



Governor Charles D. Baker has ordered that the United States flag and the Commonwealth flag be lowered to half-staff on Thursday, June 28, 2018, the day of interment, in honor of Major General (Retired) George W. Keefe, 39th Adjutant General of the Massachusetts National Guard and resident of Holliston, Massachusetts who passed away on June 21, 2018.

The following information about Major General Keefe is from the website of Ahearn Funeral Home.

George was born on April 24th, 1939 to Edward L. Keefe and Margaret (Sullivan) Keefe in Northampton, Massachusetts. He attended public schools in Northampton, and graduated from Northampton High School in 1956, and received his Associates Degree from Holyoke Community College in 1966. He retired from the Massachusetts Air National Guard and United States Air Force in 2005 as the 39th Adjutant General of Massachusetts, with the federal rank of Major General. He was predeceased by his wife of 41 years, his high school sweetheart, Kathleen (Savoie) Keefe in 2000, and a daughter in law, Tracy Jernigan Keefe in 2006.

George enlisted in the Massachusetts Air National Guard's 104th Tactical Fighter Group in 1956 as a Crash Fire Rescue Specialist attaining the rank of Master Sergeant before he was selected for a commission as an Officer and First Lieutenant. He served as a Squadron, Group, and Vice Wing Commander at the 104th Tactical Fighter Group before being selected to serve at the Massachusetts National Guard Joint Force Headquarters. He was the last Massachusetts Air National Guard member to serve in uniform who were federally activated and deployed from October 1961 to September 1962 to Phalsbourg France for OPERATION STAIR STEP, the US Military response to the Berlin Crisis. George

was also enshrined in the US Air Forces Enlisted Heritage Hall at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama as one of the few General Officers who rose from the rank of Airman Basic to Major General.

George was selected and appointed as the 39th Adjutant General of Massachusetts, in 1999, by Massachusetts Governor the Honorable A. Paul Cellucci. With this appointment, George became the first US Air Force Officer to serve as Massachusetts Adjutant General since 1778. George continued to serve under Lieutenant Governor and then acting Governor Jane Swift. Governor Mitt Romney re-appointed George to his second term as Adjutant General, a position he held until George retired with 49 years of military service in 2005. Recently when asked what he found most satisfying and rewarding about his long military career, George was quick to respond; "I had the chance to meet and serve with the best men and women in the world, and my job was to take care of my soldiers, airmen, and their families. That was my passion, and I hope I made a difference for them." His military awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, Air Reserve Forces Meritorious Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, and the Armed Forces Service Medal. He was also a graduate of the Air Force Squadron Officer School, Air Command and Staff College, National Security Management Course, and the Air Force Inspector General Course. George was active for many years as a youth baseball and basketball coach with the Northampton Recreation Department. He also was President of the Northampton High School Boys Soccer Boosters, and the President of the Northampton High School Boys Lacrosse Boosters. George was also a Life Member of the VFW, Michael Curtin Post, 8006, BPOE Lodge #997, Northampton St. Patricks Association where he served as the Northampton Parade Marshal in 1994, and the American Legion Northampton Post.

George's passion was his family, especially his 13 grandchildren. He enjoyed watching them compete in sporting events, and their many, extracurricular activities. His "little piece of Heaven" was his house on Cape Cod, where he watched his sons, and his grandchildren enjoy the beach, the waves, fried sea food, and countless whiffle ball and miniature golf matches. He loved family picnics, Thanksgiving meals, and Christmas Eve and Christmas Day family celebrations. Not just for the never ending parade of food, especially satisfying to his sweet tooth habit, but for being surrounded by his family and friends who were known to "stop

by” for a libation. His extended family of friends were a constant source of love and laughter for him throughout his life, and he was proud of the strong friendships and relationships he had formed and maintained throughout the years. He also seemed to be intent on funding the Massachusetts Lottery by utilizing his patented unique strategy to “invest” in Scratch Off Tickets. He also was happy to leave this earth knowing the Red Sox had beaten the “Curse of the Bambino” and won a World Series, and that the Patriots would be ever known as the greatest football team of all time.

George is survived by his son Gary and his wife Allison Keefe, and their children Garrett, Bridget, and Shannon, his son James and his wife Yvonne Keefe, and their children Liam and Caitlin, his son Patrick and his wife Leigh Keefe and their children Meagan, Brenna Patrick Jr, and Conan, and his son Timothy and his wife Nicole Keefe, and their children Tully Keefe, Avery Keefe, Daniel Strum, and Connor Strum. George also leaves his loyal and older brother Edward E. Keefe and his wife Maryanne “Sissy” Keefe. He also leaves his loving partner and “Honey” of 17 years, Geraldine “Gerri” Kingkade, his God Daughter Debbie Szipilla, and many loving nieces, nephews, cousins, neighbors, friends and extended family.