

# Michael Oldfather



02-12-1940 - 12-06-2025

Michael Oldfather, a longtime resident of Manhattan, Kansas, died from a stroke on December 6, 2025, in Bethlehem, PA. He was 85 years old.

Michael was born in Lincoln, NE, February 12, 1940, to Wilbur and Alta Oldfather. He is survived by his wife of 43 years, Kathleen J. Oldfather, of Nazareth, PA as well as three children: Alice Oldfather (Mark Gregory), of Albany, NY; Paul Oldfather, of Norman, OK; Thomas Oldfather (Sarah Appelhans), of Easton, PA; two grandchildren, Graham and Tova Gordon; a sister, Anne Pease (Gary), Hutchinson, KS; numerous nieces and nephews; former son-in-law Jeffrey Gordon of Albany, NY, and first wife, Penny Oldfather, of Athens, GA.

He was preceded in death by his parents and three siblings: Jane Lewis, Kay Logan, and Roger Oldfather.

Michael joined the Economics Department at Kansas State University in 1983, where he taught until his retirement in 2006. From 1983 until 1991, he also served as president of the Kansas Council on Economics Education. During his final years at KSU he was Director of Undergraduate Studies and lead advisor for the Economics Department.

Michael earned a bachelor's degree from Oberlin College, a master's degree from the University of Nebraska, and a Ph.D. from Ohio University. Prior to his tenure at KSU, Kansas Wesleyan University, Augustana College and Drury College, where he held the Cray Chair of Private Enterprise Education.

One of the organizing partners of Manhattan's Community First National Bank, he served on its board for more than 20 years. Prior to that, he had been a member of the Board of Directors of Citizens State Bank in Abilene, KS.

Besides his devotion to friends and family, Michael's passions included environmental protection, birdwatching, advocating for civil liberties, helping to elect Democrats, and doing almost anything involving music, especially singing, playing guitar, leading his church's choir, and attending all kinds of live music concerts.

A Celebration of Life will be held in late spring in Manhattan. Contributions in Michael's memory can be made to the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Manhattan, 481 Zeandale Rd. Manhattan, KS 66502 or [uufm.net](http://uufm.net) or the GMCF Guardians Fund, PO Box 1127 Manhattan KS 66505 or [foundation@mcfks.org/donate/guardians-fund](mailto:foundation@mcfks.org/donate/guardians-fund).