

Mr. Benjamin Palmer Clark

December 20, 1947 - December 15, 2025

Benjamin Palmer Clark, 77, passed away on December 15, 2025 in Kingwood, Texas. He will be deeply missed by the family and friends who loved him so dearly. Palmer was known for his kindness and generosity, and he made a lasting impact on every life that he touched.

Palmer Clark was born on December 20, 1947 in Shreveport, Louisiana to Edgar Davis “Ed” Clark and Kathryn Strong Clark. Palmer was the first baby to be baptized at St. William of Vercelli Catholic Church in Carthage, Texas, where his funeral mass will be held. He spent his childhood in Carthage, along with his brother, Jim Clark. Palmer graduated from Carthage High School in 1966. He then moved to Denton, Texas, where he attended the University of North Texas. He was a member of Phi Kappa Theta, a Catholic men’s fraternity. In 1970, he graduated with his bachelor’s degree in business and a minor in statistics.

Palmer met the love of his life, Susan, when they were both attending the University of North Texas. They married the summer before their senior year, on June 28, 1969. After graduation, Palmer and Susan then moved to Louisville, Kentucky as part of Palmer’s service for the National Teacher Corps.

While in Louisville, they welcomed the birth of their first child, Mary Elizabeth “Betsy” in December of 1970. Palmer earned his Master’s of Education at the University of Louisville.

Palmer and Susan’s desire to be closer to their families prompted a move to

Tyler, Texas. Their second child, Amy, was born in Tyler in 1973. Susan and Palmer were active in the Tyler community, and they were devoted members of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception Parish.

Palmer had a very successful teaching career, which spanned a total of 34 years. In Tyler, Texas, he taught math at Peete Elementary and Moore MST Magnet School. He was known for his mental math skills. He invited his students to challenge him with math problems that he would solve entirely in his head, never once putting pencil to paper. He became a mentor in the teaching community and was passionate about providing a quality education for all students of diverse backgrounds and skill levels. He served as a representative for the Texas State Teachers Association, and you could often find him on the local news, advocating for teachers and education.

In January 2005, shortly after retirement, Palmer suffered a life-threatening stroke. Palmer showed immense strength and perseverance in his recovery defying all odds and exceeding expectations. He learned to speak, walk, and drive again in spite of his paralysis.

Palmer loved being “Papa” to his five grandchildren. He was a generous and selfless grandfather and enjoyed nothing more than spending time with his family. Palmer and Susan made every trip to “Nana and Papa’s house” so special and packed full of fun activities.

In September 2012, Susan passed away after a hard-fought battle with melanoma. He absolutely adored Susan and missed her immensely. Palmer and Susan made many lasting memories together in their 43 years of marriage. Palmer never took off his wedding ring, wearing it faithfully until the day that he passed.

After Susan’s passing, Palmer moved to Kingwood, Texas to live near Betsy and family. On a typical day, you were likely to find “Papa” reading a newspaper, rooting for the Dallas Cowboys, the San Francisco Giants, or the Carthage High School Bulldogs. He also loved cheering on his grandchildren in their various sporting activities.

Palmer Clark is survived by his daughter Mary Elizabeth (Betsy) Gay and

husband Jason Gay, his daughter Amy Turner, brother Jim Clark and sister-in-law Shari Clark, sister-in-law Judy Davis and brother-in-law Don Davis, sister-in-law Sharon Massey, grandchildren Madeline Gay, Marissa Gay, Andrew Gay, Kylie Wilbanks, and Ashlyn Wilbanks, and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Palmer is preceded in death by his wife Susan Clark, his parents Edgar and Kathryn Clark, and his father-in-law and mother-in-law Joseph and Mabel Vestring, his brother-in-law Tim Vestring and sister-in-law Cheryl Vestring. A funeral mass will be celebrated on Dec. 22, 2025 at 11:00AM at St William of Vercelli Catholic Church in Carthage, followed by burial at Odd Fellows Cemetery. Immediately following the burial, a reception will be held at Hawthorn Funeral Home at 307 West Wellington Street, Carthage, TX. The Family request memorials be made to the East Texas Food Bank.

Cemetery Details

Odd Fellows Cemetery

256 S. Market
Carthage, TX 75633

Previous Events

Funeral Mass

DEC **22**. 11:00 AM (CT)

St. William of Vercelli Catholic Church
4088 NW Loop 436
Carthage, TX

Reception

DEC **22**. 12:30 PM (CT)

Hawthorn Funeral Home
307 West Wellington Street, P.O. Box 188
Carthage, TX

Tribute Wall



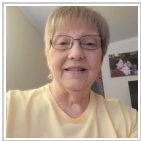
“ *My condolences to the family. Mr. Clark was my math teacher at Moore in the early 1980's. He was a great teacher. I had Mrs. Clark as my typing teacher for 2 years at JT. They were both fantastic teachers and kind human beings.*

Tammy Bickerdike Hicks - January 17 at 10:40 PM

BG

Thank you so very much. Sincerely, Betsy

Betsy Gay - January 20 at 04:30 PM



“ *Cathy Woodard lit a candle in memory of Mr. Benjamin Palmer Clark*



Cathy Woodard - December 22, 2025 at 04:40 AM

S(

“ *Sincerely, ExxonMobil (EMBSI) purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of Mr. Benjamin Palmer Clark.*



Sincerely, ExxonMobil (EMBSI) - December 21, 2025 at 03:11 PM

EL

“ *Mr. Clark was my sixth grade teacher at W.A. Peete Elementary and we loved him! He was a great teacher and taught many valuable lessons. Rest in peace 🙏🙏🙏*

Eleanor - December 21, 2025 at 06:58 AM

BG

Thank you so very much for your kind words. Sincerely, Betsy

Betsy Gay - January 20 at 04:31 PM

CS

“ *Cynthia Singletary lit a candle in memory of Mr. Benjamin Palmer Clark*



Cynthia Singletary - December 20, 2025 at 09:40 AM

CC

“ *Cynthia Singletary Clerc lit a candle in memory of Mr. Benjamin Palmer Clark*



Cynthia Singletary Clerc - December 20, 2025 at 09:38 AM

LE

“ Love, “The Best Moms Ever” purchased the Rose Remembrance for the family of Mr. Benjamin Palmer Clark.



Love, “The Best Moms Ever” - December 19, 2025 at 04:10 PM

LE

“ Love, “The Best Moms Ever” planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mr. Benjamin Palmer Clark.

Love, “The Best Moms Ever” - December 19, 2025 at 04:10 PM

TF

“ The Gay,Borum,Roth and Johnston families purchased the Magnificent Life Spray for the family of Mr. Benjamin Palmer Clark.



The Gay,Borum,Roth and Johnston families - December 19, 2025 at 11:59 AM

TF

“ The Gay,Borum,Roth and Johnston families planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mr. Benjamin Palmer Clark.

The Gay,Borum,Roth and Johnston families - December 19, 2025 at 11:59 AM