



George John Koch

December 24, 1935 - June 13, 2021

1935 -2021

George J. Koch, age 85, a long-time resident and active member of the Rio Communities in Belen, New Mexico, passed away Sunday June 13th in Albuquerque, following a brief hospitalization for pneumonia. George moved to Belen in the mid-1970s from the Kansas City, Missouri area and was known to many for his outgoing personality, contagious smile and mischievous sense of humor. His family and many friends are gifted with countless precious memories and he is deeply missed already.

George was born in Bonne Terre, Missouri and grew up in Jefferson City and Columbia. He graduated from University High School in Columbia with the Class of 1953 before attending the University of Missouri (MU) from 1953 to 1957. While attending MU, he was a member of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity and served with the National Guard. George was awarded his Bachelor's degree from MU some 53 years later in 2010, completing a long-time personal goal.

He enjoyed an extended career in the real estate industry including being a home builder and developer, agent, broker and appraiser. George participated in several professional organizations including the New Mexico Real Estate Board, the New Mexico Appraisal Board, and the Appraisal Institute. He was an active member of the Belen Rotarians and the First United Methodist Church of Belen.

George was predeceased by his former wife, Virginia ("Ginger") Bunger Koch

and his beloved granddaughter, Brandelin Duke Clark (Thomas) and is survived by his children, Karl Koch (Cheryl), New Bern, NC, Rebecca Dedier (Steve), Lillburn, GA, Pamela Duke (Derrick), Albuquerque N.M. and John Barrett (Pam), Pleasant Hill, MO. He had 10 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren (soon to be 13). George is also survived by his siblings, Karlene Voepel (Monte) of Rimrock, AZ and David Koch (Patricia) of Long Beach, CA. A celebration of George's life will be held at 11:30 am on Wednesday, June 30, 2021 at Romero Funeral Home Chapel, 609 N. Main Street, Belen, NM. Donations may be sent in his honor to Best Buddies in New Mexico at www.bestbuddies.org/newmexico/donate.

Please sign George's online tribute at www.romerofuneralhomenm.com

Romero Funeral Home, 609 N. Main St., Belen, NM

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 30. 11:00 AM (MT)

Romero Funeral Home Chapel
609 N. Main St.
Belen, NM 87002
(505) 864-8501
romerofuneralhome@comcast.net
<https://www.romerofuneralhomenm.com>

Celebration of Life

JUN 30. 11:30 AM (MT)

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609 N. Main St.
Belen, NM 87002
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Reception

JUN 30. 12:30 PM (MT)

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Tribute Wall

CH

“ Can't believe its already been 4 years feels like just last week I was shaking your hand. I only made a small impact on your life and that was towards the end. but you Mr Koch, you made a big impact on my mine for the beginning. Never said it but you were my Family and Good Friend. With a firm handshake -A

chavez - August 22, 2025 at 08:40 PM

JG

“ Met George in 1981. As he was building homes at the time he put me to work cleaning up and hauling away construction debris. I also supplied the workers with needful things. Always treated me with respect. Great sense of humor. Already miss him.

Jaye Gardner - July 03, 2021 at 12:11 AM

DK

“ The Family would like to thank all the wonderful folks from the Rio Communities, Belen, and the surrounding areas for their kindness and support during this difficult time.

I'm Dave, George's brother. That is something I have always been proud to say – “I'm George Koch's brother”. For a skinny kid growing up in a small town in Missouri it was nice to have a recognizable big brother to refer to. George was a high school basketball star who seemed to know everyone in town and was known to many more.

But George was more than a big brother to me; he was a best friend.

As many of you know, George had a mischievous sense of humor. As examples -

We both have a fondness for BBQ. George once sent me an empty box with rib bones and dirty napkins from Arthur Bryant's, our favorite BBQ joint in Kansas City. He would bring Arthur Bryant's sauce along when he visited us, only to steal it back when he departed. Last year as the pandemic shortages began and our stores ran short of some necessities, he sent us a gigantic box filled with about 50 rolls of toilet paper.

We enjoyed sports together and had season tickets together for the Kansas City Chiefs. In 1972 we were impressed by the “new” Arrowhead stadium built for the Chiefs. I will never forget finding our new seats in the end-zone immediately underneath the new video replay screen – we were looking up directly at the bottom of the video screen – not such a great view after all.

We bet on some sporting event nearly every week throughout our lives, but somehow never got around to paying our bets off. Seemed each win or loss was followed by a “double or nothing” bet until things evened out.

We also enjoyed following our alma mater's teams - the Missouri Tigers. George was a proud Tiger. On this Tribute wall there is a description of George's 2010 graduation which I would recommend to those of you who have not seen it. During that trip to Columbia we had the opportunity to visit our childhood home. Some 50 years later, we knocked on the door and introduced ourselves, only to be greeted by the owners saying "Oh, we've heard of the Koch boys" – our reputation preceded us.

