Oak Ridge High School graduate is the author of four books and a blog

(As published in The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking column the week of December 14, 2026)

Carolyn Krause met Keith Akers, an Oak Ridge High School graduate, when Keith returned to Oak Ridge to give a talk on his 2023 book *Embracing Limits* to a Sunday school class at First Presbyterian Church. Carolyn and Keith's brother Paul Akers, who invited Keith, are members of the church. The brothers are sons of Lawrence Akers, who was a physicist, and Jane Akers, who was a homemaker. Enjoy Carolyn's two articles on Keith and his views on the human-caused threats to life and the ways that humans can change their lifestyles to alleviate them.

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Keith Akers, a 1967 graduate of Oak Ridge High School and a resident of Denver, Colorado, has strong convictions that are reflected in the four books he authored and in his activities.

His books are *A Vegetarian Sourcebook* (1983), *The Lost Religion of Jesus* (2000), *Disciples* (2013) and *Embracing Limits: A Radical and Necessary Approach to the Environmental Crisis* (2023), which is about how simple living by all humans can limit damage to the environment.

Details about these books can be found on his website www.CompassionateSpirit.com,which includes his blog. The second and last article in this series will be devoted to *Embracing Limits*.

In addition to writing books, Keith has been influenced by them – one in particular. "In 1978, after reading *Animal Liberation* by Peter Singer, I became a vegetarian and have been vegetarian ever since," he wrote to me in an email. "In 1980, I became vegan." A vegan is a person who does not eat any food derived from animals (such as meat, milk and eggs) and who typically does not use other animal products (such as leather and wool).

"I have been very active in the vegetarian and vegan movements for more than 40 years. I served as the president of both the Vegetarian Society of the District of Columbia and of Colorado, as well as the regional secretary for North America in the International Vegetarian Union. I am currently a co-organizer of the Denver Vegans."

Asked what his activities were in Oak Ridge while growing up as the son of FATHER'S AND MOTHER'S NAMES, he wrote: "You do realize we are talking about ancient history! In high school I was active in the ORHS debate club, which was supervised by the teacher Robert Bogle. I was also active in the Oak Ridge Chess Club, which met with officiator Bob Coveyou on Friday nights at the Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Church" (located then near the entrance to the Kroger Superstore off Robertsville Road).

He then answered a question about his higher education experiences and other training.

"I graduated from Vanderbilt University, magna cum laude, class of 1971, with a major in philosophy and a minor in physics. Later, I took some graduate-level classes in philosophy at the University of Texas but never got a degree.

"In 1978, I took some classes in computer programming at Computer Learning Center, a technical school in northern Virginia. My training there enabled me to launch into a career as a computer consultant."

He said he worked on a wide variety of computer consulting projects for the U.S. State and Education departments, American Management Systems, Bell Atlantic Nynex Mobile (now Verizon) and others.

"I wrote 'A Vegetarian Sourcebook' in 1983 during a brief break in my information technology work, and I wrote 'The Lost Religion of Jesus' in 2000 in my spare time while I was still working," he said. "I stated my belief in that book that Jesus was a vegetarian."

In his email, he told a fascinating story about an ironic connection between his Oak Ridge education in the early 1960s and his early book-writing career.

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"In seventh grade, I took English from Ms. Waunette Fowler at Robertsville Junior High School. I wasn't a very motivated student. I got middling grades and frequently didn't do my homework because I thought, 'I don't need this English class.' As a consequence, I frequently had to get a note to my parents that they signed to indicate they were aware that I hadn't done my homework."

Keith continued the story by citing an incident in Oak Ridge over two decades later.

"I was the subject of an article in The Oak Ridger in 1983 or later. Unfortunately, I've lost my copy of the article.

"The occasion was a publicity appearance for my book *A Vegetarian Sourcebook*. The article mentioned a book signing I would have at some vegetarian-friendly local store, possibly The Epicurean.

"In any event, who should appear at my book signing but Waunette Fowler! But, instead of chastising me for not doing my homework two decades ago, she walked up and gave me a hug! I did a double take but then realized why: She was an English teacher, and I had written a book. So, I suppose that writing a book made up for all those missed homework assignments!"

Next: A summary of Keith Akers' book *Embracing Limits: A Radical and Necessary Approach to the Environmental Crisis*.

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Thank you, Carolyn, for insight into what Keith Akers experienced while in Oak Ridge schools and his books that he has written prior to the one being discussed next.



Keith Akers gives a lecture on his "Embracing Limits" book to a Sunday School class at First Presbyterian Church at Oak Ridge. (Courtesy of Carolyn Krause)

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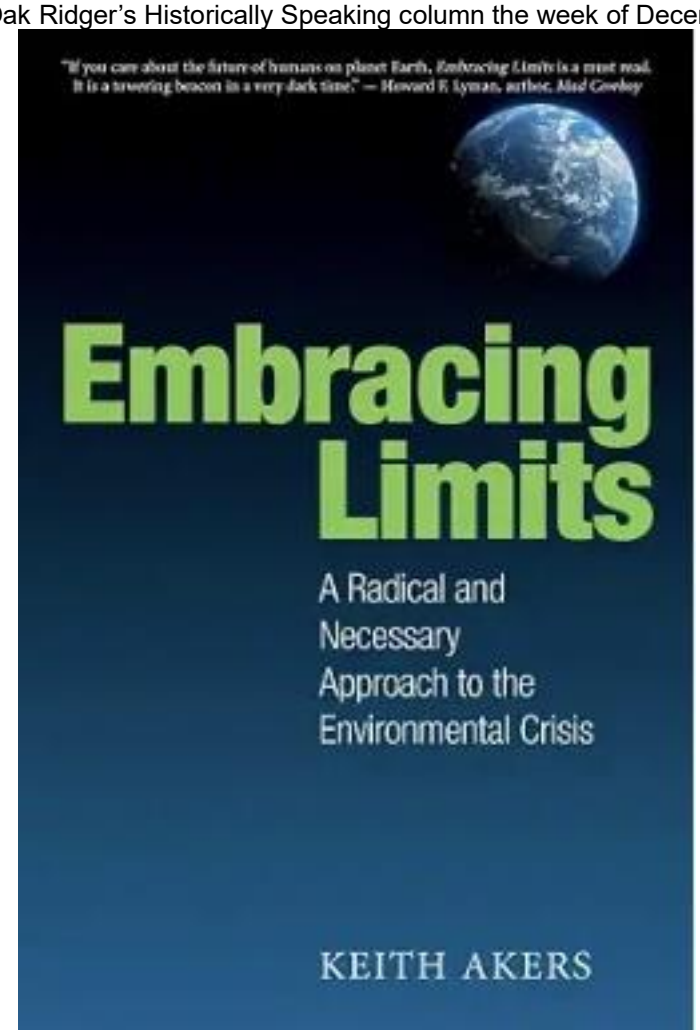
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Paul and Keith Akers. The brothers grew up in Oak Ridge, where Paul still lives. (Courtesy of Barbara Reeve)

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Embracing Limits: A Radical and Necessary Approach to the Environmental Crisis by Keith Akers