



Chris Franklin Dettling

July 8, 1952 - March 8, 2024

Chris Franklin Dettling, 71, passed away March 8, 2024. He was born in El Campo, Texas to the late Mike and Albertha Dettling. He attended St. Philip Catholic School and graduated from El Campo High School. He was a lifelong member of St. Philip Catholic Church and a 4th Degree member of the Knights of Columbus.

Chris was 13 years old when he lost his father and at 16 years old he began operating his father's maintainer to support his mother and five siblings. In 1980 he purchased the maintainer from his mother and started his own heavy equipment business. Chris loved his work, but the light of his life was his family, especially his grandchildren. He also enjoyed stories around the campfire at deer camp with his buddies. One of Chris' highlights was taking his grandson hunting this past season and watching him get his first deer. For hours on end he and his granddaughter Ellie would garden in the backyard, talking about life, something, and everything in between.

He also loved fishing and misadventures on the bay with his family and friends, whether or not they caught his limit or caught a "buzz".

Being a Santa look-alike, Chris always found joy in spreading Christmas cheer by surprising random HEB shoppers with gift cards during the Christmas season. Chris never met a stranger and could carry on a conversation with

anyone for over an hour.

He is survived by his wife of 49 years, Susan Waligura Dettling of El Campo; children Amy Dettling Perez (Vanessa) of the Woodlands and Neal Dettling (Brittany) of New Braunfels; grandchildren, Ellie and Owen Lewis; sisters, Linda Rees of San Antonio, Butzi Vacek (Mike) of Austin, Sherry Hoffman (Darby) of Garwood; brothers, Carl Dettling and Russell Dettling (Barbara) of El Campo, and numerous nieces and nephews.

Chris was preceded in death by his parents; infant son, Matthew; and brother-in-law John Rees.

Visitation will begin at 1 p.m. Sunday, March 10 at St. Philip Catholic Church with a KC Rosary recited at 3 p.m. Funeral Mass will begin at 10 a.m. on Monday, March 11 at the church with the Rev. Dalton Ervin officiating. Burial will follow at Holy Cross Memorial Park.

Pallbearers will be Ryan Vacek, Curtis Vacek, Jordan Dettling, Zachery Dettling, Matt Hoffman, John Reese III, Craig Reese and Wyatt Waligura. Honorary pallbearers will be his hunting buddies.

Memorial donations in memory of Chris may be made to St. Philip Catholic Church, St. Philip School or Wharton County Cares.

Triska Funeral Home, El Campo, 979-543-3681

Cemetery Details

Holy Cross Memorial Park

1617 South Mechanic Street
El Campo, TX 77437
(979) 543-3770

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 10. 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM (CT)

St. Philip Catholic Church
304 W. Church Street
El Campo, TX 77437
<http://stphilipapostle.org/>

Knights of Columbus Rosary

MAR 10. 3:00 PM (CT)

St. Philip Catholic Church
304 W. Church Street
El Campo, TX 77437
<http://stphilipapostle.org/>

Funeral Mass

MAR 11. 10:00 AM (CT)

St. Philip Catholic Church
304 W. Church Street
El Campo, TX 77437
<http://stphilipapostle.org/>

Tribute Wall



“ *Amazing Grace 44" Sonnet was purchased for the family of Chris Franklin Dettling.*



March 25, 2024 at 02:38 PM



“ *Melba and Randy Clapp planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Chris Franklin Dettling.*

Melba and Randy Clapp - March 25, 2024 at 02:38 PM



“ *Peggy Trochta sent a virtual gift in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling*



Peggy Trochta - March 13, 2024 at 01:08 AM

KK

“ *Condolences to Chris' family and friends. I only just met and worked with Chris on a couple of locations this past year. Just a few weeks ago, we rode out to look at a location that was too soft at the time to get my rig on it. Although the company decided to just let the area dry up, I am very glad that I got the chance to visit with him on our ride. After assessing and discussing the location, we shared more than a few thoughts that day about life, family, God, and friends. It was a pleasure.*

Prayers for comfort and healing to you all,

Kevin King

Kevin King - March 11, 2024 at 03:07 PM

DP

“ *Debbie Prihoda sent a virtual gift in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling*



Debbie Prihoda - March 11, 2024 at 08:25 AM

CK

“ Mr. Chris Dettling was a fine and generous man. Once when I was in a terrible bind on a excavation job, Mr. Dettling stopped what he was doing, loaded his bulldozer onto a truck and came and rescued me from the worst situation I've ever been in. I don't know what I would have done without his help that day. He stayed and visited with me for several hours, and I'll never forget how he helped me. He will be greatly missed. God bless Susan and family. Praying that God will wrap His arms of love about you all.

