



## Kelly Clay Cook

March 12, 2021

Kelly Clay Cook, 72, of Manassas, Virginia, passed away on March 12, 2021. Kelly was born in Kansas to the late Corlin and Lois Cook. Kelly attended Wichita State University on an athletic scholarship and earned his bachelor's degree in Education. He was a retired Army veteran with over 20 years of service.

Kelly was a longtime member of NORVA Rod & Gun Club and the Manassas Men's Club, of which he served as president for some time, as well as other gun and knife clubs. Kelly was well traveled and found himself having hunting and fishing adventures with friends and family around the world, including Africa, Korea, Germany, New Zealand, Canada, and all over the United States. He loved hunting and fishing and remained active in gun and knife shows up and down the East Coast. Kelly most of all loved meeting people, making friends, and his grandchildren.

Kelly is survived by his wife, Sharon; Son, Clifford Cook; Daughter, Natalie cook; Grandchildren, Cyilus Sikes, Leila Craig, and Daxton Cook; Brothers Mike and Riley Cook. He was preceded in death by his parents and sister, Corlys.

A memorial service will be held at a later date, to be determined, at St. Thomas United Methodist Church in Manassas.

# Comments

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“ I met Kelly about eleven years ago when my wife and I moved into the house across the street from him. He and Sharon always greeted us with kindness and a smile. We would chat across the street while I was working in the yard. He would remind me that if I kept watering the grass, it would grow and that I'd just have to cut it again. His sense of humor, his gentle kindness and humility all reflected his deep love of God. We talked a little about our days playing football in our youth but he never revealed to me what I have since learned - that he was an incredible athlete who earned an athletics scholarship to college. In keeping with his kindness and humble nature Kelly, was a very good listener and very positive person. I am very sorry that we have lost Kelly in this life. I find myself looking out my window to Kelly and Sharon's driveway across the street and wishing I could see him again, hear his voice, share a hearty laugh and just an overall good vibe!!! My deepest condolences to Sharon, Kelly's grandchildren and all his family and friends.

**Saffan Andolsun** - April 26 at 07:42 PM

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“ Hello I'm brandon I was his waiter from pho sapa many years he would come to visit us at the restaurant one of my favorite customers we always talked about fishing and knife making he will be dearly missed My Condolences to the family and loved ones

**Brandon Critzer** - April 11 at 11:38 PM

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“ This is very emotional for me to write. I remember the first day we met for two a days in 1967 at Wichita State University.. He was a very personable man that quickly became a leader on the team. I loved playing with him and being around Kelly. He had amazing intellect and a passion for football. In 1970 both of our lives changed and with the tragedy he again reflected his traits and helped pull a splinter group of players together. We lost touch as he and I both went in two separate military directions. I am sorry we never got to meet at one of the Memorial services over the years however his name and a lot of memories about him were always talked about and shown the respect he always deserved. Although we haven't talked for a number of years, I will miss him in my heart and the fact that the Lord called him up brings a smile to me as I look forward to seeing him again.

**Bill Burch** - March 30 at 11:13 AM

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“ My Condolences to All that Loved and Cared about Him.

KELLY---one of the good guys,...YES, for Real,---one of the Good Guys !

We met back in the early 1990s at a Hugo's show. But, most had heard (of) Him before they met Him. Because, back in those days, He would (at the shows) Chop pieces of metal out of a steel anvil with a long "Master Don" blade! (That special Master Don Metal,...another story.) That anvil had a slot cut in the top to insert the tip end of that long blade and Kelly would bend that long Master Don blade 45-50-55 degrees from vertical to show that it would spring-back without a permanent bend. You could hear His loud voice while he demonstrated that superior metal blade (chopping the anvil). So, after entering a show, if you wondered if He was there, all you had to do was listen for a few minutes,...if He was there, you would Hear Him,--- Chopping that anvil !

