



Kerry Weems

September 8, 1956 - August 31, 2023

Kerry Neil Weems died at the age of 66 on August 31, 2023, of glioblastoma. He passed away peacefully at home in Spirit Lake, Iowa, on a beautiful evening looking out at the lake.

Kerry was born on September 8, 1956, in Portales, New Mexico to Doye Neil Weems and Anita Brown Weems. He received an HSD from San Marcos Academy, a BA in Philosophy and a BBA in Management from New Mexico State University, and a Master of Business Administration from the University of New Mexico.

Kerry's early, and maybe most formative years, were spent bouncing between Las Cruces, NM, San Marcos, TX, and Jedda, Saudi Arabia. While his father worked for the Raytheon missile program in Saudi Arabia, Kerry would travel between the Arabian Gulf and San Marcos Academy in Texas. There was never any shortage of stories from Saudi Arabia. Whatever mischief happened at San Marcos seemed to be subject to a pact of silence.

Most of Kerry's adult life was spent in the Washington, D.C. area. Kerry spent much of his professional career working for the Federal Government. Kerry first moved to D.C. in the early 1980s to work for his Senator, Harrison Schmitt (R-NM). It was during this time that he met his wife, Jean, who had also moved to D.C. to work for her Senator, Charles Grassley (R-IA). They first met

while commuting on the Metro across the Potomac River from Arlington, VA to Capitol Hill. Such meetings are now as infrequent and unlikely as those that happen on the International Space Station.

Kerry and Jean put down roots in the Virginia suburbs and raised their three children, Peter, Claire, and Anna. Kerry was very involved in his children's lives, volunteering for their swim teams, serving on their school's Board of Directors, and thoroughly interrogating friends and suitors. A favorite activity while raising his kids was the weekly "Scary Movie Night" where Kerry subjected his family over the years to hundreds of B-movies from the 1950s, 60s, and 70s.

Kerry's professional accomplishments are too numerous to be listed in full. After leaving Capitol Hill, he spent nearly 30 years working first for the Social Security Administration, and then the United States Department of Health and Human Services. By the time he left government work, Kerry was managing thousands of people and hundreds of billions of dollars and had been personally named by President George W. Bush to lead the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). He would only occasionally bring up the fact that, even after a positive Finance Committee confirmation hearing, the Senate failed to confirm him officially to the post.

After leaving government, Kerry kept himself busy by serving on corporate boards, working in private equity, leading companies, writing opinion and policy pieces, giving speeches, and consulting for businesses working in healthcare. Among other things, he spent time as CEO of several companies, and as Executive Chairman of the Value Based Healthcare Investors Alliance at Leavitt Partners. His career was dedicated to making sure that the healthcare system worked as effectively as possible.

Kerry and Jean eventually departed Northern Virginia and settled in Sedona,

Arizona. He found some small irony in the fact that he and his wife came to D.C. riding the wave of the Reagan Revolution and left on January 6, 2021. Kerry and Jean quickly found Sedona to be their dream home and encouraged friends and family to visit. He enjoyed daily hikes through the red rocks hills surrounding their house, and despite a lifelong rationalist streak and disdain for the “woo woo”, Kerry would always remark on when he had visited a vortex.

The friendships that Kerry made were lifelong and deep. Kerry counted among his close friends a diverse cast of characters, including podiatrists, military officers, sportswriters, small business owners, bankers, Home Depot employees, Governors, Senators, business executives, and countless others. For most of the decades he lived in Northern Virginia, Kerry and his friends could be found holding court and solving the world’s problems every weekend at Fat Tuesdays in Fairfax over beers, cigars, and jambalaya.

Kerry loved dogs and he and his family always had at least one. Mac, Penny, Boji, and Lizzie were waiting for him on the other side. It is hoped that Suki sticks around here a while longer.

In recent years, Kerry found a renewed love for traveling, taking multiple trips to South America, visiting Antarctica, and most recently cruising the Mediterranean with Jean. If he had any regrets, they would be that he never got to visit the ancestral family castle in Scotland and that he will miss the Big Family Vacation he had been excitedly looking forward to.

The end came abruptly and unexpectedly—less than seven weeks after his initial diagnosis. Kerry had so much more he was looking forward to, and it is for this that his loss will be most profoundly felt by his family and friends. Anyone who knew him was impressed by his intellect, humor, truthfulness,

and personal and professional accomplishments. Despite missing out on what that future might have held, Kerry would have looked back at his legacy and accomplishments and very modestly appraised it all as “bueno”.