Our condolences, Chad & Tammy Koehn

Chad Koehn - March 11, 2024 at 12:26 AM

SP

“ Scott & Ernestine Poth. purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Chris Franklin Dettling.



Scott & Ernestine Poth. - March 10, 2024 at 10:14 PM

CH

“ I was fortunate to have known Chris who always welcomed me with his warm heart and infectious smile. He was a genuine soul. I shall always remember him with fondness and deep affection. My heartfelt condolences to Susan and both families. The world has lost such a special man. Rest in Peace, Chris, until we meet again.

Camille Dowden Holm - March 10, 2024 at 05:29 PM

KK

“ My deepest sympathies to Susan, Amy and Neal. Mr. Dettling was such a great man. Praying for you all.

Kristina Korenek - March 10, 2024 at 12:41 PM

SC

“ Dear Susan and all the family, it is with a heavy heart that I offer you my deepest and most heartfelt sympathy at this time. Our mothers were the closest and best of friends and, as young children, we spent much time with the Dettling family. We have many fun memories of Chris that we will cherish. May the happy memories you have together be with you always. We are all richer for having known Chris and thoroughly enjoyed his friendship. I pray that the Lord will wrap Chris in His eternal embrace. May perpetual light shine upon him and may he rest in peace. God bless you.



Sandra Cranek - March 10, 2024 at 08:34 AM

GO

“ Genevieve Leopold Otto lit a candle in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling



Genevieve Leopold Otto - March 10, 2024 at 12:28 AM

CB

“ We did not directly know Mr. Dettling. However, while spending Christmas with our family this past year, he randomly showed up at my in-laws’ house while we were all outside enjoying our gathering. It was especially awesome for our 2.5 year old twin boys who had already seen Santa earlier in the day but he (Santa) returned to give them high fives and talk about their upcoming Christmas morning. After some asking around on our end, we finally determined who this Santa was and that he did this regularly. It had a very special impact on our family as it sounds like he did for many others. Rest in peace, Mr. Dettling! Thank you for giving a family some special memories and more smiles!

Cole & Lindsey Baker - March 09, 2024 at 10:23 PM

CR

“ Clarence & Judy Rohan lit a candle in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling



Clarence & Judy Rohan - March 09, 2024 at 10:04 PM

JR

“ Judy Rohan lit a candle in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling



Judy Rohan - March 09, 2024 at 10:03 PM

VQ

“ *My thoughts & prayers are with you all that God will Comfort you in your loss! God bless you & your loved ones! RIP Chris! He will be dearly missed by everyone who knew & loved him!*
Vicky Blair Ustynik Quijas



Vicky Quijas - March 09, 2024 at 06:25 PM

VQ

“ *Vicky Quijas lit a candle in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling*



Vicky Quijas - March 09, 2024 at 06:19 PM

JH

“ *John & Susan Halamicek sent a virtual gift in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling*



John & Susan Halamicek - March 09, 2024 at 05:57 PM

CH

“ *Peggy and Charlie Schomburg send our deepest sympathy for your loss. Stay strong and keep the faith*

charlie - March 09, 2024 at 05:11 PM

RJ

“ Ray And Linda Jaksch lit a candle in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling



Ray and Linda Jaksch - March 09, 2024 at 02:28 PM

GV

“ Gary Voelkel lit a candle in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling



Gary Voelkel - March 09, 2024 at 02:24 PM



“ Crystal Cross Bouquet was purchased for the family of Chris Franklin Dettling.



March 09, 2024 at 12:05 PM

WI

“ West Side Drywall, Inc. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Chris Franklin Dettling.

West Side Drywall, Inc. - March 09, 2024 at 12:05 PM

MC

“ Mustang Cat El Campo purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of Chris Franklin Dettling.



Mustang Cat El Campo - March 09, 2024 at 12:05 PM

FS

“ Frank and Kay Salvato purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Chris Franklin Dettling.



Frank and Kay Salvato - March 09, 2024 at 11:39 AM

SH

“ Sandra Hensley sent a virtual gift in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling



Sandra Hensley - March 09, 2024 at 11:29 AM

GP

“ Ginger Ann Preite sent a virtual gift in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling



Ginger Ann Preite - March 09, 2024 at 10:48 AM

GP

Chris who we called Red, was a dear friend to many. His Family was Very important always coming first. Red was generous with his smile and kind to all, A joyful person that believed in Jesus and Our Father, God. Not long ago we were at a reception for a friend, when he asked if I would pray with him. We sat silent together for a moment then, prayed, with the love of Jesus for all. Red had an attitude of gratitude and a multitude of friends that will miss him. In our school years I could always count on his jolliness to laugh. In later years he portrayed Santa with a joyful spirit. Rest in Peace my Friend.

