



## Elton Keith Helwig

February 27, 1942 - July 11, 2021

Elton Keith Helwig passed away Sunday, June 11, 2021, at his home in Dallas, Texas. He was 79 years old. Elton was a pioneer in commercial relational database management and a gifted coder for practical software application. Elton's family, friends and work colleagues take comfort knowing that his legacy of software coding and development will live on for the benefit of all.

At the young age of 12, Elton contracted polio, which divested his physical abilities and left him with such serious handicaps that he would spend his lifetime endeavoring to overcome them. Elton, however, was committed to not allowing his physical limitations be his only story, especially since polio did not in any way impact his mental abilities. Elton used his own strength of mind and character to prove over and over to himself and to anyone lucky enough to be in his life that he was brilliant and extraordinary. Elton's true genius was grounded in his gift for mathematics, which led him to a long and successful career in the computer software and technology industry. After graduating as the Salutatorian in the Class of 1960 at Woodrow Wilson High School in East Dallas, Elton attended Southern Methodist University (SMU), earning his Master's Degree in Mathematics in only 4 years.

After his graduation from SMU, Elton began a career path sparked by his mathematical genius and genuine interest in the advancement of computer and machine technology. His first job after graduation was with University Computing Company (UCC) which was a data processing service bureau on the campus of SMU. It was founded by the Wylie brothers (Sam and Charles, Jr.) in 1963, and its name was later changed to UCCEL Corp. when it was bought by a Swiss company in the mid-1980s. Elton worked at UCC for 13 years, developing IBM mainframe products. Elton specifically worked on what was then the world's first commercial relational database management system (RDBMS), called DB4, along with his long-time colleague and work partner, Merle Proulx, who was himself a pioneer in relational database management. Their efforts to develop a way to work with data has yet to be beat from a performance point of view today.

In 1985, He left UCC to co-found a company called, Caltex Software, Inc., a development stage company located in Dallas, Texas. Caltex Software acquired DB4 from UCC to further develop the database technology. In October 1993, Seagate Technology purchased Caltex Software, Inc., which at that time was developing an application development system and database management product for the Macintosh and Windows platforms. While the company's name and ownership would change several times over the following years, Elton's unwavering commitment to his software programming and coding remained his focus through the years. At the time of Elton's death, he served as Technical Emeritus for WhamTech, Inc., where since the late 1990s, he continued to develop and use the technology he founded.

His colleagues at WhamTech can attest to Elton's love for coding, a love which started in the 1970s and continued until his final day on this Earth. Because of the resulting physical handicaps from his childhood fight with polio, he taught himself to use his foot to move a mouse on the floor and a pencil with an eraser on the end to type on a keyboard. Anything he coded or wrote was very compact and to the point. His colleagues knew to read any emails he sent carefully because they knew how much effort he put into writing them. Elton was beloved in his field as a great teacher and demonstrated great patience with his tech teams. Elton worked with many developers of different nationalities and cultures in varied locations around the world, and he would work tirelessly to assist any colleague who called upon him for technical help.

Elton was preceded in death by his parents, the Reverend Wilfred and Lydia Helwig, his brother, Stanley Helwig, and his sister, Joyce Champe. He is survived by eight nieces and nephews. Special thanks to Carolyn Williams and Pam Haith for their special care and love.

At his request, a memorial service will not be held. Donations in his memory can be made to the Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children, 2222 Welborn Street, Dallas, TX 75219.

# Comments

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“ I worked with Elton since I joined Caltex Software on 1993. He is most import person to me for my professional career. I started worked very close to Elton since 2001 and my job is to build software components on top of the D the data language, a pioneer database language which was created by him and his long-time colleague and work partner, Merle Proulx. Since then the help I got from him had made my lifer much easier as a software engineer. I admire him not only for his wisdom but also his work ethic. Thank you Elton for all the help you gave to me and rest in peace.

**Jui-Pin Jao** - July 19 at 02:43 PM

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“ I really admired Elton because of how smart he was. He always gave me advice to read read read! I will miss him very much because I really looked up to him and all of his accomplishments under his circumstances. He really made a happy life out of what he had!

**Buck Williams** - July 19 at 11:55 AM

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“ 2 files added to the album Elton at work



**Gavin Robertson** - July 18 at 08:10 AM

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“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



**Gavin Robertson** - July 18 at 07:59 AM



“ Awe, Thanks for sharing.

**Carolyn** - July 19 at 10:14 AM

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“ I worked with Elton at Business Driven Solutions. To this day I consider him the brst programmer I have ever known. He was one of the most determined people I have ever encountered.

**Chad Cranfill** - July 17 at 10:19 PM

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“ To Elton's family, Elton was one of the kindest friends I have ever had, he was a blessing to me. I miss him so much now what a void I feel in my life. Elton, I hope you are running and jumping around heaven. Jesus, I pray that you bless the soul of Elton.

I first met Elton in 1964 while a student at SMU...I worked in the SMU Computer Lab. After that I worked with Elton at UCC on Hi-Line Drive. I am not even in the realm of Elton's genius, and our friendship was built on kindness. Such a kind, gentle soul!!!

The last time I spoke with Elton was on July 4 and he was so happy and his voice was so strong.

Elton, thank you for choosing me as your good lifelong friend,  
Ilona Rakentine O'Brien

**Ilona Rakentine O'Brien** - July 16 at 06:11 PM

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“ Elton was truly a special person, he will be missed so much. My condolences to the family. Elton, I cannot you you left us so suddenly. I was expecting at least another 10 years with you. I hope you are flying with the angels. Rest In Peace my friend.  
Love Betsy

**Betsy Castro** - July 16 at 08:42 AM

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“ Carolyn Williams is following this tribute.

**Carolyn Williams** - July 16 at 01:28 AM

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“ Elton, I miss you so much already. I'm glad I got to tell you how special you were to me on many occasions. I really looked forward to seeing you. You just left way too soon. I wanted you to live for-ever! I still wish this was a dream and I would just wake up and we could continue our talks about just about anything. You lead me to the "Magnolia Trees" Such a Beautiful place! My last words to you Saturday night, Was I bet you were dreaming of Harriet. And you chuckled. I have peace knowing that you were really Happy that week. Condolences to your family and friends that they get through this difficult time.

**Carolyn Williams** - July 16 at 01:15 AM