



Nicholas E. Keller

April 27, 1954 - October 29, 2025

Nicholas (Nick) Edwald Keller, 71, passed away unexpectedly on October 29, 2025, at his beloved hunting land. A longtime resident of Richmond, Minnesota, Nick was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, great grandfather, and friend to many. He leaves behind a legacy built on hard work, generosity, and an enduring love for family and the outdoors.

Nick was born on April 27, 1954, in Paynesville, Minnesota, to Harold and Mary Jane (Roering) Keller, one of eleven children. He grew up in Regal, Minnesota, attended school in nearby Belgrade, and graduated from Belgrade High School in 1972.

On August 24, 1974, Nick married the love of his life, Janet Hemmesch, at Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Richmond. Together, they built their home in Richmond and were blessed with three daughters- Julie, Carrie, and Melissa.

A proud mason and respected craftsman, Nick established Nick Keller Masonry, where his skill and integrity earned him lasting respect throughout the region. He also served his community through 24 years (1979–2003) of dedicated service with Richmond Fire & Rescue, including time as Fire Chief and as a member of the Minnesota Fire Chief's Association.

Nick found his greatest peace in nature. A lifelong snowmobile enthusiast, he loved nothing more than hitting the trails, spotting eagles overhead, and watching the moonlight shimmer across the woods. Whether snowmobiling, hunting, fishing, or spending time at “the land” with family and friends, Nick was truly at home in the great outdoors. He never met a stranger - every handshake became a friendship, and every story was shared with a smile.

“A man, his sled, and miles of snow...”

Nick’s passion for snowmobiling became a force for good. As the Founder and Vice President of the Keller Family Community Foundation, he believed that one person on a snowmobile can make a difference. In 2010, inspired by his mother’s memory - who passed away from breast cancer at 56 and in celebration of his own 56th birthday, Nick launched the Snowball Cancer Challenge. What began as a record-setting endurance ride soon grew into the Valentine 500, uniting riders from across the country to support families fighting cancer.

Through Nick’s vision and leadership, the Keller Family Community Foundation has raised over one million dollars, supporting six organizations and eight healthcare systems across Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Iowa, and Illinois. His belief was simple yet powerful: when we ride together, we help families fight together.

To honor Nick’s legacy, riders and supporters are invited to join the Valentine 250/500 Snowmobile Ride on February 5, 2026, in Bergland, MI, and February 12, 2026, in Manitowish Waters, WI, continuing the mission that meant so much to him.

Nick was also an active member of several community and outdoor organizations, including the Twilight Riders, Country Snow Cruisers, White Thunder Riders, the Snowmobile Hall of Fame (St. Germain, WI), and the

Minnesota Deer Hunters Association, where he shared his energy, leadership, and passion for giving back.

Nick is survived by his loving wife of over 51 years, Janet; daughters Julie (Jason) Dornbusch of Miliona, MN; Carrie Keller of Williamstown, Victoria, Australia; and Melissa (Josh) Ngeno of Jordan, MN; and his cherished grandchildren: Zachary (Shelby) Heinen, Olivia Heinen (Michael Saaranen), Alex Heinen, and Avalyn Dornbusch; Sean Burhop, Alexis Burhop Keller, and Nicholas Burhop Keller; Tyler Ngeno and Nicole Ngeno; and his great-grandson, Desmond Heinen.

He is also survived by his brothers John (Cathy) of Litchfield, MN; Victor (Debbie) of Hawick, MN; Ron (Sherry) of Belgrade, MN; Dennis (Connie) and Allen (Shari) of Regal, MN; and his sisters Doris (Keith) Sieben of Rockville, MN; Alice (David) Hiltner of Regal, MN; and Helen Hiltner of Paynesville, MN. He leaves behind brothers-in-law Thomas (Renaë) Hemmesch, George (Joni) Hemmesch, and James (Sheila) Hemmesch, all of Richmond, MN; sisters-in-law Margee Keller (Allen Hansen) of Crookston, MN; Ann Lucas of Wichita Falls, TX; Barbara (Matthew) Walz, Linda (Robert) Schmitz, and Beth Hemmesch of Cold Spring, MN; Sue (Pete) Dingman of St. Martin, MN; and Joyce (James) Backes of Richmond, MN; along with many nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends.

Nick was preceded in death by his parents, Harold and Mary Jane Keller; brother Walter Keller; sister Carol Keller; parents-in-law Harold and Leona Hemmesch; brothers-in-law Linus Hiltner, Michael Hemmesch, Elmer Hemmesch, David Stang, Robert Lucas, Victor Hemmesch, and Jerome Hemmesch; and nephews Jonathan Hiltner, Tom Robertson, and Bradley Hemmesch.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, November 22, 2025, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. at The Olde Coliseum, 691 Main Street West, Richmond, MN.

Family and friends are welcome to come and go throughout the afternoon to share stories and memories in honor of Nick's life.

Nick's family kindly requests no flowers or plants due to allergies. To celebrate his life and legacy, memorials may be made to the Keller Family Community Foundation at <https://donate.snowballcancer.org/sponsor/13/105.html>

Though he has gone ahead on the trail, his tracks remain — a life well lived and deeply loved.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

NOV **22**. 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM (CT)

The Olde Coliseum
691 Main St. W.
Richmond, MN 56368

Tribute Wall

BR

“ *Bill Ruhland lit a candle in memory of Nicholas E. Keller*



Bill Ruhland - November 01, 2025 at 06:50 PM

JB

“ *So sorry to hear of Nick's Passing. Please know he, and the entire Keller Family, are in our thoughts and prayers. Nick was a solid guy with a strong work ethic and a kind heart. He will be missed, and remembered, forever in our hearts!*

Jeff & Marlene Bertram - November 01, 2025 at 10:38 AM

BS

“ *Bill Renate Schaefer lit a candle in memory of Nicholas E. Keller*



Bill Renate Schaefer - October 31, 2025 at 03:48 PM