



Keith Ava

July 1, 1949 - March 10, 2026

We bid Aloha to the most kindest, gentlest, caring, loving and humble person we have ever known. Keith Samuel Ava passed away on March 10, 2026, doing what he loved best, traveling with his family. He was born in Kahuku, Hawaii on July 1, 1949, to Vili and Marie Alapa Ava. As a child he grew up in Laie, Hawaii alongside his brother, Gordon and sister Nell, as well as many other dear cousins. He often shared fond memories of cherished, simple times; surfing Goat Island, swimming Beauty Hole, chasing mosquito truck, playing tricks on Grandma Alesi and Nell, hiking Ko'oloau Mountain Range and finding old WWII can rations, and enjoying pake cake from Sam's store.

He attended Laie Elementary, and Kahuku Intermediate & High School. In the 8th grade he left the islands to live with his dad in Southern California for a year. He graduated, or was "released" as he called it, from Kahuku High School in 1968. While at Kahuku he played football and was well known for his athletic abilities and was an All-state player in his junior and senior years. His older brother and cousins would encourage his talents and place bets on his touchdowns.

After high school he joined the United States Navy and served for four years as an A7E airplane captain, Wing 9 aboard the USS America, USS Enterprise, and USS Constellation. He sailed around the world twice and endured three tours of Vietnam.

Upon completion of his Naval duties, he visited St. George Utah to visit family attending Dixie College and fell in love with the beauty of the area. He ended up staying and enrolling at Dixie College in the Aeronautical program and played football. About halfway through his first year, he became very ill and was diagnosed with Gilliam Barre syndrome which nearly cost him his life. He fought in the Salt Lake City University of Utah Hospital for a full year and had to re-learn how to walk again.

Regaining his strength, he found himself back in St. George Utah at Dixie College to continue his aeronautical education and earned his private pilot license! He loved to take his cousins and close friends on airplane rides and was known to turn off engines, do stalls, spins and dead stick landings. Being around and working on airplanes and hanging out at the old airport was his passion! He landed a job at SkyWest Airlines in 1975 and served for 40 years. Here he made MANY lifelong friendships, served countless passengers, and gave tours to elementary kids and boy scout troops loading them on the baggage carts and driving them up and down the runway and taxiways. He supported his family, traveled the world and took countless trips to Oahu to reconnect with loved ones, indulge in the island foods he missed so much and be the #1 supporter to the pride of the North Shore, his Kahuku Red Raider Football teams!

While eating one day at A&W in St. George he met the love of his life, Patricia Gentry. She didn't know if he really liked her or if he was just after some free food! He enjoyed learning from Pat, the ways of a dairy farmer's daughter and took to feeding the baby calves and learning how to operate the John Deer tractors. It took about 5 years, but they finally got married in the Laie temple on July 7, 1979.

In 1983 they were blessed with their daughter Kanani Marie. She became the

pride and joy of his life. Kanani and Keith were inseparable. He was the best dad! He never missed any of her sporting events. He taught her how to swim, bike, hunt for and cut down the best Christmas tree on Pine Mountain, shoot a gun, avoid boys, ski, surf, fly a Cessna, and drive at 8 years old... Which came in handy one winter when they both went snowboarding at Brian Head and Keith got a concussion and Kanani had to drive him all the way home at age 13.

His same supportive love continued when he became the best "Papa" to Anu and Ini girl. He loved and spoiled them! They loved to spend time with him, listen to his stories and go eat McDonalds and ice cream together. He looked forward to attending their various school, music and dance performances as well as sporting events. And keeping up with tradition has even taught them to drive already too!

Keith liked to reminisce of the old town of St. George and share with others the nostalgia that when he arrived in 1974, he was the first Polynesian to settle and at that time there was only one stop light in town!

Everyone he knew, he loved and would constantly provide service to them. He was everybody's friend, uncle or cousin. He truly lived the Aloha spirit by checking in with others often, feeding and housing all who came to visit, even those he just met. You could always find him taking videos at Kahuku football games and family and friend events, standing in the back, quietly recording with his usual calm and patient demeanor. He prided himself in being able to share these football games and special moments with others as gifts of VHS, DVD's and the like.

Keith was a faithful member of the church and had many callings that have influenced more lives than we know. We will all miss his great laugh, his

stories and jokes and his Christlike characteristics.

Keith is survived by his brothers Gordon Broad and Lafoia Ava, and sister Paula Estrella Pimental. His dear wife, Patricia Gentry, daughter Kanani Marie (Sioeli Nau), and the two apples-of-his-eye Granddaughters, Anuheia Patricia (13) and Ailine Nell (11).

Funeral services will be held at the LDS Stake Center 1295 S. 3000 E. St. George, Utah. Viewing, music and talk story/ Kanikapila Thursday, April 2, 2026, from 5:00-9:00pm. Viewing Friday, April 3, 2026, 9:00-10:30am. Bishop's service 11:00am. Interment at Tonaquint Cemetery.

