



Keith Edward Gardner

March 6, 1956 - May 20, 2026

Keith Edward Gardner, 70, passed away at home with his family by his side on May 20, 2026. He was born in Louisville, Kentucky, on March 6, 1956, to his late parents, Helen “Jane” and Henry “Jack” Gardner.

Keith was a man of faith and proudly attended Sts. Simon and Jude Catholic Church. He honorably served his country as a veteran of the United States Army and carried that same dedication and work ethic throughout his life. He retired as a mechanic for the City of Louisville and worked as a parts manager for NAPA Auto, where his knowledge and skill were well respected. He was also a proud member of the American Legion Iroquois Post #229.

His greatest thrill was behind the wheel of a stock car. For more than 40 years, racing was not simply a hobby but a lifelong passion. His remarkable career took him to numerous tracks, including Louisville Motor Speedway, Kentucky Speedway, Salem Speedway, Bristol Speedway, Sportsdrome Speedway, the old Fairgrounds, and tracks in Charlestown, Winchester, and Nashville. In recognition of his lasting impact on the sport, he and his brother, Kevin, were inducted into the Kentuckiana Auto Racing Hall of Fame in 2026, a proud honor reflecting decades of dedication and achievement.

He is preceded in death by his parents, as well as his brothers, Gene and Glen Gardner.

Keith will be lovingly remembered by his wife, Jill (Hart) Gardner; daughter, Katy Jo Groft (Samuel); son, J.D. Gardner (McKensie); grandchildren, Margot Groft, Benny Groft, Alyssa Shazier (Matthew); brothers, Kevin Gardner (Denise) and Gary Gardner (Barbara); sister, Nancy Medley (Joe); nieces; nephews; and other extended family members.

His funeral services will be at Owen Funeral Home, 5317 Dixie Hwy. The visitation will be on Thursday, May 28, 2026, from 2:00 PM to 8:00 PM. The Funeral Mass will be on Friday at 11:00 AM, at Sts. Simon and Jude Catholic Church, 4335 Hazelwood Ave., 40215.

Following the Mass, there will be a celebration of Keith's life at American Legion Post 229, 7323 St. Andrew's Church Road.

The family would like to express special thanks to Pamela Young, Edward Young, Jay Barker, Glenda Barker, Donnie Mingus, Pam Owen, and David Owen for all your support and loving care.

Cemetery Details

Cremation to Follow

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 28. 2:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Owen Funeral Homes - Dixie Highway
5317 Dixie Highway
Louisville, KY 40216
(502) 447-2600
<https://owenfuneralhome.com>

Funeral Mass

MAY 29. 11:00 AM (ET)

Sts. Simon and Jude Catholic Church
4335 Hazelwood Ave
Louisville, KY 40215

Tribute Wall



“ Owen Funeral Homes created a Tribute Video in memory of Keith Edward Gardner



Owen Funeral Homes - May 28 at 11:24 AM



Today we said goodbye to my dear friend Keith Gardner. Many of us spent many many years watching Keith race. Being a close friend of his wife Jill Hart Gardner, I spent many years, at many different tracks, watching him race. I spent many fun weekends being part of the pit crew. But to me Keith was a lot more than a race car driver. He was a great friend to me personally and to many other people. He was a wonderful husband, dad, grandfather, brother, brother-in law, son and uncle. I'm glad that Keith is in heaven and free of his earthly body and illness. He is so missed. Prayers for his family, especially for his loving wife Jill. Until we meet again. ❤️

Jana Jumpp - May 29 at 04:15 PM

KR

“ One of many memories I think of is The Beetle Bugs and Hot Rod Haven. We did some foolish but fun things back in the day. When I hear a song by Three Dog Night, Guess Who and many more they bring back great memories. Of course the Race Track. Keith and I down in Whitesville decided to take the Pace car for a spin around the track. Needless to say the officials running after us we're not to happy. Keith could tear a dance floor up. He got a hold of me one night and turn me every which way but loose. I survived. Yes Keith we will miss you greatly. Love you, Karen Ray

Karen Ray - May 29 at 10:33 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Keith Edward Gardner.

May 28 at 11:11 AM



“ Guiding Light Bouquet was purchased for the family of Keith Edward Gardner.



May 28 at 11:11 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Keith Edward Gardner.



May 28 at 08:56 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Keith Edward Gardner.

May 28 at 08:56 AM



“ Natalie, Andrew, and Julie Gardner purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Keith Edward Gardner.



Natalie, Andrew, and Julie Gardner - May 27 at 11:59 PM



“ Keith taught me how to drive. "Hollywood or Movie Star" Smile gave those who knew him many great memories, laughs, and love. He will be missed by all. Peace and prayers to his family.



Sherree Keene - May 27 at 05:31 PM



“ Paula Troy Lauren Justin Jamie & Girls purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Keith Edward Gardner.



Paula Troy Lauren Justin Jamie & Girls - May 27 at 02:09 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Keith Edward Gardner.

May 27 at 10:20 AM



“ Large Basket Garden was purchased for the family of Keith Edward Gardner.



May 27 at 10:20 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Keith Edward Gardner.



May 27 at 09:07 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Keith Edward Gardner.

May 27 at 09:07 AM



“ Ed and Lydia K. purchased the Angel's Embrace Bouquet for the family of Keith Edward Gardner.



Ed and Lydia K. - May 26 at 10:29 AM

MF

“ Mingus Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Keith Edward Gardner.

Mingus Family - May 23 at 07:11 PM

MF

“ Mingus Family purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Keith Edward Gardner.



Mingus Family - May 23 at 07:11 PM

DM

“ Donnie Mingus planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Keith Edward Gardner.

Donnie Mingus - May 23 at 07:09 PM

DM

“ Donnie Mingus purchased the With Distinction for the family of Keith Edward Gardner.



Donnie Mingus - May 23 at 07:09 PM

DF

“ Donnie Mingus and Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Keith Edward Gardner.

Donnie Mingus and Family - May 23 at 07:01 PM

DF

“ Donnie Mingus and Family purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of Keith Edward Gardner.



Donnie Mingus and Family - May 23 at 07:01 PM

MD

“ Great memories of Keith at Iroquois High School driving around in his v w was always happy and easy going even after we graduated great man!

Mark Dietzman - May 23 at 05:13 PM

MF

“ Michael & Nancy Freeman purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Keith Edward Gardner.



Michael & Nancy Freeman - May 23 at 04:16 PM

YF

“ Your Farmer & Wright Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Keith Edward Gardner.

Your Farmer & Wright Family - May 22 at 05:24 PM

YF

“ Your Farmer & Wright Family purchased the Beautiful Dreams for the family of Keith Edward Gardner.



Your Farmer & Wright Family - May 22 at 05:24 PM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Keith Edward Gardner.



May 22 at 04:04 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Keith Edward Gardner.


May 22 at 04:04 PM

KF

“ Prayers

Kentucky Motorsports Hall of fame - May 22 at 10:12 AM

DB

“ Keith and I shared lots memories throughout the years. Including being knee high, to joining the military together with others from the neighborhood including Mark Hayden, Joey Hayden. Donnie Frost. And then working side by side at the city police garage working on the fleet cars. Keith will be missed by everyone that ever crossed his path. Our hearts  are with all of the family.

Danny Barker

&

Sue Carroll



Be

With you

Keith Gardner

Danny Barker - May 21 at 05:19 PM

TM

you will be keith, peace and love to the family

terry martin - May 21 at 11:18 PM

LY

We will miss you Keith, but always will remember the love and laughter and good times we had together. Peace and prayers to your family...love, Ed and Lydia

Lydia - May 26 at 10:38 AM