



Joe Dean Butterfield

December 6, 1936 - January 10, 2021

Joe Dean Butterfield, 84, formerly of Marion, passed away on Sunday, January 10, 2020, at Briarwood Health Care Center, in Iowa City, due to complications of Covid-19. In agreement with his wishes, cremation has taken place. The family will hold a celebration of his life at a later date, when it is safe to gather.

Joe was born on December 6, 1936, at the Salvation Army Hospital, in Des Moines. He was adopted as an infant by Sada LaRue (Beckley) and James Butterfield. Joe grew up in, and graduated from, Central City in 1955. He was a strong student, proud Eagle Scout, and a skilled athlete. Joe and his brother, Don formed a dynamic duo on the basketball court and baseball field. He joined the U.S. Army shortly after graduation. Stationed in St. Andre, France, at the Aerial Support Station, Joe worked in the supply unit and played basketball for the Friendship Force, receiving an accommodation for his contributions to the Franco-American Relations program.

Fresh out of the Army, Joe joined his mother, father, and brother, Willard who had recently moved to Colorado. In 1961, during a visit to Iowa, he met Connie McCright, the woman he referred to as his “beautiful bride” to the very day he died. Married in 1962, at the Troy Mills Church, the couple departed forthwith for Sterling, Colorado, where Joe attended Northeastern Junior College. He went on to earn a BS and Master’s degree in Zoology from Colorado State University. During the summers, he worked for and lived in, Rocky Mountain National Park, helping to re-open Old Fall River Road.

The couple returned to Iowa in 1969, for Joe to start his new position as the Superintendent of Linn County Parks. He particularly enjoyed developing the Morgan Creek Arboretum, opening the Abbe Creek School and Museum, and living with his family in Wanatee (thankfully, formerly known as Squaw Creek) Park. In 1975, Joe became the Marion Parks and Recreation Executive Director, where he played a key role in expanding and strengthening the city’s park system. A few of the accomplishments that Joe was most proud of were passing the bond to build the “new” Marion swimming pool; developing Hanna Park; creating the Seniors’ Center; starting the Farmers’ Market; incorporating the

old train depot into City Square Park; building the Peg Pierce softball complex; and helping to establish the Marion Arts Council and launch the Swamp Fox Festival. In 1999, the city of Marion honored Joe's work by establishing a park in his name (NE side).

Joe appreciated life and adored his family. He loved his country, abhorred racism, and advocated for equality, values he passionately instilled in his children. Although diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis at only 33 years old, Joe enjoyed long periods of remission. He was a man who believed in the healing power of a milkshake to cure ailments, ranging from the chicken pox to a broken heart. Joe was ever present at his kids' activities, relished Hawkeye victories, and was a devoted Cubs fan. He was an avid golfer and never met a fishing line he didn't want to cast. Joe served the community as an officer in the Marion-East Cedar Rapids Rotary Club, with Trees Forever, and as an elder of Marion Christian Church.

He is survived and lovingly remembered by his beautiful bride of 58 years, Connie Butterfield; three children, Lindsey (Dawn) Butterfield and Jo Butterfield (Doug Hansel) both of North Liberty, and Tara Butterfield of Chicago, Illinois; three grandchildren, Brianna Butterfield, Amber (Mike) Benusa and Josh Grothe; three great-grandchildren, Charlee, Rolland and Andrew; two brothers, Donald (Cindy) and Willard, both of Colorado; and many nieces, nephews, sisters-in-law and brothers in-law who all adored him dearly. Joe was preceded in death by his parents; and two granddaughters, Emily and Nicole.

Since 2001, Joe resided at Briarwood Health Care Center in Iowa City. The family would like to express their sincere heartfelt gratitude to the entire Briarwood Staff for the outstanding care they provided. Their efforts during the Covid-19 crises have been incomparable.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a memorial donation in Joe's name to either: Trees Forever (<http://www.treesforever.org/Give>) or the Multiple Sclerosis Society (https://secure.nationalmssociety.org/site/Donation2?df_id=55995&55995.donation=form1).

Comments



“ A tribute video has been added.