Kerry is survived by his wife, Jean; his children Peter, Claire Shaffer (Scott), and Anna Veltri (Joe); his grandchildren Holden, Julia, and Matthew; his mother Anita; and his siblings Erma, Charleese, Lyndon, and David.. He was preceded in death all too prematurely by his brother Matt and all too recently by his father, Neil.

A memorial service will be held at Greer’s Mortuary in Sedona, Arizona, at 11:00, Saturday, September 9, 2023.

Kerry’s family requests that memorials be made to the Glioblastoma Foundation, Brain Tumor Society, or a charity of your choice.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

SEP 9. 11:00 AM (MT)

Greer's Mortuary
2725 W. HWY 89A
Sedona, AZ 86336

Tribute Wall

KH

“ Kelly H. planted a grove of 5 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Kerry Weems.

Kelly H. - October 22, 2023 at 07:38 PM

JB

“ I was a regional office CMS employee when Kerry was the Acting Administrator and remember his visit to our regional office. I got to accompany him on his visits that day, as the media liaison, and listen to him passionately conduct a public radio interview at our local NPR station. I remember how candid, thoughtful, and informative he was on the topics of Medicare and Medicaid and the direction of healthcare in general, to the listeners on the other end. He was soft spoken, but passionate at the same time - I was quite impressed. He was one leader who wore his heart on his sleeve - and truly seemed to love the oh so important work of our federal agency. I was saddened to hear of his sudden passing. May these words from myself and other CMS colleagues comfort you in knowing we all loved his style. Rest in peace. Julie Brookhart

Julie Brookhart - September 15, 2023 at 12:14 PM

PW

“ Sending my deepest condolences to the Family. I worked with Kerry when he was Acting CMS Administrator. He was so caring, respectful, kind and warming. I will cherish our fond memories. Praying for comfort during this very difficult time.
Pat Willis

Patricia Willis - September 12, 2023 at 10:32 AM

AP

“ Kerry was a wonderful colleague and friend to me at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. I'm saddened to hear this news. My thoughts and prayers are with his family.

Anand Parekh - September 11, 2023 at 09:18 AM

MN

“ Mark N. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Kerry Weems.

Mark N. - September 08, 2023 at 09:51 AM

JS

“ On behalf of the extended Swaner family I want to extend our sincere condolences to Kerry Weems family. It is sad indeed that he has died at such a young age after leading such a useful and generous life.

John Swaner
James Swaner
Janey Wall
Susan Chiles

John Swaner - September 08, 2023 at 12:16 AM

LW

“ Kerry embodied the best of everything. I trusted him and I enjoyed the many good times we spent. Godspeed, my friend.

Larry Weisman - September 07, 2023 at 03:08 PM

MW

“ *Marcia and Larry Weisman purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Kerry Weems.*



Marcia and Larry Weisman - September 07, 2023 at 03:02 PM

MW

“ *Marcia and Larry Weisman planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Kerry Weems.*

Marcia and Larry Weisman - September 07, 2023 at 03:02 PM

PK

“ *An honest, capable and valuable friend and colleague. He will be missed -- Phil Kogan, former federal employee and colleague of Kerry Weems.*

Phil Kogan - September 06, 2023 at 05:24 PM

AP

“ *Andrew Clark (Leavitt Equity Partners) purchased the Hickory Farms Savory and Sweet Snacker Gift Basket for the family of Kerry Weems.*



Andrew Clark (Leavitt Equity Partners) - September 06, 2023 at 12:58 PM

AP

“ Andrew Clark (Leavitt Equity Partners) planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Kerry Weems.

Andrew Clark (Leavitt Equity Partners) - September 06, 2023 at 12:58 PM

AC

“ It was an honor to work with Kerry for the last 5 or 6 years at Leavitt Equity Partners. His expertise, kindness, and leadership, was an inspiration to us all. I'm glad I got to spend meaningful one on one time with him back in May as we visited an investor. We had a long car ride together and shared a dinner, where we discussed everything from family, faith, careers, sports, business strategy, etc. I've learned so much from him and will miss him.

Andrew Clark - September 06, 2023 at 12:56 PM

GK

“ I worked with Kerry at CMS and admired him so much. He was dedicated and oh so very smart. May his memory always be a blessing.

Gary Karr - September 06, 2023 at 12:05 PM

MF

“ MITA Family purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Kerry Weems.



MITA Family - September 05, 2023 at 08:49 PM

MF

“ MITA Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Kerry Weems.

MITA Family - September 05, 2023 at 08:49 PM



“ A sympathy card was purchased for the family of Kerry Weems.



