



## John Kempton Shields Jr.

May 25, 1950 - July 25, 2022

John Kempton Shields, Jr. passed away on Monday, July 25, 2022, at his home in Mattaponi, Virginia. Kempton was born May 25, 1950 in Newport News to Betty Louise Lester and John Kempton Shields.

Memories of Kempton are celebrated and kept close by his surviving family and friends who include his wife of 43 years, Mary Garland Brookes Shields; daughters Ann Lewis Shields; Jessie Garland Forman (Jay); and son, Greg William Pettit (Laura); and his four grandchildren, Adeline, Wythe, Parker and Sutton. He is also survived by his brother Jolly Shields (Cathy); nephews Kevin and Jeff Shields; and other immediate family, Don and Betty Debord, Ann and Richard Cline, Cindi Brookes, and many cousins.

Kempton attended The College of William & Mary, and graduated with a degree in Business in 1972, where he also earned his MBA shortly thereafter.

He began his long and successful banking career in Richmond in commercial real estate at First and Merchant's, now Bank of America, and retired as a Senior Vice President from SunTrust, now Truist, in 2015. Kempton taught at the Robert Morris Associate School of Banking at East Carolina University over the years.

He is credited and admired for successfully leading the effort to oppose the

location of a regional jail in his community of Mattaponi. He served on the King and Queen County Planning Commission and was on the YMCA of West Point Board of Directors.

Kempton chose to make his home at his wife's family place on the Mattaponi and to commute to work in Richmond for many years.

Kempton achieved a rare balance of work, play and family because he put his family first. He believed it and he lived it.

A trusted advisor, many sought Kempton's advice and counsel for everything from buying a new car to how to navigate major life changes and significant financial decisions. He always gave wise and thoughtful guidance, making those who came to depend on him feel valued and special. His gave his time generously and kindly.

He was happiest with a cold beer in his boat, pulling friends, children, grandchildren on skis, tubes or boards. He reveled in hosting annual gatherings at the house for his William & Mary friends every Memorial Day and Labor Day for many, many years.

As a child, Kempton's nickname was "Happy." When his last stroke robbed him of his ability to speak...he regained two words; "thank you." Those words exemplify his approach to the world and he used them often to show his gratitude to those who cared for and visited him. Through his hardest times as he struggled to be his best after the strokes, he maintained his "happy," bringing smiles to all around him.

Kempton was no stranger to finding fun and creating mischief. He had a fondness for spud guns, fast cars (he taught racing at VIR and belonged to the BMW Car Club of America) and any opportunity to spray innocent boaters

and swimmers while showing off on a slalom ski. He had a penchant for good rum and loved sharing a shot with anyone he could convince to join him. He often said “You can fix anything with a beer, duct tape or WD40.”

He was, to use the name his grandchildren gave him...Magnificent. He never met a stranger. He gladly gave his time and energy unconditionally to those he loved. Never wanting the spotlight on himself, he made sure others had a chance to shine and helped them do it. He encouraged them to succeed, showed them the way if they needed it and celebrated their success. Patient and kind, he was a mentor and a friend to many.

Thank you Ed, Justina, Priscilla, Bethany, Katy, Hannah, Giselle and Sadie for giving him the best possible care, dignity, hope and moments of joy and peace.

A Celebration of life will be held on Sunday, September 4, at 4 pm, at the family home in Mattaponi. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Lower King and Queen Fire and EMS Department, PO Box 187, Shacklefords, VA 23156.

# Tribute Wall

CS

“ I'll never forget our trip around Italia with your family, particularly the speed boat ride around Venice... walking the streets of Volterra... laughing our way through Roma. It was a true honor and gift to have known you. I wish you eternal peace and to your family: thoughts of healing and love during this difficult time. You were one of the finest men I have ever known. Thank you, Kempton, for bringing so much happiness to others and to this world. Gone but not forgotten... with love, CKS



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**Chaeli Shields** - August 03, 2022 at 08:50 PM

DB

“ Donna & John Britt lit a candle in memory of John Kempton Shields Jr.



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**Donna & John Britt** - August 03, 2022 at 01:55 PM

TK

“ *Our sincerest condolences to Kempton's family, may he rest in eternal peace. His friendship will be sorely missed.*

*Across decades working together, Kempton was the epitome of the consummate professional in so many ways: diligent, highly productive, always came to the correct solution to complex problems. He used his talents and knowledge to teach others how to think.*

*More than all of these, his zest for life and generous spirit were infectious. We were all fortunate to count Kempton as a friend - he truly gave more than he received, and our lives thus immensely enriched.*

*Tom Kelley*

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**Tom Kelley** - August 03, 2022 at 01:43 PM

LR

“ *My thoughts and prayers are with the family. So sorry for your loss and may the wonderful memories bring you comfort.*