Murdoch Funeral Homes & Cremation Service - January 11 at 08:35 PM



“ wonderful what a honor to be able to see this.....love to all of you. Willard

Willard E Wright - January 17 at 11:32 AM



“ Please accept our sincere sympathy for your loss--from a member of the Marion Christian Church Family--Sondra (Cox) Knapp & family

Sondra Knapp - January 20 at 02:22 PM



“ Connie and family, so sorry to hear of Joe's passing. My most treasured memory is how he would light up when he knew Connie was coming to visit. I'm comforted to know he is safely in God's arms.

cindy Scott - January 17 at 12:51 PM



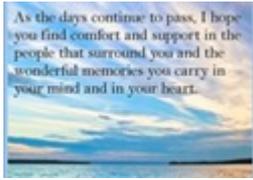
“ Thank you for your Military Service
REST IN PEACE

A VIETNAM VETERAN
Hiawatha Iowa

A Vietnam Veteran - January 17 at 03:39 AM



“ Tara and family... My sincerest condolences to you all.



Roxanne - January 15 at 03:11 PM



“ My condolences to the family. I didn't know him, but he sounds just wonderful. I agree, milkshakes are wonderful.

Margaret Power

Margaret MacDonald Power - January 15 at 02:55 PM



“ 2 files added to the album LifeTributes



Murdoch Funeral Homes & Cremation Service - January 13 at 05:33 PM



“ I am incredibly sad to say goodbye to Joe. It is nothing short of a part of my childhood being taken away. Joe always treated me with sincere kindness as a child. Whether it was a warm greeting or helping mend a boo boo, Joe was a considerate man.

Joe achieved greatness for our community, for our environment and for his family. These are the truly important measures of a person. Based on these measures, Joe excelled.

Connie, Lindsay, Jo, Tara and family my heart is hurting for you. My family joins me in grieving for Joe and appreciating your loss. In memoriam, we have donated a tree to be planted in Gardner Park - where our friendship began - to honor Joe. The derecho helped us further realize how important trees are - as is remembering Joe.

Jennifer A Borcharding - January 13 at 11:40 AM



“ So sorry to hear of the passing of Joe. My sympathy to Connie and family and friends. Joe did so much for Marion and the Linn County area. I worked with him when I lived in Marion as part of the Trees Forever committee.

Patty Reisinger - January 13 at 09:17 AM



“ Dearest Connie and family- May your hearts be at peace knowing Joe is resting. His contributions to the community will be everlasting and his name will live on. Hugs to you and yours! - Angela Byers (C&S Furniture Gallery)

Angela Byers - January 13 at 09:16 AM



“ I had the privilege of Joe being my “boss” at the Marion Parks Department. He was a very kind and thoughtful man to all of us employees and only wanted the best for our citizens. He loved his family very much, and Connie was sure the love of his life. His illness got the best of him and he retired I am sure a lot sooner that he would have liked. Rest In Peace Joe. Pat Carlson

Pat Carlson - January 12 at 01:40 PM



“ HI Connie,
So sorry to learn of Joe's passing. He left quite a legacy with the accomplishments he had with the Marion park system. I enjoyed growing up with you as neighbors and please accept my condolences.

Pat - January 12 at 08:37 AM



“ Dear Connie and Family, My condolences. Joe is free after so many years of a thief taking away his many abilities. Be very proud of all of the love, support and dedication that you have given to Joe. I have always admired how you have taken care of Joe, made difficult decisions, and respected the ties of your family. I send my best to you. These upside down times challenge us to be good to ourselves and each other. Those are the closing works of Lester Holt's evening newscast and I find them so needed during these upside down days and during the journey of grief.

Mary C McCarthy - January 12 at 08:10 AM



“ 67 files added to the album LifeTributes



Murdoch Funeral Homes & Cremation Service - January 11 at 08:25 PM



“ CA Bartels is following this tribute.

CA Bartels - January 11 at 06:54 PM



“ Your Family is in our PRAYERS. Many good thoughts of our time in CO and many years of friendship. We are here at any time to keep in touch with you.

CA - January 14 at 02:18 AM



“ Joe was a good Person==A good Boss==he was kind=and I know God will greet him in heaven with open arms=he did good work for Linn county and Marion

Harry L Simonsen - January 19 at 03:17 PM



“ To the Family of Joe,

I only knew Joe through my visits with Skeeter and Widget, but spending time with him was always a highlight of our shift! He was clearly a kind and caring person, and it is so heartwarming to read about his life before. What a great guy!

He was a man of character and grace and we will miss our visits with him. With sympathy,
Jean

Jean Reed - January 22 at 04:21 PM