



John Kenneth Harris

July 28, 1929 - July 29, 2017

John K. Harris, 88, of Terrell, passed away July 29, 2017, surrounded by family. He was born July 28, 1929 in Farmersville, TX to the late John S. and Mayda Thompson Harris.

John graduated from Farmersville High School in 1947. Next door to his dad's auto repair shop was a funeral home where he began work part time. It was here he learned of his compassion and caring for the deceased. John decided to go to mortuary school and attended Gupton Jones School of Mortuary Science (later known as Dallas Institute of Funeral Service) graduating in 1949.

Afterwards, John entered the U.S. Army during the Korean Conflict. He was originally assigned to a platoon whose job was to disarm mines in the field. Once the Army learned of his embalming skills, he was assigned to the 114th Grays Registration Company, where he managed the preparation rooms, airplane disaster recovery, embalming, and the shipping of deceased veterans back home to their families. It was here that John developed the expertise of restoring a body. In his trade, he was a true artist, knowing fully well how important seeing a loved one would be to a family., Every service man or woman was given the utmost respect, right down to their boots.

After being discharged, John moved to Terrell in 1954 and joined Anderson-

Clayton Bros. Funeral Home. It was through mutual relationships with the Claytons that John met Joan Kelpen and they were married February 18, 1955.

While at Anderson-Clayton, John's well-known skills in restorative art enabled him to train many apprentice funeral directors and embalmers. His passion was to compassionately serve families and the motto he and others kept was "serve above self." John remained with Anderson-Clayton until his retirement in 1979.

Retirement was not what he thought, so in 1980 John opened Harris Feed Store. As many are aware, he "sometimes" sold feed, but the store became a more of a place for farmers, ranchers, highway patrol, or anyone passing by to hang out, have a bit of lunch, and tell stories. At this place, the problems of the world were discussed, some solved, but by far, most important, were the many deep relationships formed around an old wooden table and a pot belly stove.

John operated the feed store until selling the business in 1994, after which he and Joan, both now being retired, began traveling around the United States in a Fifth Wheel. During their many travels, John and Joan saw most of the United States and Canada, while making many deep friendships, most of which have lasted until now and will continue for Joan.

John also served, and retired after 32 years, from the Terrell Volunteer Fire Department. It was here that he and other dedicated community members helped form the Rural Fire District to ensure fire protection for those living outside the city limits. He was especially proud there was enough money raised to purchase more than one fire truck for rural fire departments.

John was a member of Colquitt Road Church of Christ,

He is preceded in death by his parents, daughter Jennie Harris, son Jeff Harris, granddaughter Jennie Slayton and sister Jerry Bates.

Surviving him are his wife Joan Harris of Terrell; daughter Jill Slayton-Cauble and husband Jerry of Terrell; grandchildren Lindsey Webb and husband Justin of Terrell and Hannah Mack and husband Justin of Terrell; great-grandchildren: Brayden, Tenley and Style; brother-in-law Earl Bates and his wife Phyllis of Farmersville; niece, Kaye Wilson and her daughter Shelby; nephew, Paul Bates and his wife Kerri and his children Justin and Breann, all of Farmersville; and a host of friends.

Funeral services will be at 10 a.m. Thursday, August 3, 2017 at Max Slayton Funeral Chapel, with interment to follow with military honors at Oakland Memorial Park. Family will receive friends from 6 to 8 p.m., Wednesday, August 2 at max Slayton Funerals and Cremations, 642 N. Rockwall Ave., Terrell, TX 75160. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Colquitt Road Church of Christ, 1350 Colquitt Road, Terrell, TX 75160 or Terrell Volunteer Fire Dept., P.O. Box 2071, Terrell, TX 75160.