George loved his games. Not sure what to say about a guy whose favorite card games were "Spite and Malice" and "Shanghai". But his biggest fav was "Liars' Poker", a game several of you have learned about firsthand over the years. Liars' Poker is a game where each player selects a dollar bill from their pocket and plays the numbers on the bill like a poker hand. You are allowed to bluff or "lie", hence the name. One year George, Ginger, Tish and I went on a tour of southern Colorado. Knowing we would be playing Liars' Poker for every meal check, "Granny Koch", our mother, slipped me a hand full of dollar bills with "unbeatable" numbers on them. Well, I ended up paying for every dinner and lunch check on the trip and I was never sure if I had been set-up by my Mother, or George, or both in cahoots.

George was much more than a brother to me - He was my surrogate Father.

Our mother was widowed when our father was just 40-years old leaving a 13-year George, an 8-year old daughter Karlene, and 5-year old me. George provided guidance and oversight for my sister and me in ways that we may never know about and helped shape who we became. He was also a devoted son who provided support to our mother throughout her life.

His is truly a life worth celebrating!

David Koch - July 02, 2021 at 12:55 PM

SD

Beautiful tribute Dave. George's mischievous side certainly always came through.

steve dedier - July 02, 2021 at 01:20 PM

VR

“ *My most sincere condolences to the Koch family. George was a friend and customer for many, many years. I will miss him stopping by and sharing a cup of coffee with me on his way to work.*

Vince Roselli

Vincent Roselli - June 29, 2021 at 06:16 PM

VN

“ *Vanessa Neely lit a candle in memory of George John Koch*



Vanessa Neely - June 22, 2021 at 06:41 PM

DH

“ I will always remember George's kindness. Me being a fledgling real estate appraiser, I was naturally a bit intimidated in my new setting and generally unsure of myself. George would have none of that and treated me as if I were a seasoned appraiser. He took me to lunch right away and we forged a friendship ever after that.

Another encounter I had with George was when he was a county commissioner. I was working on getting approval for a subdivision I was developing and couldn't help but think that I had a friend on the commission. I couldn't have been more wrong. In his role he never shared one moment of recognition nor a friendly look. He had a job to do and his job was to evaluate what I proposed. Friendship had nothing to do with his commissionship.

We all were honored to know and work with George and he will be forever missed.

Dave Hartman - June 21, 2021 at 01:24 PM

DK

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



David Koch - June 21, 2021 at 12:33 PM

“ George’s Graduation - 2010

While it may have been cold and drizzling outside, it was warmth and sunshine inside the Sports Arena at the University of Missouri as George, age 75, led the four hundred students of the May 2010 graduating class of the university’s business school onto the arena floor. Due in no small part to the efforts of Laura Carroz, school counselor, George was about to receive his belated Bachelor degree.

Following the Curator’s Speech (whose son was also graduating that day), remarks by the alumni representative, and the Dean’s farewell address (he was retiring after 20 years in the position) the soon-to-be-graduates queued up to receive their diplomas. Leading the Business Management candidates, George, cane in hand, hobbled to the edge of the stage. Before conferring degrees on this group the Dean came to the podium to announce an extraordinary recognition.

“Leading the class of 2010 is a special graduate”, the Dean began. “Having entered the University in 1953, the pursuit of his degree interrupted by his National Guard service during the Berlin crisis and airlift, today George John Koch the third is awarded his Bachelors’ degree in Business Administration”. As George moved across the stage the crowd of 4,000 graduates, their families, and their friends rose to their feet in thunderous applause. George, focused on grabbing that long awaited sheep’s skin, had to be turned by the shoulders to see the standing ovation. Quickly recovering from his deer-in-the-headlights look of astonishment he shouted “GO TIGERS!”

Once the proceedings ended, George was approached by many of the parents and graduates to shake his hand and congratulate him. If ever there was a testament to the importance of education, this was it. And the young men and women graduating with him wanted him to know that he was an inspiration to them all.

Now, a true college graduate, George is faced with the prospects of getting a real job. And he is going to need a real job, because 53 years of extra tuition fees makes for some awesome student loan payments! - Dave

David Koch - June 21, 2021 at 12:28 PM

MI

“ *Michelle lit a candle in memory of George John Koch*



Michelle - June 19, 2021 at 04:31 PM

JC

“ *My deepest condolences to the Koch family. I had the pleasure to work with George for many years during my time working at the banks and Heritage Title in Valencia county.*

Jolene Chacon - June 18, 2021 at 01:53 PM

LW

“ *George was always a pleasure. Many discussions over the years, i was always happy to hear his voice. Gracious and knowledgeable. I'll miss you my friend.*

Lori Whitener - June 18, 2021 at 09:58 AM

SM

“ *Grateful to Mr. Koch for his integrity and the many years he unselfishly gave of his time and expertise to the Tierra Grande Community as he guided its growth for future generations. His legacy lives on.*



Sue Moran - June 17, 2021 at 08:19 PM

CU

“ You'll be very much missed, my long time good friend and mentor. You shared your insight about Rio Communities when I first came to work at Horizon in 1983. Your wisdom, quirky sense of humor and your goodness will be missed. Rest well, good Sir. 😞

Carolyn McGee Updegraff - June 17, 2021 at 04:18 PM

DR

“ Dicky And Suzanne Romero lit a candle in memory of George John Koch



Dicky and Suzanne Romero - June 16, 2021 at 06:55 PM