Previous Events

Viewing

APR 2. 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM (MT)

River Hollow 20th Ward
1295 S 3000 E
St. George, UT 84790
mail@serenitystg.com

Viewing

APR 3. 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM (MT)

River Hollow 20th Ward
1295 S 3000 E
St. George, UT 84790
mail@serenitystg.com

Funeral Service

APR 3. 11:00 AM (MT)

River Hollow 20th Ward
1295 S 3000 E
St. George, UT 84790
mail@serenitystg.com

Graveside Service

APR 3. 12:45 PM (MT)

Tonaquint Cemetery
1777 S. Dixie Drive
Saint George, UT 84770

Tribute Wall



“ *Serenity Funeral Home of Southern Utah created a Webcast in memory of Keith Ava*



Serenity Funeral Home of Southern Utah - March 30 at 06:29 PM

KH

My kind friend Pat I'm so sorry to hear of Keith's passing. May you have comfort from above. It was good to see all few years ago. Thanks for all you did for me and my children. Take care and keep all your fond memories

*Sending you lots of love
Karen Huntsman*

Karen Huntsman - April 02 at 09:15 PM

HK

“ *I just learned of your passing. I'm sorry to know that you're gone. I used to work with Keith at the St. George airport. I could never really tell if he liked me or not. haha! Whether he liked me or not, I liked and looked up to him. He accidentally took me on my first trip to Hawaii. I think he never "invited" anyone to Hawaii after that. I wasn't supposed to take his offer seriously. No one ever had up until then.*

Not sure if anyone else will understand this, but Merry Christmas Keith! ;) You will be missed.

Heather King - April 30 at 02:37 PM

GN

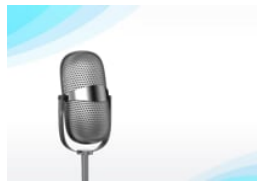
“ Dear Pat,
I am so sorry to hear of the passing of Keith.
I first met him when we were football teammates at Dixie Jr. College the summer of 1974. (Coaches Lee Bunnell, Rich Lopez, & Bob Horlacher)
I affectionately nicknamed him “Cherokee”. He always showed me kindness & love and the “Aloha Spirit”! He was the first person of Polynesian descent I met! I looked forward to seeing him at SkyWest at the airport handling my baggage. Since moving here to Roosevelt, the Basin, 24 years ago, I have missed seeing him. May you know of our love and prayers, Pat, at this difficult time. I’m sorry distance will not allow us to attend the viewing or the funeral as we would desire.

Gary R & Christine Putnam Nelson
optinsuccess@stratanet.com

Gary R. Nelson - April 08 at 01:56 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Funeral Audio Recording



Serenity Funeral Home of Southern Utah - April 06 at 01:46 PM

PM

“ Pat, so very sorry to learn of Keith's passing. He was indeed a truly kind person. Many fond memories of you two at Skywest. Know Layne and I will be praying for you and your family.
RIP Keith. P.J. and Layne Magee

P J Magee - April 04 at 11:29 AM

KP

“ Pat and family, I am grateful for Keith's loving demeanor to me and all around him. He was so friendly and kind.

Kent Page

Kent Page - April 03 at 09:42 PM

KR

“ Keith was one of the first "friends" I had when I started working at the airport in 1984. Those were wonderful times of feeling like we were part of something amazing! He was always someone I looked up to and when I found out he was married to Pat that respect increased and I believed he was also one of the smartest men I knew! I have often thought back to those days as some of the best in my life! Thank you, Keith my brother, for your friendship and example! Pat and family, know that the Robinson family is grieving with you! We love you all!

Keith Robinson - April 03 at 09:37 PM

HL

“ Keith was a wonderful neighbor while I was growing up in Washington City. He brought my family chocolate macadamia nuts from his trips to Hawaii and always shared a story. Keith even filmed my wedding reception. He gave me a copy on VHS shortly after my wedding in 1992. We watched it not too long ago! Keith will be missed. I send my love to Pat and his girls. Holly Sandberg Lowe

Holly Sandberg Lowe - April 02 at 10:37 PM

MV

“ Margie and Moises Vaquera planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Keith Ava.

Margie and Moises Vaquera - April 02 at 04:59 PM

AW

“ Pat, I'm so sorry to hear about Keith. You are in my thoughts and prayers. I remember Keith would come see you when we worked together at Tri-Mart. And bring your daughter.

Alyce (Al) Williams - April 01 at 11:21 PM

LF

“ Love, the Kimball family purchased the Days of Sunshine Bouquet for the family of Keith Ava.



Love, the Kimball family - April 01 at 07:57 PM

AF

“ Alameda Key West and Family. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Keith Ava.

Alameda Key West and Family. - April 01 at 03:12 PM

AF

“ Alameda Key West and Family. purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Keith Ava.



Alameda Key West and Family. - April 01 at 03:12 PM



“ *Lily and Rose Tribute Spray was purchased for the family of Keith Ava.*



March 31 at 05:25 PM



“ *Teresa B. purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Keith Ava.*



Teresa B. - March 31 at 01:10 PM



“ *Teresa B. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Keith Ava.*

Teresa B. - March 31 at 01:10 PM



“ *Tracy & Sherrie Carlson purchased the Medium Dish Garden for the family of Keith Ava.*



Tracy & Sherrie Carlson - March 30 at 11:29 PM