



Richard "Butch" Kelly

May 12, 1942 - January 16, 2025

Richard "Butch" Kelly, age 82, of Catawba, Virginia died, Thursday, January 16, 2025, at Roanoke Memorial Hospital. He was born in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania on May 12, 1942, to the late Carmel and Dorothy Fink Kelly.

Butch retired from Roanoke County Schools where he was a science teacher and energy manager. He was an avid volunteer for Nature Conservancy and many other organizations. He never met a stranger and had an insatiable appetite for learning.

He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Betty Kelly; daughters, Lisa Thorne-Izes (Craig), Marlene Craig, and Rachel Ulrey (Chris); son Patrick Kelly; grandchildren, Diana Thorne, Justin Craig, Jonathan Thorne (Phoenix), Bradley Craig, Hannah Ulrey, and Nicole Izes; sisters, Rebecca Ketterman (Gary), and Teresa Sunday (Gary); brother, Carmel Kelly (Janet); and numerous nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews.

A memorial service will be conducted Saturday, January 18, 2025, at 2:00 pm in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel with the Deacon Mike Ellerbrock officiating. The family will receive friends from 1:00 – 2:00 pm prior to the service on Saturday, January 18, 2025.

In lieu of flowers donations can be made to [preserve.nature.org](https://www.preserve.nature.org) or Nature

Conservancy Attn: Treasury, 4245 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 100, Arlington, Va.
22203.

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 18. 1:00 PM (ET)

McCoy Funeral Home
150 Country Club Dr. S.W.
Blacksburg, VA 24060
(540) 552-3211
mccoyfuneralhome@verizon.net
<https://mccoyfuneralhome.com>

Memorial Service

JAN 18. 2:00 PM (ET)

McCoy Funeral Home Chapel
150 Country Club Dr S.W.
Blacksburg, VA 24060

Tribute Wall

AN

“ Butch led a tour that gave us more memories than a 1-week cruise. He was good natured, adaptable and knowledgeable. Wish we had lived closer to Roanoke. Not surprised he was a Nature Conservancy supporter..
He left his mark and blessed memories that will be forever.

Alex Newmark - January 22, 2025 at 03:34 PM

JD

“ The Nature Conservancy is saddened by the loss of a great supporter, avid naturalist, family man, teacher and leader. Butch spent three decades giving back to our natural world by volunteering with The Nature Conservancy, primarily at Falls Ridge Preserve. He left an amazing legacy. I am forever grateful to Butch for taking the time to show me Falls Ridge when I first started with TNC. He didn't just “show” me the preserve, he taught me about what made Falls Ridge special. He taught me about travertine waterfalls and pointed out where the rare wildflowers bloomed. He talked about the furnace and the history of the property. I think these powerful words best sum up Butch's love for Falls Ridge and the great outdoors. I hope to continue honoring him through service, curiosity and exploration. During a spring 2012 interview with him for the volunteer newsletter he said, “Being at Falls Ridge creates a sense of peace. Where else can one go and see rare wildflowers, exciting geology or hear the call of a raven? This is truly a place of peace and tranquility. I am thankful to my Creator that I have had this opportunity to give back.” Our sincere condolences to his family.
[The Nature Conservancy Virginia]

Jennifer Dalke - January 21, 2025 at 10:57 AM

RW

“ So sorry to hear this. I taught school for many years with Butch. He was a great guy and a great friend. He was always fun to be around. We enjoyed sharing jokes. His family is in my thoughts and prayers during this sad time. Ralph Webster

Ralph Lee Webster - January 21, 2025 at 10:50 AM

DH

“ A bright light has left us. Butch was a true friend to all of us who cherish wild flowers and native plants. I had the great privilege to participate in a few of his nature hikes. My sincere condolences to his family and many friends.

Deborah Hamilton - January 20, 2025 at 08:28 AM

JK

“ Our thoughts and prayers to the friends and family of Butch Kelly

Jeffrey Kaldahl - January 20, 2025 at 07:55 AM

AR

“ Butch started off as a client and became a friend. I always enjoyed visiting his property with him and bumping in to him at VT basketball games. He will be missed.