One special memory, at a Hugo show, a like new in the original white box, was a pistol that Kelly specialized in. A vendor, in a visual line with Kelly's table had it for sale at a very reasonable price. It was in my hand and my wallet was coming out, when I noticed Kelly jumping and waving His arms in the background behind the vendor. When He caught my attention, I asked the vendor if I could show it to a friend. That item in the pretty white box, with me, walked a couple of isles over to Kelly's table. He seemed a little dejected, and explained He was trying to do a deal to get it. Well, after a few minutes, He found out it was still for sale, (but the next person like me would buy it!). I watched His table while He found a way to get it. That item and the circumstances that led up to Kelly acquiring it, were the basis of many fun discussions. There are many, many more good Stories from the many shows we attended. With all the family, Church, friends, hunting adventures and interests He had,...One thing you can say about Kelly,...He lived Life !

Kelly---A true Artist,...there are many of His works of art in the neighborhood (even one of His Master Don knives!). A true "Good Guy" Friend,...always with a smile and a positive welcoming presence (and always with an extra chair for visitors). He would give a,..."Bye" or "See Ya", when we parted,...He will be sorely missed (it is hard to believe,...we just talked!).

So long,...Kelly...God Speed!

Dan

Dan - March 23 at 08:29 PM

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“ That is me and my papa  
Leila his granddaughter



leila - March 23 at 01:19 PM

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“ Kelly would spend so much time with me I am his granddaughter Leila. When I was a baby he would come by to see me and play. He would hold me when my mom and Kelly where talking. It hit me so hard that my Best friend had passed. It was so hard to know that Covid has taking my papa. I sat in my room asking why did you take such a good man's life telling myself over and over that he did not deserve it and he didn't.



leila - March 23 at 01:16 PM

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“ My deepest sympathies go out to Kelly's family. Kelly was someone that always made your day when you saw him. Kelly always had a big smile on his face and went out of his way to hello to myself and my wife Sherry. I certainly had the pleasure of knowing Kelly for many years with doing multiple knife shows with him. If there was ever a question that came my way about a Remington knife, I always sent that person to Kelly for professional input.  
Kelly was a very kind hearted person and will be someone I will so miss as time goes on!  
Will miss you my friend and God Bless.

Jerry Stein - March 22 at 10:37 AM

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“ Kelly's football locker was next to mine at Wichita State. He was a senior when I was a sophomore. We dressed and undressed every day before and after practice and games elbow to elbow... He was a senior leader that I looked up to and was always a guiding light during those difficult two a day practices. I will always remember Kelly as a leader and a strong, powerful, kind man... Bruce Gerleman Wichita State football wide receiver class of 1973.  
God Bless you Kelly Cook.

**Bruce W. Gerleman** - March 20 at 03:40 PM

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“ Kelly was a great person - one of the "good people" - always generous, thoughtful and willing to share his knowledge of firearms and knives. We travelled together to many knife shows. The trips themselves were a time for comraderie as was the time at the shows seeing and greeting old friends. One of the biggest pluses, however, associated with these shows was going back to our favorite restaurants to enjoy some local and exotic foods, especially for Kelly - he had a knack for finding some great food places!

I am privileged to have known and been good friends with him. Weidmannsheil, Kelly.

**Doug Growitz** - March 19 at 07:09 PM

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“ Our deepest condolences go out to Sharon and all of Kelly's family. Kelly was a stalwart member of the Manassas Men's Club and led the club for many years with his kindness, generosity, and a great laugh. His loss will leave an unfillable void in the club and the community he served so well. We were blessed to know him.

John Snider  
Manassas Men's Club

**John Snider** - March 19 at 04:36 PM

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“ Sending love to Kelly's family. I met him at a WSU '70 memorial and he was so gracious to me. I have never forgotten how touched I was by his kindness.

**Elizabeth Wilson Winterbone** - March 19 at 02:50 PM

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“ Kelly was one of the best. We did many shows together, did many deals and shared many meals. I remember one deal that took all afternoon at a show: involved a couple of knives, a gold double eagle, some silver and some cash. We went back and forth for hours. I get a smile on my face every time I think about it. It was a lot of fun. And then there was the deal on the Jimmy Lyle knife, we laughed about that one for years. I lost a good friend, but the real sad part is the world loses without Kelly's positive influence. I'll catch up with you sometime buddy, later!

