



## Joseph Edmond "Joe" Robertson

February 16, 1918 - May 2, 2013

Joseph Edmond "Joe" Robertson, age 95, Brownstown, passed away Thursday, May 2, 2013, at his residence.

Born February 16, 1918, in Brownstown, he was the third and youngest child and son of Roscoe and Edith Shields Robertson. Joe was a fifth-generation Jackson County native, whose family entered the county around 1800. He is descended from one of the earliest recorded marriages (1819) in Jackson County.

Joe was always aware of the many benefits he and his family gained as local residents and greatly appreciated the honor bestowed on him when he was named Brownstown's First Life Achievement Award winner. He was thrilled to be selected with his wife, Virginia, as marshals for the 2001 Watermelon Festival Parade. Growing up, Joe had always watched parades but had ridden in only one of them when he and a friend jumped on the back platform of Brownstown's No. 1 fire truck. Instead of ordering them off or having them arrested, Chief Junior Wessel appointed them temporary firemen, third class, issued them helmets and ordered them to show up as referees for the Fireman's Water Ball Contest the next day.

Joe met the love of his life, Virginia Baxter, while in college at Kansas State University. Virginia was named Miss Manhattan two times and was selected Honorary Cadet Colonel of the University ROTC unit. Joe was named the Outstanding Student in the College of Agriculture and played varsity basketball at Kansas State. At the time of his death, he was the oldest surviving letterman of Kansas State and was named a "Kansas State Legend." Joe and Virginia married after college graduation and shortly before Pearl Harbor, on Nov. 23, 1941, in Manhattan, Kan. Joe served in the U.S. Army Air Corps while Virginia did volunteer service work during World War II. They were married for 66 years and with the exception of 39 months of Joe's service time resided in Brownstown.

Joe was employed by and finally served as chairman of the 128-year-old Robertson Corp., which was founded in the Ewing section of Brownstown in 1881. Joe was an elder and Sunday school teacher for more than 35 years at the Brownstown Presbyterian Church. He was president and valedictorian of his 1936 Brownstown High School Class, which won the "no class school" basketball sectional.

He was involved in many community activities. He was president of the Brownstown

Chamber of Commerce in the 1950s when Brownstown was chosen one of 11 runners up in the All American City contest and he served as president of the Jackson County Welfare Board for five years. He was listed in Who's Who in America beginning in 1979, the same year that his wife, Virginia, was listed in Who's Who of American Women. Joe was named a Sagamore of the Wabash by two Indiana governors. Both Joe and Virginia were Kentucky Colonels. Both have been members of the Circumnavigator's Club and the International Traveler's Century Club. He was an early president of Lake and Forest Club, Brownstown, and in 1974 he was the recipient of the first Award of the Year for outstanding service to the club. He also authored the history of the club and taught hundreds of youngsters the basics of water skiing, even into his 90s.

Joe is the author of a travel book titled "On Kilroy's Trail." This book chronicled many of Joe and Virginia's travels around the globe. Virginia kept and supplied the notes on which the book was based and several Brownstown people helped put the book together. At 94, he also published "Marker on Huff Creek," a fiction piece based on events in Jackson County in the late 1800s. He also authored a number of scientific and technical articles and co-authored a number of articles for international wood product magazines.

Despite his love for adventure and travel, which took him and Virginia around the globe three times and to 167 countries, he was a man whose heart remained in his beloved Jackson County.

Joe is survived by his son, Joe Robertson Jr., daughter-in-law, Patricia, and grandson, Charles Joseph "C.J." Robertson, all of Portland, Ore. Rob is president of Oregon Health and Science University and C J. is ready to start graduate school in pursuit of a master's degree in public health. He is also survived by a large and close-knit extended family and countless friends of all ages.

Joe was preceded in death by his parents; his wife; two brothers, R.S. "Dick" Robertson and Charles R. "Buck" Robertson; and one granddaughter, Kathryn Faye "Katie" Robertson.

Funeral service will be conducted at 11 a.m. Tuesday at Brownstown Presbyterian Church. Burial will take place at Fairview Cemetery, Brownstown. Military honors will be presented by Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1925, American Legion Post 89, Disabled American Veterans 47 and Vietnam Vets 7.

Friends may call from 4 to 8 p.m. Monday, at Spurgeon Funeral Home Inc., Brownstown, and from 10 a.m. until time of service Tuesday at the church.

Memorials may be given to the Brownstown Presbyterian Church or Joseph E. Robertson Genealogical Library.

# Comments

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“ I have very fond memories of Joe from growing up in Brownstown. He always had a story to tell and a lesson to teach. Even after years of being away, the last time I returned "home" and attended church, he was there with a welcome embrace and a warm hug. Brownstown has been very blessed to have had this man as a son and he will be missed by many, I am sure.

**Carol Morgan Maxey-Johson** - June 01, 2015 at 01:15 PM

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“ Rob,  
You are in our thoughts and prayers.

Linda and Rick laCour

**Linda Hobbs laCour** - June 01, 2015 at 01:15 PM

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“ Joe, my friend. It was a wonderful journey with so many memories. It is just so sad it has come to an end. You will definitely live on in my heart, good friend. May God bless and keep you forever.

**Ang Schramm** - June 01, 2015 at 01:15 PM

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“ The Plywood Industry and World had lost an Icon! Our regards to the Robertson Families and Joe's extended families

**Gail & Linda Overgard** - June 01, 2015 at 01:15 PM

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“ Joe was my hero. He was a mentor to me and a wonderful friend. It was a privilege and an honor to work with him on the two book projects as well as several other stories that were published in The Banner. Joe did for me what he did for many people -- he motivated us (even challenged us!) to go beyond ourselves and be more than we would have been otherwise. His love of life and sense of adventure have inspired me to live bigger. I am thankful for the opportunity to have known Joe. It was one of the greatest joys of my life to know Mr. Joe Robertson.

**Peggy Robison** - June 01, 2015 at 01:15 PM

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“ I have kept Joe in my heart since visiting him on behalf of Warren Wilson College. He has donated faithfully for so many years to see that our students can afford a college education. During my visit, Joe drove me around his neighborhood and beloved Brownstown. He took me to lunch and drove by his church. He is a true gentleman, of the highest order. He is one of the reasons I love my job.

Thank you, Joe, for believing in Warren Wilson College, with your heart as well as your checkbook. And thanks for the hospitality! I will miss you.

Julie

**Julie Lehman** - June 01, 2015 at 01:15 PM