mr. Kelsey. May the winds be fail on your stern and the sun warm on your shoulders. Sail on.

June 15 at 1:05 PM

JK

John And Cookie Kennedy posted:

We will always remember his captivating smile, love of life and endearment of his students in class, shop and swim team. He was and always will be remembered for pushing us to understand we could do better than average. Our heartfelt condolences and love go out to the Kelsey Family. John and Cookie Kennedy

June 15 at 12:00 PM



Tribute Wall

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Rabun Reynolds lit a candle in honor of William.

Coach was a sermon in shoes, He influenced the way I live my life, he is and will be a great inspiration to all who knew and spent time with him, The Panther Nation was blessed to have him, his influence is without measure. Rabun- '65



June 15 at 9:37 AM



Jill (Neimeyier) Shelton June 17 at 12:57 PM

Coach was so wonderful and very caring about his students and the town of Eustis. There are alot of people who are better because of Coach



Keith Oliver June 16 at 2:39 AM

well said, rabun ...



Barry Eveland posted:

Thanks for the memories, Coach: swimming upstream at Rock Springs before the pool opened; spearing at eating sting rays at Crystal River; riding the swim team bus home from who knows where; turning something on a lathe in shop class...and avoiding the shoe sole paddle! And through it all that irrepressible spirit and personality. Thanks, Kelsey's, for sharing him with us. What a difference he made in the lives of others. Barry EvelandEHS '70

June 15 at 6:06 AM



Barbara Murphy posted:

Just loved him! He was fun to be around. Had him for swim team and remember him as a great teacher also. Think JR had him for shop class - great teacher. He took some of my Senior pics. Also enjoyed seeing him at the first class reunion(s) at Ferran Park. We need more people like him. He will be missed, but oh the memories we have! Good, funny memories we will always have. Love and prayers to the family and to his wife of 70 years...what a testament. Fondly remembering him, Barb & JR Murphy

June 15 at 5:05 AM



Jan Theberge posted:

The Bill Kelsey's of this world make life worth living. Don't believe I ever saw him without a smile. Jan Theberge

June 15 at 4:41 AM



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Joleen Griffin posted:

What a wonderful man! He was an inspiration to many who knew him! He was my swim coach and taught me so much. One of my favorite people in high school! My condolences to the family. Thank you Coach Kelsey for all you have touched and it was many!! May you rest in peace! Joleen Egebrecht Griffin Class of 69

June 15 at 4:28 AM



Robbie Hollenbeck posted:

The angels will be playing their guitars and singing many verses of "Railroad Bill" to welcome Mr. Kelsey home. He touched so many lives in so many ways for so many years...so many great memories! We are all blessed that he touched ours.

June 15 at 3:50 AM



Lib Hipplet June 18 at 7:04 AM

Well said, Robbie, our prayers to his family, The Hippler Family



Jessie Koss Campbell posted:

A legend and such an inspiration!! I will always remember the time we spent at Crystal River snorkling and learning! He had such a great personality and made such a postivie impact on so many of us! Rest in Peace Mr. Kelsey!

June 15 at 12:09 AM



Anonymous sent an Emerald Garden Basket to the Kelsey family.



June 14 at 7:21 PM



Tribute Wall

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Merida Smith Brooks posted:

Coach Kelsey was loved by all of us, even those not on his swim team :). I will forever remember the incredible trip to Crystal River that he worked so hard to make happen for our class. What an inspiration he was...a true educator giving his life for the benefit of his students. May Father God strengthen and comfort you as you mourn your loss and at the same time celebrate the joy-filled memories of a life well lived and a legacy passed to succeeding generations! Sincerely in Christ, Merida Smith Brooks

June 14 at 5:13 PM



Rebecca Jagers lit a candle in honor of William.

Such an inspiration to so many young people. Thank you for sharing him with us while at Eustis High School. He was a wonderful example of what a good person and Godly man should be. Becky Perrine Jagers EHS Class of 1969



June 14 at 2:53 PM



Ed McKinney posted:

Sad, but inevitable, he staved it off for 94 years. And, yes, he coached swim teams, and (I was not aware of his interest in photography, a similar calling for me at about that same time.) But, No, he taught me in 8th grade Wood Shop class, something that molded my life for decades. His Shop Class would likely be outlawed now-Too Dangerous!!- Nonetheless, I won a Residential Contractor's License from his guidance/start. His tales of the Air Force's exploits in Minnesota are still in my memory. And in the end, Memories are that all we have. This from Ed McKinney, Class of '61

June 14 at 2:36 PM



Anonymous sent a Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum to the Kelsey family.



June 14 at 1:31 PM



Tribute Wall

William C. Kelsey

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AL

Anne Douglas Lanier posted:

So sorry to hear of Coach Kelsey's death. Heartfelt sympathies sent to the family. Coach Kelsey was always a happy guy with a smile a yard wide. He was a great man and loved by all his students. He will be sorely missed. R.I.P. Coach.

June 14 at 12:36 PM

SO

Sandra Oliver posted:

I was saddened to read about the death of Coach Kelsey. My condolences to the family in their loss. He was such a good man, very easy to talk with, had a great sense of humor and I enjoyed being in some of the classes he taught. I am living in North Carolina now, so I won't be able to attend the services, but I will be thinking of you and praying for his family and friends. May God comfort you in your time of sorrow. Sandra Britt Oliver Class of 1961

June 14 at 8:50 AM



Media

William C. Kelsey
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Charles Fraser shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

June 16 at 10:05 AM





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring William by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



Scan to Visit



Hamlin & Hilbish
Funeral Directors