



Nelson H. Keener

April 19, 2016

Nelson H. Keener, 67, of Lancaster, PA, died unexpectedly on Tuesday, April 19, 2016. A native of East Donegal Township, Nelson was born in Lancaster on May 1, 1948. He was the son of the late Walter Longenecker Keener and the late Martha Miller Hernley Keener. He was married 47 years to Jean Reist Keener, also of Lancaster.

After graduating from Liberty University in 1976, Nelson developed a 25-year career as a communications executive for national ministries and non-profit organizations. This included seven years as a youth pastor, eight years as the personal executive aide to the late Rev. Jerry Falwell, eight years as the Vice President of Communications for Prison Fellowship and personal aide to the late Charles Colson, and two years as Vice President of Publishing for Word Publishing. In 1997, Nelson returned to Lancaster where he enjoyed a second career in real estate, most recently as an associate at Puffer Morris.

Nelson was a man of grace and integrity. While rooted in his strong Mennonite heritage and upbringing, Nelson continued a vibrant faith journey throughout his lifetime. He was an active member of Saint James Episcopal Church since 1997 where he served as a member of the Endowment Board, finance committee, the Vestry, and in 2002, as Senior Warden. In addition to his church life, Nelson took great pride in the City of Lancaster, supporting local businesses and service organizations. He loved spending time with his family

and was highly regarded for his easy-going, affable personality. Nelson was known for his ability to connect with people across many different backgrounds and perspectives.

In addition to his wife Jeannie, he is survived by a daughter: Dana, married to Allen Mast, Decatur, GA; a son: Wesley, married to Katherine Wallace, Durham, NC; a granddaughter, Esther Grace Keener Mast; two sisters: Audrey, married to James Hilsher, Winnipeg, Ontario; Marilyn, married to Fred Baldwin, Carlisle; three brothers: Gerald, married to Donna Zehr, Lancaster; Lamar, married to Theresa Grassel, El Cajon, CA; Arlen, married to Kathleen Boll, Columbia.

In addition to his parents, Nelson was preceded in death by two sisters: Charlene and Velma, wife of Roy Scholl.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Monday, April 25, 2016, at Saint James Episcopal Church, 119 N. Duke St, Lancaster at 11:00 AM. Family will receive guests beginning at 10:00 AM. A viewing will be held on Sunday, April 24, 2016 at Groffs Family Funeral Home, 528 Orange St, Lancaster from 4:00-6:00 PM. A private family interment ceremony will take place at Saint James Memorial Garden.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Saint James Episcopal Church.

Arrangements by Groffs Family Funeral Services.

Cemetery Details

St. James Memorial Garden

Lancaster, PA 17603

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 24. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

The Groffs Family Funeral and Cremation Services Inc
528 W Orange St.
Lancaster, PA 17603
(717) 394-5300
admin@thegroffs.com
<https://thegroffs.com/>

Visitation

APR 25. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

St. James Episcopal Church
119 N. Duke Street
Lancaster, PA 17603

Service

APR 25. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

St. James Episcopal Church
119 N. Duke Street
Lancaster, PA 17603

Tribute Wall



“ *Nelson H. Keener*

October 22, 2023 at 11:34 PM



“ *I am so sorry to hear about this. In my first professional position out of college, I had the privilege of working with Nelson. Nurturing and supportive, he would take the time to mentor me and even took me to lunch at Isaac's on several occasions to talk. This is deeply meaningful to a young person. I will Never Forget his kindness to me in a new place away from home. He loved his family deeply and talked about them lovingly at work. I respect him and am Deeply Saddened to find out about this now. My thoughts and prayers are with his wife Jeannie and grown children. May he rest in peace in the presence of the Lord always.*

Susan Kerch - June 16, 2016 at 06:27 PM



“ *Nelson was a true professional in his field, we had the privilege of holding his real estate transactions and it was an honor to know him. My prayers are and have been with his family during this time. All our hearts, prayers and thoughts are with his family during this time,*
Patti A. Connell and his friends at Land Transfer Co., Inc.

Patti A. Connell - May 21, 2016 at 08:45 AM



“ *Sharing the profound shock and sorrow with sister Marilyn, wife Jeannie, and daughter Dana. Wishing you ample time to grieve in the shelter of one another. Mary Lou Weaver Houser*

Mary Lou Weaver Houser - April 25, 2016 at 03:09 PM

SD

“ I am still reeling from the news of Nelson's homegoing. But my prayers are still with the Keener family. One thing I will always remember about Nelson (and Jeannie) was their servants heart. We were taught servant leadership at TRBC and Liberty and Nelson always exhibited that. Being from E-town he and Jeannie gave me a ride to work at the camp in Pittsburgh and I will never forget that ride.

God bless, Steve DeGroft LBC '76

Steve DeGroft - April 25, 2016 at 02:06 PM

AE

“ Nelson was a friend and co-worker with me for many years. He was a one of a kind person. And one of the nicest kind people I have known. I am fortunate to have been able to call him my friend.

Andy Esbenshade - April 25, 2016 at 07:04 AM

JS

“ Nelson was a class act and a gentleman through and through. He was a colleague and a friend.

