



**CLAUDE B. KEELAND JR.**

Mr. Claude B. Keeland Jr., went to be with the Lord on January 13, 2004. Born in Grapeland, on August 8, 1922, and was raised in Crockett.

Mr. Keeland heritage as a third generation Texas and love of his family and friends was the sparkle in his eyes. Mr. Keeland was a lifetime Methodist and upon marrying Betty joined and was active in the Prestonwood Baptist Church. While in junior high school he had a newspaper route and before he finished high school in Crockett, he was the district manager in Crockett for the Houston Post Newspaper. After graduation Mr. Keeland joined the United States Air Force during WWII where he was a Sergeant Major and squadron commander.

Following his military service he was hired by C.I.T. Finance Co. in Orange, to handle automobile loans from which he launched his banking career by obtaining his first bank charter in Vidor. Then in Buna and Winnie. Mr. Keeland acquired an option to buy a bank in Sequin, from Harold Simmons in 1955 and brought in his brother to run that bank.

In 1964 came his move to Dallas where he acquired the National Bank of Oak Cliff and then South Oak Cliff Bank merging them into Guaranty Bank. With a group of fellow bank owners he was an organizer and director of The Texas Independent Bank serving Texas Banks.

Mr. Keeland was very active in civic and charity organiza-

the Vidor Chamber of Commerce, the Beaumont Business Professional Club, a director of the East Texas Chamber of Commerce, President of the Texas Independent Banking Association, director of Leader Savings and Loan, Murray Saving and Loan, and the Oak Cliff Chamber of Commerce.

As well as long tenures on the boards of Bishop College and a founding director of the

Community Colleges of Dallas County.

In 1982 Mr. Keeland was named Oak Cliff Man of the Year in honoring his service and contributions to the people of all colors in Oak Cliff.

And of Mr. Keeland's proudest business accomplishments was financing The Christ for the Nations Institute. When the President Gordon Lindsay passed away unexpectedly in 1971, the board was determined to elect a man as president. Mr. Keeland stepped in and insisted upon Mr. Lindsay's wife Freida to be the next President. Mrs. Lindsay has brought millions of lives to Christ and has lead that organization to the greatest.

One board member of Mr. Keeland's bank's told a story that changed his life about Mr. Keeland getting up in the middle of a board meeting when he saw a blind man selling brooms and mops. Mr. Keeland purchased one of each for every board member. Helping others is what really drove Mr. Keeland.

Playing golf and enjoying being with friends were important to him. Mr. Keeland was a member of Dallas Country Club for over thirty years, along with memberships at the Spring Creek Country Club of Crockett, Beaumont Country Club, McKinney Country Club and Stonebriar Country Club of Frisco.

Mr. Keeland's son Craig said his father's success in life was that he loved life and he loved people.

My dad always had his door open to talk and chat with everyone of every back ground. He treated everyone equal and fair regardless of their gender,

life or business. Mr. Keeland will be missed by the thousands of friends and associates he developed over a beautiful and productive lifetime.

Survivors include his wife Betty Keeland; son Craig Keeland; daughter Kay Keeland; step-son B.G. Moore and wife Susan; four grandchildren Cas-

sidy, Chase, Caroline Keeland and Josh Moore; brother William Keeland; cousins Jane Dawson and Theresa Overstreet and their families.

Preceded in death by his parents Claude B. and Irene Keeland, of Crockett; sisters Marjorie Gentle, of Houston and Marie Womack, of Austin.

Funeral services for Mr. Claude B. Keeland Jr. will be held Thursday, January 15, at 2:00 p.m. at Sparkman/Hillcrest Northwest Highway Chapel. Interment will follow in the Hillcrest Memorial Park.

Honorary Pallbearers will be Jimmy Bishop, Harold Simmons, Jack Hennig, Gene Phillips, Bill Henry, Lonnic Ledbetter, Frieda Lindsay, Harold Simmons, J.D. Hall and Dr. Leighton Farrell.

H.C.C.

1/15/04