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**LINDA ROBERTS** - August 03, 2022 at 09:31 AM

PG

“ *Kempton was truly a great person to work with at SunTrust. Always a smile on his face. My thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult time. I know your great memories will last forever.*

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**Pam Grizzard** - August 01, 2022 at 08:13 PM

RF

“ *Sending condolences to all of you.*

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**Rob Fraser** - July 30, 2022 at 07:30 AM

JK

“ *Kempton was, indeed, Magnificent. I was fortunate to have known him as a Sigma Pi brother at William and Mary. He was as kind and respected then as he proved himself to be for his entire life. I was blessed to have him in my life for those short years and salad days.*

*Condolences to Kempton's family and friends. May memories of Kempton bless you always.*

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**James Kaywell** - July 29, 2022 at 12:45 PM

KC

“ *So sorry for your loss. My thoughts and prayers go out to Mary and the entire Shields family. Godspeed Kempton*

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**Kathy Cavicchi** - July 29, 2022 at 11:22 AM

TG

“ *To all of the Shields family, extended family and friends , Desi and I wish you many happy memories of Kempton. He was a friendly and interesting man and we know sharing stories of him and his life will be a comfort. Prayers continue during this difficult time. Tina and Desi*

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**tina gulley** - July 29, 2022 at 06:18 AM

WW

*Mary So sorry to hear about Kenton he was a great guy my God be with you and family Bill. @ Grace Wills*

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**william E Wills** - July 29, 2022 at 02:27 PM

SK

“*Kempton was well loved by many. A true gentleman, devoted to family and friends, Kempton will be missed. Lots of fond memories are our gifts from him.*

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**Sue and Robert Kurfees** - July 29, 2022 at 05:48 AM

BW

“*Kempton was, simply put, just a great guy. Always welcoming, always a friend and always there to lend a hand. Joanie and I have such fond memories of skiing on the Mattopani with Rex and Nancy Luzar and families and then being graciously greeted by Kempton at his beautiful riverfront home. Billy Joel got it right when he wrote and sang, “Only the good die young”. Kempton was, without a doubt, one of the best.*  
*May he rest in well deserved peace,*  
*Bruce and Joanie Wachter*

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**Bruce and Joanie Wachter** - July 28, 2022 at 11:05 PM

VA

“*Mary, Jessie, and Ann Lewis, Will and I are so sorry to learn about Kempton’s passing. We have fond memories of being with you all and send much love and many hugs. God bless you and all of your family,*

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**Virginia&Will Addison** - July 28, 2022 at 10:45 PM

CJ

“ How beautiful to read the solemn and 100% true words describing my friend, buddy, and sparring partner during 54 years of lefthanders attraction. Mary and Charlie understood that birds of a feather flock together as they golfed and we grocery shopped for summer holidays fun. So glad that in addition to his well earned credentials, y'all added slaloms, spud guns and beer slugs. Kempton is a guy we'll be remembering with laughter and tears til the day we join him. Every Blessing, Carol

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**Carol Jackson** - July 28, 2022 at 02:43 PM

JC

As you read this description and think of Kempton's life, ask yourself this question. What would the world be like if we'd all strive to emulate his example? What a great guy. He will truly be missed. Our prayers for Mary and the whole extended family. John Constance

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**john constance** - July 28, 2022 at 05:55 PM

LC

Kempton and my brother Randy were BFFs in high school. He was one of the first people I called when Randy passed away in 2005. Since then, it's always been a Homecoming highlight to catch up with him. The world is a little less bright without him, and I'll miss him more than I can say.

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**Lynn Cole** - July 28, 2022 at 10:01 PM

CC

One of the steadiest, most loyal and funniest people I ever had the pleasure of knowing. He and Mary were made for each other. The world is a poorer place today without Kempton. My truest sympathy to Mary, the rest of the family and the many, many people he counted friends.

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**Cathy A Cooper** - July 30, 2022 at 09:04 PM



*Mary and Family, please accept our most sincere condolences following the passing of Kempton. I met Kempton at W&M, and was a Sigma Pi brother. We had the opportunity to attend several of your famous summer parties at the river, and am reminded of Kempton every time I cross the bridge and see the "Brookeshire" sign. He was a great guy, and will be sorely missed.*

*Joe and Mary Gregory*

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**Joe Gregory** - July 31, 2022 at 04:11 PM

RM

*I had the pleasure and privilege to attend a FHS reunion at your home in 2019. I had not seen Kempton since HS and had a great time meeting, greeting and speaking with him after so many years. What a great and fun person Kempton was. I was looking forward to catching up on old times again with him and will truly miss him. God bless the family and God bless Kempton. He will be missed by many. Rob and Laverne Mitchell*

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**Robert Mitchell** - August 02, 2022 at 09:14 AM