

Keith Royer

Keith Royer was born July 3, 1923. He was the eighth of 12 children born to Alvin and Ella Royer. Keith grew up on the family farm outside of Newton, Kansas, and graduated from Newton High School in 1941. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1942 and served in the North African, Sicilian, and Italian campaigns as a trooper in the 91st Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron doing recon for the U.S. 5th Army. He married Wanda Warhurst on August. 29, 1942, and they shared the next 60 years together. He was father to two children, Michael and Teresa, and grandfather to five -- Bradley, Melissa, Vanessa, Jacqueline, and Benjamin.

Keith started his 42-year career in the Fire Service in 1946 when he joined the Wichita (Kansas) Fire Department. In 1949 he began a 39-year career as a Fire Service educator, accepting a position as Chief Instructor of Fire Service Extension at the University of Kansas. In 1951 he assumed a similar position at Iowa State University. He later became the Director of the Fire Service Institute. While at Iowa State he established the university as a national leader in fire behavior research and application.

In his early years at ISU, he did major fire behavior investigation and research with Bill Nelson (a friend n colleague of 28 years) that resulted in the Iowa Rate of Flow Formula. The formula is still a major fundamental in basic firefighter training. After this research he was established as a national leader in the fire protection and education field. He served in advisory positions under both Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy.

Keith's career was rooted in and dedicated to his belief in the importance of training firefighters. He helped found the International Society of Fire Service Instructors and the Iowa Society of Fire Service Instructors. He was a major supporter of certification for firefighter training on the state and national levels. He helped establish the National Professional Qualification System and the national Fire Academy. He served leadership roles in many national organizations including the International Association of Fire Chiefs and the National Fire Protection Association.