

June 29, 1953 ❁ February 16, 2026

Kenneth LaVern Nelson

Ken "Sarge" Nelson, a beloved husband and father, passed away peacefully surrounded by his family on February 16, 2026. He was 72 years old.

Born in Bloomfield, Iowa on June 29, 1953, Ken was the son of LaVern and Elaine Nelson, and grew up alongside his younger brother Kieth. He graduated from Tracy High School in 1971, where he played water polo and still holds numerous records for swimming. He enlisted into the United States Marine Corp in 1971, and was forever proud of his service to his country. He later graduated from San Joaquin Delta Junior College with an AA in Police Science, and followed his degree with a Contractor apprenticeship, where he earned his General Building Contractor license.



Ken worked on building freeways and bridges before starting Sterling Construction in 1983, where he focused on building custom homes. He moved on to work for Capital Builders where most of his building was focused in the vicinity of the greater Bay Area, until he retired in 2019 as a superintendent. He loved his craft and was able to use it in building the homes he lived in with his family.

Ken took pride in his work and mechanical accuracy – he gave all that he had in his efforts. He was a man of convictions, was true to his word, and remained humble throughout his life, without the need to boast of his accomplishments. His hands were equally adept in building as they were to playing music on his piano. His swimming coach would comment that Ken had his own way in the water, but when he got out, he was just another teammate, and they loved him for it.

Ken was preceded in death by his father LaVern and his mother Elaine. He is survived by his wife, Kathleen; daughters, Sarah (Ross), Amy (Jerry); son, Forrest (Dana); younger brother, Keith (Jodi); grandchildren, Julia, Thomas, Luciella, Nova, Allie, Trevi, and Harris.

He will be remembered as loving his family above all else, and building his greatest foundation where his house stood, which was where his family loved to gather.

A service will be held at 11a.m. on March 9th, 2026 at St. Bernard's Church, 163 W. Eaton Avenue, Tracy CA. A reception will follow immediately at the Elk's Lodge at 6400 Eleventh Street, Tracy.

The Nelson family welcomes all who knew Ken to join in the remembrance of his life.