



Kermit "Kerry" Francis Rusch, Jr.

October 30, 1943 - December 14, 2025

Kermit Francis "Kerry" Rusch, Jr. age 82, passed away in Austin on December 14, 2025.

Kerry was born in Austin on October 30, 1943 to Kermit Francis Rusch, Sr., and Winnifred Marie Wright. Kerry grew up in Austin and graduated from Austin High, after which he entered the University of Texas. From an early age, Kerry had shown an affinity for music and while at UT became a big part of the beginning of the Austin folk music scene of the early and mid 1960s, along with others such as Janis Joplin, Powell St. John, and John Clay. John Clay called him "the best guitar player I knew back then." Kerry released a couple of singles and an album, "Mystic Geometry" between 1965 and 1967, and besides playing shows in Austin at places like the 11th Door, also traveled to Berkeley, California several times to perform and promote his music there, where he received rave reviews in the UC Berkeley student newspaper as well as the underground magazine "Rag Baby" which was created by Joe McDonald of Country Joe and the Fish.

After returning to Austin he eventually started a "soul rock" band in the 1970s called Thunderdream which played various shows around Austin, including at the legendary venue Raul's on Guadalupe St. As the seventies came to a close, he moved to New Orleans where he continued to create music along with other musicians such as Buzzy Beano and Bindu Gross. He then moved

on to New York City where he worked for Arista Records under Clive Davis.

Back in Austin in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Kerry became interested in the movement for Eritrean independence, and was proud to have been an official observer in Dallas of the Eritrean Independence referendum in 1993.

Besides creating music, Kerry's other passion was a search for spiritual truth which was exemplified by the fact that while living in Bastrop and later Smithville in the early 2000s, he was a Central Texas coordinator for several US tours of Swami Shivabalananda, while at the same time playing gospel music with groups like the Heavenly Praisers of Bastrop, and later the Mt. Pilgrim choir in Smithville.

Kerry also enjoyed gardening, and while in Bastrop County, he was also a volunteer for the Smithville Community Gardens as well as the Bastrop Food Pantry Garden.

After spending several years in Aledo, Texas, Kerry returned to Austin in 2023 after reconnecting with his family in 2019. He was still working on music up until the very end, revising lyrics, and making preparations to release more of his music.

Kerry is survived by his son, Aaron Rusch, granddaughters Chelsea Rusch of Austin, and Melanie Rusch of Buda, as well as a sister Pat Hyatt of New Jersey, a niece and nephew, along with numerous cousins and an amazingly diverse group of friends from all over the world.

The family will hold a private memorial at a future date.

Tribute Wall

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“ 6 files added to the tribute wall



Aaron Rusch - January 18 at 03:54 PM

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“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Aaron Rusch - January 17 at 12:29 AM

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Kerry's 81st birthday

Aaron Rusch - January 17 at 12:57 AM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Aaron Rusch - January 17 at 12:13 AM



Kerry in 2004 at Shivabalananda US tour

Aaron Rusch - January 17 at 12:14 AM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Aaron Rusch - January 17 at 12:09 AM