



Kenneth Byron Tanksley

July 1, 1946 - December 22, 2025

Kenneth Tanksley, beloved husband, father and papa left this world on December 22, 2025. Born on July 1, 1946 to Cecil Tanksley and Christena Marrs Tanksley Duncan in Mound City, IL, Ken spent his childhood in the area of Cairo, Illinois, graduating from Cairo High School in 1964. After graduation, Ken joined the United States Air Force and was stationed in the Philippines during the Vietnam War. After reaching the rank of Airman 2nd Class, Ken was honorably discharged from the service and settled in the St. Louis, MO area.

The love of Ken's life was Judy Callis Tanksley from Miller City, IL. While they had grown up and attended the same high school together, it wasn't until a chance meeting while Ken was stationed in Biloxi, Mississippi and Judy was on her Senior Trip in Biloxi that they began their romance. Through their life together, they moved for Ken's job and lived in St. Louis, MO; Longview, TX; Omaha, NE; McAllen, TX; Quitman, TX and Muskogee, OK. All of these moves kept their family close and led to Ken and Judy having close friends in many locations. Throughout the difficulties in their lives, they supported and loved each other. They shared 57 years of marriage and every year will be remembered fondly.

To their union was born Cari Ann Tanksley Laque and Kenneth Brent Tanksley. Ken was a loving and devoted father and as the children grew, he became well known and beloved by their closest friends. Ken's most infamous stories were about Cari's friend who always saved her mashed potatoes for the end of the meal, like it was dessert, or Brent's friend who was the only one to stay and help clean up after a New Year's Eve party.

As Cari and Brent became adults, they each met and brought new additions to the family. Cari met Mario Laque in McAllen, TX and stayed in Texas when Ken and Judy moved to Muskogee, OK the first time in 1995. While it's hard for any dad to see his baby girl grow up, Mario was welcomed to the family, and Ken and Judy now had a family of 5. In 2002 in Muskogee, OK, Brent met Alisha Cardwell and they married in 2003. Ken made sure to tease Alisha as much as possible when she and Brent were dating to make sure she could fit into the family dynamic, but she won him over. All holiday gatherings and get togethers were full of fun and laughter.

Then came the grandchildren and Ken became Papa to Jake Laque, Kennedi Tanksley, Luke Laque and Karson Tanksley. Ken doted on his grandchildren which kept all family

gatherings even more interesting. He delighted in finding the loudest toy or the toy with the most pieces and those gifts were required to go home with them.

Ken was also the family videographer and there are hours of video where he recorded all family big events and activities. Ken was also a big gift giver. He has, over the years, surprised Judy with cars or jewelry for big occasions or no occasion at all. He would squirrel away money in the pockets of his suit jackets and then take all he had hidden and buy her a new bracelet, earrings or necklace.

In 2012, Ken retired and two years later, he and Judy moved back to Muskogee. Ken and Judy took their first vacation together alone in 2015 to enjoy the beaches in the Bahamas and loved their retirement together. As involved grandparents, they continued to visit San Antonio where Cari and Mario lived and hosted Brent and Alisha at their house most Sundays for lunch after church. Ken swore that sometimes that was the only full meal he got all week.

The last few years, while he may have slowed down physically, there was never a slowing in his wit or his teasing.

Ken was preceded in death by his father, Cecil Tanksley, his mother Christena Duncan, his sister Carlene and her husband Bud Haney. He is survived by his wife Judy of the home, his daughter Cari Laque, his son Brent and wife Alisha, sisters Stella Hoover, Janet Evans, Debbie Staples, Donna Williams, and brother Carl Tanksley. Grandchildren Jake Laque, Luke Laque, Kennedi Tanksley and Karson Tanksley, many cousins, relatives and friends.

He will be missed by all who knew him.

Viewing for Ken will be 10:30AM Monday, December 29, 2025 at Muskogee First Church of the Nazarene followed by his celebration of life service at 12:30PM with Pastor Drew Dinnel officiating. Committal prayers and interment will follow at 2:30PM in the Fort Gibson National Cemetery with full military honors being observed.

The family of Kenneth Byron Tanksley has entrusted his care, service and burial to Clifford D Garrett Family Funeral Home and Crematory, Muskogee. 918-910-8883.

Online condolences may be left for the Tanksley family at clifforddgarrettfamilyfh.com

<https://www.youtube.com/@muskogeechurch9010/streams>

Cemetery Details

Fort Gibson National Cemetery

1423 Cemetery Road
Fort Gibson, OK 74434

Previous Events

Viewing

DEC 29. 10:30 AM - 12:15 PM (CT)

First Church of the Nazarene
2700 East Peak Blvd
Muskogee , OK 74403

Celebration of Life

DEC 29. 12:30 PM (CT)

First Church of the Nazarene
2700 East Peak Blvd
Muskogee , OK 74403

Committal Service

DEC 29. 2:30 PM (CT)

Fort Gibson National Cemetery
1423 Cemetery Road
Fort Gibson, OK 74434

Tribute Wall

RF

“ Ronald Talley & Families purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Kenneth Byron Tanksley.



Ronald Talley & Families - December 29, 2025 at 10:08 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Kenneth Byron Tanksley.



December 26, 2025 at 06:07 PM



“ Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Kenneth Byron Tanksley.



December 26, 2025 at 02:15 PM

AK

“ Art & Sharon McAnarney, Tom & Kitty purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Kenneth Byron Tanksley.



Art & Sharon McAnarney, Tom & Kitty - December 26, 2025 at 12:27 PM

EK

“ Eric & Angie Kehmeier purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Kenneth Byron Tanksley.



Eric & Angie Kehmeier - December 24, 2025 at 02:14 PM