Reg Hazlett Velocity Ammo

**Regenald S. Hazlett** - March 18 at 09:10 PM

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“ All of his many friends in NORVA and VGCA miss you so much. None of us will ever forget you and your cheerful personality and your truly incredible skills as a true artist.

We all extend our most sincere condolences to your family. You lived a good life and we all are thankful we had the opportunity to count you as a close friend over these many years. Rest in peace. Wm. Addison Hurst , Secy. NORVA Rod and Gun Club and Past Pres. VGCA

**WILLIAM ADDISON HURST** - March 18 at 08:51 PM

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“ It just doesn't seem real that Kelly is no longer with us. My deepest condolences to his family. My father and I did Gun Shows with Kelly, in fact he gave me my first opportunity to sell ammo. Kelly let me have half of one of his 8 ft. tables at Dale City Gun Show 8 years ago....now our company is one of the biggest Ammo companies on the east coast. I owe an enormous amount to Kelly. We did many shows together up until a year ago when things were disrupted. Kelly was an amazing wealth of knowledge, people would come by all weekend to get his opinion on a particular firearm. Kelly was a mentor to me and I will miss him a great deal.

David Hazlett  
Velocity Ammo

**David Hazlett** - March 18 at 08:37 PM

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“ My sincerest condolences to Kelly's family. To say that Kelly was a good man is an understatement. When I first joined the Virginia Gun Collectors Association Kelly was one of the first to greet me and make me feel welcome and over the years he has always been generous with his time and knowledge. He will be missed by all who had the privilege to know him.

Marc Gorelick

Marc Gorelick - March 18 at 06:30 PM

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“ My condolences to the family.

Kelly was a great and caring man. He would help most anyone and always had an ear to lend or a hand and his words of wisdom when you needed them. His laugh was jolly and contagious. It was an honor to have known him and to have gotten to spend time with him. I'll cherish the memories of our hunting trips and time together.

Jason Valentine - March 18 at 09:18 AM

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“ My heart sincerely goes out to the the two of you. What an amazing father... What an amazing man! I cannot count the number of times I have walked into 911 Bay Street in Woodbridge, Virginia as a teenager. Mr. Cook always had a huge smile and welcoming glow. I would almost always walk in through the garage and he would be working on repairing some firearms and other things he would do in his workshop. I spent many nights there with his kids which were my friends and the man sure knew how to cook a good meal. Every time I would step foot into his home... I felt like family... even when sneaking in at 2am. Mr. Cook was dedicated to his kids and provided food, shelter, and safety for them which I knew that was his priority. I am very sad to have learned he passed away at such a young age but I know he probably spent his last years doing something he loved. I know the hurt is painful and there are probably some things left unsaid.... but I know the man loved his family and that one day you will see him again. You guys have great memories to look back on but he will always be on your mind and because of that... always in your heart. To that... celebrate his life... and I wish you both the best while you struggle with this loss. My father passed 7 months ago and I think of him everyday. In my eyes, your Mr. Cook was truly an honorable man.

Juan Giusti - March 18 at 01:37 AM

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“ Patti Russell Johnston lit a candle in memory of Kelly Clay Cook



**Patti Russell Johnston** - March 17 at 10:54 PM

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“ Lisa Russell Colgan lit a candle in memory of Kelly Clay Cook



**Lisa Russell Colgan** - March 17 at 10:51 PM

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“ Roger Duell

Kelly was always just a little bigger than life to me because he was such a gifted athlete and scholar at Cheney and when he went on to play for WSU football team he became a sterling example of what is so great about growing up in small town America. I will always remember how gracefully Kelly helped lead us through those heart wrenching memorial services after that terrible plane crash. Kelly lived quite a life and he cast a pretty long shadow but all you Cook boys do. Our deepest condolences to Riley and Mike and your families on Kelly's passing.

