



Malcolm James "Jimmy" Keep

JUN 13, 1926 - MAR 20, 2016



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Jimmy Keep died Sunday night. He was 89. He had really wanted to make it to his 90th birthday on June 13th, but it wasn't meant to be. He was a young seventeen-year-old when his father signed for him to join the marines in June of 1943. He was considered the most combat-experienced marine of WWII living in America. His combat experience was the stuff of movies and legends. Like most WWII vets, he never considered himself a hero; he said the real heroes were the ones who never came back. This past year all of this caught up with him after Diane Hight and the Forever Young organization discovered him and honored him with a return trip to Iwo Jima. The article in The Commercial Appeal, so well-written by Tom Charlier in February, started his late bout with fame. His new-found friendship with Zach Randolph and The Grizzlies caused a stir among so many. He was a 60-year retired member of Local 474 IBEW: a skilled electrician who worked on many major projects over the years here in Memphis. Dad was proud of his union membership and boasted that he had never knowingly voted against his union in any election. He was eagerly anticipating voting this November for our first woman President. Too bad they don't take absentee ballots in heaven. Daddy was a generous man. Having grown up poor during the Great Depression and fought the war, he could not tolerate cheap people and bullies. He loved his dogs...always, always had a dog...He wanted to write his own obituary a few years ago but never got around to it. So, here it is. Although he was born in Orlando, FL on June 13, 1926, he was raised in Memphis and grew up mainly in old South Memphis. He had two sisters-long ago gone- and one brother, John, to whom he was close; he is also deceased. He was raised by his paternal grandmother and her scandalous boyfriend John Walford Lindsey. He has forever considered "Daddy Walford" his father, adored the man. His real father was Benjamin James Keep and his mother, who he never knew and died in his early childhood, was Ruth Bach Keep. He married Helen Patterson and had two children,



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Mickey Keep and Teresa Ann Keep Harris Reeves, who died thirteen years ago. His first wife also died thirteen years ago. His second wife, Audrey, whom he adored, died four years ago. His grandchildren are in order of birth: Jamie Harris, Stefanie Keep, Liz Ann Harris, Lindsey Keep, and Michael Keep. He also has many great-grandchildren. Daddy knew his baseball. He hated the interleague play with a passion and hated the designated hitter rule. He was a true sports fan and knew his three major sports in and out, especially the Memphis Grizzlies, and especially his new-found hero, Zach Randolph. Old Dude also never missed a Memphis Tiger football game, through thick and thin, mostly thin. Daddy's true love, of course, was golf. He had a hole-in-one, finally, when he was in his seventies. Took him long enough. He had the worst swing of anyone you could imagine. He played with the same group of guys, all younger than him, for over forty years. He had faults. And I won't mention them. And shortcomings. But I promised I wouldn't list them here, so I won't. He hated those obituaries that said all the usual flowery stuff about the dearly departed and begged me not to have anything like that written about him...not to worry, Daddy. A converted Catholic, he never gave up his religion and was grateful for his early relationships with old-time priests like Monsignor Harold Shea at old St. Thomas parish where he was an early member. Daddy was also crazy about my wife, Denise Keep, who loved him dearly. He mostly loved her for her cooking. "Papaw" will also be missed by her two children, Ben and Hannah Purvis, to whom he was so generous and for whom they are so grateful. Our home will not be the same without him. Thanks Brittany and Yolanda of Crossroads Hospice Care for your especially loving tender kindness. We're gonna miss Old Dude. I already do. Visitation 6-8 p.m. on Tuesday, March 22 and funeral service at 10 a.m. Wednesday, March 23, all at Memorial Park Funeral Home. Please remember Forever Young Senior Veterans in lieu of flowers: Forever Young, P.O. Box 1381 Collierville, TN foreveryoungvets.org.



Tribute Wall

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CD

Cheryl Dean posted:

This is why I read obituaries. It really is a joyous feeling to find someone with such a zeal for living and making their opinions known. For them or a loved one, since Mr. Jimmy didn't get around to doing it, to express that so well in their "tribute" is heartwarming. My condolences to the family. No doubt he will be missed. Mrs. D

March 22 at 9:06 AM

JL

John Lewis posted:

Truly a member of the generation of Americans who saved the world. As a Marine, Jimmy Keep fought in the one battle that is iconic for the Marine Corps, a battle that is still talked about with awe and wonder at Parris Island and San Diego. A wonderful tribute to a father written by his son. Rest easy Marine. Someone else will assume the watch now. Saepe Expertus, Semper Fidelis, Fratres Aeterni

March 21 at 1:36 PM



Memories only last if you share them

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



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