Andy Rosenberger - January 19, 2025 at 04:14 PM

BT

“ I had Mr. Kelly for 7th grade science in '76. He was an awesome teacher, very passionate about teaching. One day he threw a chalk board eraser across the room to hit a very disruptive student in the head. It was a perfect shot! In that day teachers could do that without backlash! RIP Mr. Kelly, we need more teachers like you!!

Brian Tanner - January 18, 2025 at 08:40 PM

BB

“ My mother and I remember him fondly. We are very sorry for your loss.

Betty Barton and Melinda B Poag

Betty Barton - January 18, 2025 at 05:44 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Richard "Butch" Kelly.

January 18, 2025 at 02:25 PM

MA

“ My sincere sympathy to you all at this impactful loss to so many. Butch was the most dedicated volunteer and expert on wildflowers and readily spoke to groups, attended wildflower walks, and shared his expert knowledge humbly. He will be greatly missed. We of the Wildflower Garden on Mill Mountain have enjoyed his gracious sharing of knowledge so many times.

*Warmly,
Martha Anderson
Mill Mountain Garden Club*

Martha Anderson - January 18, 2025 at 11:08 AM

LE

“ May Gods grace and peace be with all.

Larry Eby - January 18, 2025 at 08:03 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Richard "Butch" Kelly.

January 18, 2025 at 07:54 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Richard "Butch" Kelly.



January 18, 2025 at 07:54 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Richard "Butch" Kelly.

January 17, 2025 at 10:14 PM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Richard "Butch" Kelly.



January 17, 2025 at 10:14 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Richard "Butch" Kelly.

January 17, 2025 at 09:44 PM



“ Tender Tribute was purchased for the family of Richard "Butch" Kelly.



January 17, 2025 at 09:44 PM

RC

“ Shirley and I are deeply saddened to read of Butch's passing. He was a great friend and respected teacher. He never knew a stranger, always had a big smile and a kind word for those he encountered. He will be missed by many friends and family. We send our warmest condolences to Betty and family in this difficult time.

Rick and Shirley Calhoun - January 17, 2025 at 09:25 PM

SD

“ Sandra D. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Richard "Butch" Kelly.

Sandra D. - January 17, 2025 at 07:33 PM

FN

“ So sorry for your loss. I met Butch and Betty Kelly when I joined the wildflower group. I was eager to learn the wildflowers and he was an awesome teacher and loved sharing his knowledge. What a great loss and he will be truly missed by every one who knew him. frances newcomb

frances newcomb - January 17, 2025 at 04:29 PM

BS

Betty and family. I am so sorry to hear about the passing of Butch. Memories of him are treasures to carry with you always. He was loved by so many people who knew him. He may be gone but he won't be forgotten. Brenda Satchell . Blue Ridge Native Flowers.

Brenda Satchell - January 17, 2025 at 10:33 PM

CF

“ So very sorry to see this sad news. My deepest condolences as you cope with this sad loss. Butch was an outstanding educator and all around great guy. Sending love during this difficult time.

Cristina Flippen - January 17, 2025 at 04:18 PM

DM

“ I am so sorry for your loss. I knew him as a teacher and friend for many years in Vinton. He had a great sense of humor and knew how to make people smile! I pray the Lord will get you through this difficult time. 🙏❤️

Deborah McDaniel - January 17, 2025 at 03:12 PM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Richard "Butch" Kelly.



January 17, 2025 at 03:09 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Richard "Butch" Kelly.

January 17, 2025 at 03:09 PM

MM

“ Butch and Betty came to the kick-off event for the Catawba Valley Keepers. It was wonderful to hear him speak about the pollinator field and quail release effort. a true man of conservation!

Mary Ashby McDonald - January 17, 2025 at 12:57 PM

LS

“ Leann S. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Richard "Butch" Kelly.

Leann S. - January 17, 2025 at 11:18 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Richard "Butch" Kelly.

January 17, 2025 at 08:12 AM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Richard "Butch" Kelly.



January 17, 2025 at 08:12 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Richard "Butch" Kelly.

January 16, 2025 at 08:24 PM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Richard "Butch" Kelly.



January 16, 2025 at 08:24 PM