John Spidalieri - April 24, 2016 at 07:10 PM

VK

“ My sincere sympathies to the family on the loss of Nelson. I worked with him on the Bridge to Community committee for many years and highly respected his service to the community. He will definitely be missed by many. Vickie Kutz

Vickie Kutz - April 24, 2016 at 01:53 PM

LO

“ Jeannie, Dana, Wesley and families, Nelson was indeed a very special man who touched our lives in many ways. When Bob was having those very difficult months, he was one of the wonderful supports, visiting, engaging, bringing communion, brightening Bob's days with his passionate and compelling ideas and conversation. And he will ever be remembered when we put up Ollie's Closet door in the Narthex each fall to support our adopted children at Carter and MacRae. We will carry his legacy: sunny smile, warm greetings, loving service, heartfelt prayers and passionate conversations in our hearts always. May God's strength and comfort be with you in the coming days and months and know our prayers are with you as well. Love, Lissa & Bob Olson

Lissa Olson - April 23, 2016 at 10:06 PM

GL

“ Nelson and I were friends at Kraybill Mennonite School years and years ago. It was good to read his many accomplishments in the obituary. Truly he was a man of Godly character. I'm glad I knew him when we were young. May God's comfort be very real during these sad days, weeks and months. Gloria Longenecker Lehman

Gloria Lehman - April 23, 2016 at 08:57 PM

MB

“ To Jeannie and family,
Nelson's sudden death is shocking to all of us who have known him. He was a special person and left an amazing legacy. May God grant you peace and comfort as you experience this loss and continue life without his earthly presence. May God give you courage and strength for the journey.
Glenn and Mary Bucher

Mary Bucher - April 23, 2016 at 07:47 AM

GI

“ May God comfort Jeannie and all the Keeners during this sad and difficult time. We were so sorry to hear about Nelson's passing and our hearts hurt with you, "Too soon, too soon" was the way our hearts spoke to us. We know Nelson is with Jesus, and also know how much he will be missed. With sadness and love, Giselle and David Jenkins

Giselle - April 22, 2016 at 11:12 PM



“ Be My Love Bouquet with Red Roses was purchased for the family of Nelson H. Keener.



April 22, 2016 at 10:43 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Nelson H. Keener.



April 22, 2016 at 10:15 PM

DK

“ We are sad for the family who must deal with a "sudden" death. May Nelson rest in peace and may the memories of his life sustain his family and friends. - Dave and Mary Keener. Dave, son of Edwin Keener.

Dave and Mary Keener - April 22, 2016 at 05:40 PM

JR

“ My thoughts are with you all as you go through this difficult time. It's been a while since I've attended St James, but Nelson was always so kind and welcoming - and quick with a smile!

I am so very sorry for your loss - Jenny Rodriguez

Jenny Rodriguez - April 22, 2016 at 01:42 PM

LS

“ With loving memories of Nelson, and our prayers for Jeannie and the family. Nelson was a true Christian and a precious friend. In fact he and Jeannie were our first friends when we moved to Lynchburg. As a singer with the LBC Chorale in 1972, he sang at our church in Santa Barbara, CA, and stayed as a guest in our apartment. He convinced Les to go to Lynchburg Baptist College. The rest is history! Les and I both worked for Dr. Falwell and for Nelson, and our daughter came to us from the Save-a-baby ministry. To us he was always "Nels--who else?" We'll miss his quick wit & sense of humor.



Les and Connie Schofer

Les & Connie Schofer - April 22, 2016 at 11:59 AM

GZ

“ Jean

It is with a very heavy heart of sadness I send my love and sympathy to you and your family; I cannot imagine the loss you are feeling. You and Nelson have been so inspiring to so many and I have admired and loved you both. I pray God is sending special strength to you and his love is touching you through your many friends and family. It is so hard to know why God needed Nelson so soon in his heavenly home but we know he is there in His fathers presence. I wish I could give you a huge of love in person to show my support and be there to celebrate Nelsons life. A life truly worthy of honor and celebration. I will not be able to make a trip to Pa from Nebraska just now. I do promise to make contact with you soon. Nelson would want you to remember Psalm31;24 Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.

*My deepest sympathy dear friend
Gerri Mummau Zimmerman*

Gerri Zimmerman - April 22, 2016 at 10:05 AM

JM

“ *Dear Jeannie and Children, we are at a loss of words to describe how we feel about the sudden loss of Nelson. He was kind and thoughtful and faithful. He will be greatly missed by us. Peace be to you. Robert and Jeanne Mosebach*



Jeanne Mosebach - April 22, 2016 at 09:19 AM

RM

“ Our prayerful thoughts are with you at this difficult time, Jeannie and family, as you continue to carry out God's purposes without Nelson. I look back with joy to the five years Nelson and I had a wonderful working relationship at JF Ministries. I've always marveled that you could work closely with someone for five years and never have a contentious word! Nelson was a loving person who cared enough to stay in touch throughout the years. Blessing to you! --Psalm 116:15

Ruth McClellan - April 22, 2016 at 03:25 AM