Cemetery Details

Oakland Memorial Park

1000 W. Moore Avenue
Terrell, TX 75160

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 2. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Max Slayton Funerals and Cremations
642 N Rockwall Avenue
Terrell, TX 75160
(972) 524-0881
<https://www.maxslaytonfunerals.com>

Funeral Service

AUG 3. 10:00 AM (CT)

Max Slayton Funerals and Cremations
642 N Rockwall Avenue
Terrell, TX 75160
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Tribute Wall



“ *John Kenneth Harris*

October 08, 2023 at 07:43 PM



“ *I just found this obituary announcing John's death today. I am so saddened to learn of his death. I was born in Terrell and lived there until I left for the army and later college. I was one of John's fellow volunteer firemen for 5 years and it was a privilege to have served with him. May God bless his soul!*
Gough Alexander

Gough Alexander - August 16, 2017 at 03:27 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of John Kenneth Harris.*



August 02, 2017 at 10:33 AM



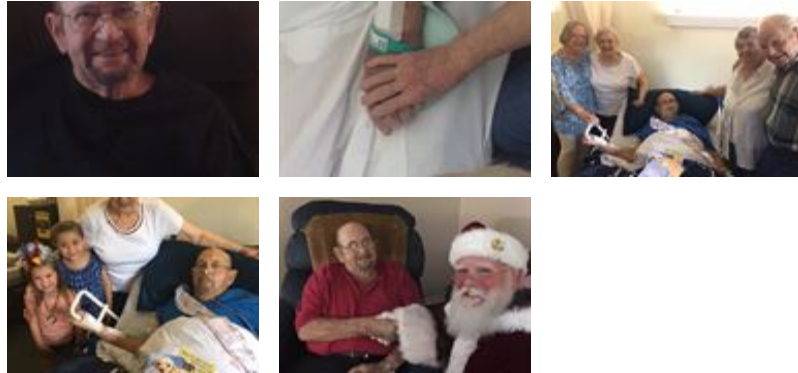
“ *Vicki and Mike Maltese purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of John Kenneth Harris.*



Vicki and Mike Maltese - August 02, 2017 at 08:17 AM



“ 64 files added to the album Life Tributes



Max Slayton Funerals & Cremations - August 02, 2017 at 08:14 AM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of John Kenneth Harris.



August 01, 2017 at 09:49 PM



“ Your Woodbury Family: Todd, Nate, Julie & Karen purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of John Kenneth Harris.



Your Woodbury Family: Todd, Nate, Julie & Karen - August 01, 2017 at 03:01 PM



“ A New Sunrise Spray was purchased for the family of John Kenneth Harris.



August 01, 2017 at 12:42 PM



“ Tim and April Mack and Family purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of John Kenneth Harris.



Tim and April Mack and Family - July 31, 2017 at 03:32 PM



“ Clifton and Laurie Freeman purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of John Kenneth Harris.



Clifton and Laurie Freeman - July 31, 2017 at 01:02 PM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of John Kenneth Harris.



July 31, 2017 at 12:58 PM

ST

“ My prayers are with your family John was one of a kind all can say is I was so glad to have known him he was so helpful to me in so many ways we had so many good times with the fire department he will be missed GOD BLESS YOU IN THIS TIME

SAMMY TURNER - July 29, 2017 at 11:43 PM

JC

“ Jill, you and the family are in our thoughts and prayers.

JeMese Chamberlain - July 29, 2017 at 11:43 PM

LB

“ One of my favorite person's I have had the privilege of knowing in my life! My love & prayers for Joan, Jill & the whole family! Love you, Leah Butterworth

Leah Butterworth - July 29, 2017 at 11:39 PM



Jill I loved your Dad and your mom it was my private to have know him and up take care my prayers always to you and your family loss my prayers always cor mama Joan always

Mary Casarez - July 30, 2017 at 07:13 AM



We are so sorry to hear of your family's loss. Our prayers are with you.

Kay Stinnett - August 02, 2017 at 02:39 PM

CH

“ Jill & family, so sorry to hear about your Dad. He was good to me when I needed help with Mr.Rorie. I will never forget him for that. Let us know if we can help somehow.

Cindy & Rick Hunter - July 29, 2017 at 09:52 PM

CS

“ Joan, Jill & family, we are so sorry to hear about the loss of your Husband, Daddy, & Grandpa. I saw him a few weeks ago & he gave me a big hug & said Karo it's good to see you! I remember what good friends he & my Daddy were through the years! Keeping all of you in our thoughts & prayers! With Deepest Sympathy & Love,
Wilson & Karo Stewart

Carolyn (Karo) Stewart - July 29, 2017 at 08:28 PM

SN

“ Joan, Jill and Family, I am so sorry for your loss. May the Lord be your Peace through these days ahead. Much Love, Sandra Hulon Nichols

Sandra Nichols - July 29, 2017 at 07:52 PM