

# HARTLEY CHARLES KING



Age 91, a prominent local entrepreneur and restaurateur, passed away comfortably at his home, in Elizabeth Township, on Friday, January 31, 2025. Born in McKeesport, PA in 1933, Hartley was the son of the late Howard and Thelma (Dreiling) King and brother of the late Wayne H. King of White Oak and Melbourne Beach, FL. A 1951 graduate of McKeesport High School, Hartley proudly attended

Lehigh University, where he was a member of Alpha Tau Omega fraternity, earning a B.S. in Business Administration in 1956. He then served in the U.S. Army as Specialist Fourth Class in the 557th Engineer Company (LE) stationed in Fort Lewis, WA, before returning home to work in sales at King and Keeney, Inc., an oil distributorship co-founded by his father.

In 1967, while still maintaining his day job at the oil company, Hartley invested in a struggling restaurant, the Pig-N-Go, at the intersection of Routes 30 and 48 in North Versailles. The new business, originally called Kings Country Shoppes, later became known as Kings Family Restaurants. Hartley was fired from King and Keeney in 1972 for spending too much time on his fledgling restaurant business, but by 1980, with six thriving locations, he was able to purchase King and Keeney, which he ultimately renamed Mon Valley Petroleum and where he served as President/CEO until it was sold in 2012.

The Kings chain expanded steadily during the '80s and '90s. Over its 48-year run, Kings operated 36 locations in Western PA and Ohio, offering legendary breakfast, lunch, dinner and dessert options in a casual, friendly atmosphere, where families could enjoy delightful meals at affordable prices. At the time of his death, Hartley was still a managing partner in NCH Hospitality, LLC, which currently operates five Sonic locations in PA and West Virginia.

Beyond his accomplishments in the restaurant and petroleum businesses, Hartley was a savvy real estate investor and land developer. Combining his passion for business with his love of golf, Hartley and associates teamed up with nine-time major golf champion Gary Player to develop the exclusive Diamond Run Golf Club in Sewickley, Pa. Following the success of Diamond Run, he and his partners launched a second golf course enterprise in 2002, Maryland National Golf Club, in Middletown, MD.

Hartley's generosity was as notable as his work ethic. His businesses contributed to many area charities, including the Make-A-Wish Foundation, Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and the Leukemia Society of Western Pennsylvania. Kings also sponsored annual golf tournaments to benefit the Shriners Hospitals for Children and had been a proud sponsor of the Kings Junior Golf Tournament Series, in conjunction with the TSPGA. The Variety Club of Pittsburgh named Hartley its "1992 Businessman of the Year." He was also one of 11 area leaders named "Entrepreneur of the Year" in a 1997 contest sponsored by Ernst & Young LLP, the Kauffman Foundation, USA Today and NASDAQ. In 2001, he was given the honor of "Restaurateur of the Year" by the Pennsylvania Restaurant Association Western Chapter. Other noteworthy honors include the Richard S. Caligiuri Memorial Award and induction into the McKeesport High School Hall of Fame.

Hartley was a long-time Pittsburgh Steelers season ticket holder, member of Youghiogheny Country Club, Mount Vernon Community Presbyterian Church, the Pittsburgh Petroleum Club, Franklin/St. John's/Trinity Masonic Lodge No. 221, 33rd degree Freemasons, the Royal Order of Jesters Pittsburgh Court No.2, and the Syria Shriners.

Preceded in death by his supportive and remarkable wife of 57 years, Dianne (Hacker) King. Hartley is survived by two daughters, Susan King and Keeley (Mark) Goldsmith; four grandchildren, Ryan (Tori Dobson) Zeleznik, Courtney Zeleznik, Dante Egizio, and Dylon Egizio; and nieces and nephews.

A public Visitation will be held Thursday, February 20, 2025, from 4-8 p.m., at the **GILBERT FUNERAL HOME AND CREMATORY, INC.**, 6028 Smithfield St., Boston, PA 15135, (412)-751-5000, Drew J. Gilbert, director. A private Memorial service will be held for family and invited friends at a later date.

Memorial contributions may be made to Make-A-Wish Greater Pennsylvania and West Virginia, Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, or Shriners Children's Hospital.

Condolences may be made at:

[Gilbertfuneralhomeandcrematory.com](http://Gilbertfuneralhomeandcrematory.com)

Send condolences [post-gazette.com/gb](mailto:post-gazette.com/gb)