

Alfred McKnight Jr.

Obituary | [Condolences](#)



Alfred McKnight Jr., 81, a rancher, World War II veteran and architect, died peacefully Saturday, Feb. 12, 2005, at a local hospital.

Service: a private litany service for the family was held Sunday morning at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church by the Rev. Bertrand N. Honea Jr. Alfred's final resting place will be at Midnite Ranch in Iredell.

Memorials: Should friends desire, memorials may be made to Cook Children's Medical Center, Fort Worth; St. Andrew's Episcopal Church Memorial Fund; or a charity of choice.

He resided at 6205 Greenway Road, Fort Worth, with his wife, Betty Claire. He was also at home at his Midnite Ranch near Iredell, where he raised purebred Black Angus cattle.

As an Army Air Force fighter pilot, he served first in North Africa and then in France in support of the Allied invasion of Europe in 1944. His P-47 was shot down in December 1944 and he was interned in a German prison camp near Linz, Austria, until Gen. Patton rescued U.S. soldiers from the Russian army.

While he was avoiding capture by the Germans for 11 days in the snow, his feet froze and he developed pneumonia. His survival was a miracle since he suffered severe medical trauma to both legs. By sheer determination, he was able to walk with just the aid of a cane until the end of his life.

He attended Washington and Lee University, TCU and the University of Texas and received a graduate degree in architecture from the University of Texas School of Architecture. One professor, from France, was so impressed with his work that he invited him to spend two years working in Paris designing new buildings to replace those destroyed during the war.

His great-grandfather came to East Texas in the 1830s' war and just after the Civil War brought his family and settled in Johnson Station, which is now the heart of Arlington. Among the many McKnights who sprang from that family were Felix McKnight, editor of the old Dallas Times Herald, and Alfred's father, a senior partner at Cantey & Hanger law firm in Fort Worth and once co-chairman of the Texas Racehorse Association. Alfred's beloved grandfather, Frank McKnight, was for years the only banker in Arlington, where at first he conducted business outside on the porch and later, when the weather wasn't so hot, would go inside and have Alfred hide under his desk while he conducted business. He passed hard candy to him to keep him quiet.

To toughen up his only grandson, he sent him alone on the train to be a ranch hand on a ranch near Lamesa. He rode with the cowboys from sunup to sundown. His other toughening up included a stint on an oil rig off Tampico, Mexico.

Alfred was a member of River Crest Country Club, the Petroleum Club, the Sons of the American Revolution and the Sons of the Republic of Texas.

Alfred was known as a kind, even-tempered gentleman who was an inspiration to all who knew him. We thank God for the privilege of having him in our lives.

The family is grateful to his devoted chauffeur and companion, Lawrence Alexander, and to Paul Jones, ranch foreman at Midnite Ranch.

He was preceded in death by his former wife, Georgemma Rominger.

Alfred was blessed with superb medical care by Dr. H. Anderson Dollahite, Dr. Mary Milam, Dr. Harold Berenzweig, Dr. Denzil D'Souza, Dr. Martin A. Tobey and Dr. James Lambert. The family also gives heartfelt thanks to the cheerful, encouraging nurses at the cardiac ICU of Harris Methodist Hospital and the wonderful staff of Vitas Hospice Unit at Baylor All Saints Hospital.

Survivors: His wife, Betty Claire; five children from his late wife, Patricia Donoghue, Mrs. Paul Corkery Jr., Ms. Blanche McKnight of Piedmont, Calif., Alfred McKnight III and Patricia McKnight of Colorado Springs, Colo., and David McKnight of Waco; grandchildren, Greg Stevens, attache with the Department of Justice in El Salvador and wife, Marybeth, Teresa Woodman and husband, Pat, of Austin, and Walker Young and Will Young of Piedmont, Calif.; great-grandchildren, Lilli, Jack and Kate Stevens, and Mac Woodman; stepchildren, Kathy Dupree, Rob Dupree and Ellen Davis and husband, Ron, of Winston-Salem, N.C.; stepgrandchildren, Claire, Shapley and Robert; and stepgrandson, Paul Corkery III.

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