Ginger Ann Preite - March 09, 2024 at 11:38 AM



“ *Leslie Schroder lit a candle in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling*



Leslie Schroder - March 09, 2024 at 10:11 AM

MF

“ *McKnight Family purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of Chris Franklin Dettling.*



McKnight Family - March 09, 2024 at 09:54 AM

EE

“ *Eric, Stacey and Ethan purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Chris Franklin Dettling.*



Eric, Stacey and Ethan - March 09, 2024 at 08:08 AM

KN

“ Karen & Kristi Nation purchased the Magnificent Life Spray for the family of Chris Franklin Dettling.



Karen & Kristi Nation - March 08, 2024 at 11:36 PM

JS

“ Judy/Allen Sefcik sent a virtual gift in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling



Judy/Allen Sefcik - March 08, 2024 at 11:27 PM

GH

“ Grover/Val Hargrove lit a candle in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling



Grover/Val Hargrove - March 08, 2024 at 10:44 PM

CW

“ I am truly sorry about the loss of Chris. My condolences to Susan, Amy and Neal along with the rest of the family. May he rest in peace.



Cindy Witcher - March 08, 2024 at 09:07 PM

KK

“ *Kanthryn Krpec lit a candle in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling*



kanthryn krpec - March 08, 2024 at 08:00 PM

CR

“ *My heart is filled with sorrow for your loss.*



Cindy Riha - March 08, 2024 at 07:53 PM

EC

“ *Elaine Mach Cook lit a candle in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling*



Elaine Mach Cook - March 08, 2024 at 07:38 PM

RH

“ *Randy & Vicki Hildebrand lit a candle in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling*



Randy & Vicki Hildebrand - March 08, 2024 at 06:59 PM

GR

“ *Our condolences to the family.*



Gerald & Neta Ripple - March 08, 2024 at 06:12 PM

MS

“ *Matt Henry & Laura Shuey purchased the Medium Dish Garden for the family of Chris Franklin Dettling.*



Matt Henry & Laura Shuey - March 08, 2024 at 06:08 PM

PD

“ *Patricia Dybala lit a candle in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling*



Patricia Dybala - March 08, 2024 at 06:04 PM

WK

“ *Wright K. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Chris Franklin Dettling.*

Wright K. - March 08, 2024 at 05:40 PM

DB

“ *Diane Busby lit a candle in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling*



Diane Busby - March 08, 2024 at 05:22 PM

DC

“ *Danny & Andrea Leaks and Children purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Chris Franklin Dettling.*



Danny & Andrea Leaks and Children - March 08, 2024 at 05:18 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Chris Franklin Dettling.*



March 08, 2024 at 05:08 PM

TF

“ *The Mustang Cat Family purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of Chris Franklin Dettling.*



The Mustang Cat Family - March 08, 2024 at 04:56 PM

MS

“ Sure going to miss Chris. Condolences to his family and friends.



Martin Strarup - March 08, 2024 at 04:13 PM

LM

“ Lu Matzke lit a candle in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling



Lu Matzke - March 08, 2024 at 04:06 PM

SK

“ Susan Kaspar lit a candle in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling



Susan Kaspar - March 08, 2024 at 03:25 PM

RM

“ ROSE ANN MITCHELL sent a virtual gift in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling



ROSE ANN MITCHELL - March 08, 2024 at 03:11 PM

JF

“ Julie Strnadel & Family sent a virtual gift in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling



Julie Strnadel & family - March 08, 2024 at 02:32 PM

AM

“ My condolences to the family at this difficult time.



Andrea McCann - March 08, 2024 at 02:32 PM

LB

“ You are in our thoughts and prayers. Lester and Deidra



Lester Priesmeyer and Deidra Becker - March 08, 2024 at 02:30 PM

TA

“ Tracey A. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Chris Franklin Dettling.

Tracey A. - March 08, 2024 at 02:14 PM

FW

“ Praying for you Susan and family. This is a sad day. Praying that God gives you strength .

Florence Wesselski - March 08, 2024 at 02:08 PM

SP

“ Shirley Popp lit a candle in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling



Shirley Popp - March 08, 2024 at 02:07 PM

AA

“ Chris you will be greatly missed ❤️so many beautiful memories with Susan & You 🙏



Angie Drlik Allen - March 08, 2024 at 01:47 PM

SS

“ Sandra Stary lit a candle in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling



Sandra Stary - March 08, 2024 at 01:46 PM

HC

“ *Holly Waligura Class lit a candle in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling*



Holly Waligura Class - March 08, 2024 at 01:35 PM

DS

“ *David & Charlene Linhart Smith lit a candle in memory of Chris Franklin Dettling*



David & Charlene Linhart Smith - March 08, 2024 at 01:20 PM