September 05, 2023 at 08:40 PM

JN

“ I was fortunate to work with and travel with Kerry for more than a year when he was CMS Administrator. What follows is typical of his depth:

He was the featured speaker at a Medicare Part D Enrollment event in East St. Louis, Illinois. 700 beneficiaries at a luncheon listened intently to an African Methodist Episcopalian (AME) Minister opening the event with a rather moving prayer. Kerry was up next, looked out on the crowd, and recited from memory two verses from Luke. The crowd was first in shock and then nodded their heads in acclimation.

*Such was Kerry - a remarkable man whose insight will be missed.
Jeff Nelligan*

Jeff Nelligan - September 05, 2023 at 01:28 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Kerry Weems.*



September 05, 2023 at 01:16 PM



“ *I had the great privilege of getting to know both Kerry and Peter, both personally and professionally. There is no doubt in my mind that, among all his great accomplishments, Kerry’s biggest were as a father and mentor. My condolences to the extended Weems family at this difficult time.*

Lambert van der Walde - September 05, 2023 at 12:42 PM



“ *Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Kerry Weems.*



September 05, 2023 at 10:39 AM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Kerry Weems.*



September 05, 2023 at 10:22 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Kerry Weems.



September 05, 2023 at 10:02 AM



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

September 05, 2023 at 10:02 AM



“ Enduring Grace was purchased for the family of Kerry Weems.



September 04, 2023 at 08:00 PM



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

September 04, 2023 at 08:00 PM



“ Anita D. purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Kerry Weems.



Anita D. - September 04, 2023 at 06:06 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Kerry Weems.*



September 04, 2023 at 04:55 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Kerry Weems.*



September 04, 2023 at 01:56 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Kerry Weems.*

September 04, 2023 at 01:56 PM



“ *We are saddened to hear about your family's loss. We are praying for peace and comfort in Kerry's memories.*

Sherry and Tom Fuhrman - September 03, 2023 at 10:20 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Kerry Weems.*



September 03, 2023 at 08:29 PM



“ *Kerry was both a client as the CFO at HHS and later an executive at a company for who we both worked in Northern Virginia. We laughed about me “pimping him out” to solicit good opportunities for our company. We last met in Columbus, Ohio at the airport, where we were delayed for hours and got to catch up. He was always gracious with his time, had a keen intellect and loved to actually help problem solve. RIP. My condolences to his family and all who knew him.*

Wanda Gamble - September 03, 2023 at 06:59 PM



“ *Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Kerry Weems.*



September 03, 2023 at 04:58 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Kerry Weems.*



September 03, 2023 at 04:11 PM



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

September 03, 2023 at 04:11 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Kerry Weems.



September 03, 2023 at 04:07 PM



“ Please accept my sincere condolences for your loss. Kerry will be sorely missed. His love and contributions to his family, friends, and to the US health system and policy reflect a permanent positive legacy of his life.

Mary Shepard Spaeth - September 03, 2023 at 02:29 AM



“ Jim and I are so sorry for this tremendous loss. We hold all the family in our thoughts

CONSTANCE DIAMANT - September 02, 2023 at 05:03 PM



“ So very, very sorry to learn of Kerry's passing, so young and so suddenly. Our hearts go out to Jean and to their family. Kerry was a remarkable man, intelligent, generous, and kind. May his memory be a blessing. Bonnie & Garry Moore

Bonita Moore - September 02, 2023 at 04:50 PM

CW

“ *Jean and family I am so sorry for your loss*



Cathy Worden - September 01, 2023 at 12:22 PM

MD

Sending hugs and prayers, Mary Jean for you and your family.

Mary K Donovan - September 02, 2023 at 10:47 PM

MD

Sending hugs and prayers Mary Jean for you and you family So very sorry for your loss

Mary K Donovan - September 02, 2023 at 10:49 PM

LH

Anna & Joe - sympathy is extended to you and your family. Your father had an incredible "resume"! He will be missed by the many people who called him friend, dad, husband and grandpa.

Lou Ann Huberty - September 03, 2023 at 01:42 PM

EC

I was sorry to hear about Kerry. I worked with him in the early part of his Federal career, both at SSA and HHS. He and Jean were at my wedding and I remember his lovely comment about how going to a wedding provided an opportunity to publicly reaffirm his love for his wife.

Elizabeth Cusick - September 06, 2023 at 11:16 AM

KB

Kerry was a dear and trusted friend for the past 5 decades. It was my great honor and pleasure to have known him. My heart goes out to his family, friends and colleagues. "... but they should never have taken the very best"

Karl Boesenberg - September 06, 2023 at 01:43 PM