**Roger Duell** - March 17 at 10:02 PM

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“ My sincere condolences to all of Kelly's Family and Friends. May your memories of Kelly bring you comfort. I have many memories of Kelly: one of my favorites memories is Kelly cooking up frog legs in the garage at Cheney.  
Celebrating Your Life Kelly,  
Dr. Debra Galvin

**Debra Galvin** - March 17 at 08:09 PM





“ Kelly was a great athlete at Cheney High School and had a great easy going attitude and liked by all. My condo lace to the family. Ron and Linda Ball

**Linda Ball** - March 17 at 06:15 PM



“ Kelly was faithful in his attendance at St. Thomas UMC in Manassas. He greeted worshipers with a smile as they arrived and was a loyal usher. -Joyce & Frank Hale

**Joyce Hale** - March 19 at 03:22 PM



“ I first met Kelly at Dale City in 2005. He will be missed!

**scott selby** - March 24 at 10:31 AM



“ God sent Kelly into our lives in the 1980s when we were stationed in Germany. He and my husband graduated from the same German hunting course so they could pursue their passion overseas. When our family was reassigned to northern VA in 1998, Kelly and my husband got reacquainted at a gun show when they both stared at one another trying to figure out the connection. The things went quickly after that and a loving, lasting friendship that spanned the next 22 years began. Kelly got my husband hired where he worked and led him to Christ at Cokesbury Methodist Church. They worked together, worshipped together and tried all the cuisine that northern VA could offer. They hunted, fished, laughed, prayed, and established a brotherhood that had many people asking if they were “real” brothers. They were. Friendship, however, doesn’t describe what Kelly and, very soon Sharon, became in our lives. They were loving members of our family. Almost every fourth of July, New Year’s Eves, a special anniversary, a daughter’s wedding, and even a family reunion was spent together eating, laughing, sharing, and watching fireworks fall on our heads. It’s hard to capture the type of caring person that Kelly was, but a prime example was when my furry best friend was near the end and I was grieving the day to come. Kelly called and gently said he knew how hard it would be to put her down and said when the time came, he would be glad to take her for me. The offer brought tears to my eyes, but am sure he was relieved when I said I would have to be there. The last time we saw Kelly was just before Christmas when he came to our house to drop off Christmas presents. He came in wearing his signature “Kelly smile” carrying a big box of gifts for the whole family--my husband, me, our daughters and their husbands all included. He gave me a big ole Kelly hug and said he knew the girls were coming the next weekend and he wanted to get the presents there in time. This year when we learned that Kelly had the horrible virus, we prayed so hard to keep him here because we couldn’t imagine our life without his presence. But sometimes, God decides it’s time to bring his really good disciples home. And that is the only comforting thought—that he is at peace with no pain in the presence of the Lord. There will never be another Kelly and the void that he left in our lives will never be filled. We honor Kelly’s well spent life, the love he spread every day to all he met, and the Christian example he provided to those around him. We love you Kelly and Sharon and are blessed to have Kelly’s memory and Sharon’s presence to sustain us until we can meet again. As a final tribute for Kelly, the poem below captures the essence of Kelly so well... “

Touching Shoulders

There's a comforting thought at the close of the day,  
When we're weary and lonely and sad,  
That sort of grips hold of our crusty old hearts  
And bids them be merry and glad.

It gets in our souls and drives out the blues,  
And finally thrills through and through.  
It is just a sweet memory that chants a refrain  
"We're glad we touched shoulders with you!"  
Did you know you were brave, did you know you were strong?  
Did you know we were all leaning hard?  
Did you know that we waited and listened and prayed,  
And was cheered by your simplest word!  
Did you know that we longed for that smile on your face,  
for the sound of your voice ringing true?  
Did you know we grew stronger and better because  
We had merely touched shoulders with you?  
We may not have wealth, we may not be great,  
But we know we shall always be true,  
For we have in our lives that courage and love you gave  
Each time we touched shoulders with you.

**Leta & Robert Deyerle** - March 29 at 10:22 AM