



John F. Brown

May 26, 1921 - February 23, 2015

John Franklin Brown, 93, passed away peacefully on Monday, February 23 with family at his bedside in his hometown of Herscher, IL.

He was born on May 26, 1921 in Hammond IL, to the late Nellie Marie (Doyle) and Franklin Brown.

John grew up in the Decatur area and graduated from Monticello High School. He was a star athlete in high school who once punted the football nearly 70 yards. He was also a talented musician. In his early years he organized and played trumpet in a very popular jazz band, The Knights of Rhythm.

On 12/11/43, he married Mary Margaret Foran in Ivesdale, IL. For nearly 70 years they were inseparable before she passed away on 1/09/09 in Kankakee, IL.

He proudly served his country in the United States Army Air Force from 1941-1945. He was an instructor and piloted various aircrafts, including gliders. His favorite aircraft was the C-47. Much of his military time was served in the European Theatre of WWII with occasional forays into North Africa. Later in life he wrote a book about his experience serving his beloved country.

After his honorable discharge, John resumed employment at the Tylac/Loxit

manufacturing plant in Monticello, IL., working his way up to position of General Manager. In 1963, he and his family moved to Herscher, IL., where he owned and operated the Herscher IGA grocery market until retiring in 1981. During this period he was actively involved in the civic life of Herscher, serving on the Town Board and in other leadership and volunteer capacities. In recognition of his service to the community he was selected as Herscher's 2012 Grand Marshall for the annual Labor Day Celebration and Parade.

After retiring, he and the love of his life, Mary Margaret, enjoyed many years of traveling. In addition to travel throughout the U.S., their agenda included Europe, Asia, Central and South America, and cruises, as well as visiting family members.

As Mary Margaret's health began to deteriorate, their active lifestyle of traveling changed. During this latter period of their marriage, the ever-loyal and loving John provided ongoing support, companionship and comfort to his ailing but life-long love.

John loved to drive and remained an outstanding driver at an age when most people had long stopped. For him, driving was also an adventure. In 1968, he decided to drive his daughter, Trish, back to college after break. However, it wasn't such a short drive as he, Mary Margaret and Trish drove to Cuernavaca, Mexico. It was an incredible adventure about which he would reminisce for years to come.

His inquisitive mind did not end with travel. He loved to unleash his creative talents on challenges posed by carpentry and mechanics. For example, he designed and built a 2-seat motorized "hot rod" from scratch and refurbished a '65 Mustang. There was nothing that was ever broken that was beyond his ability to repair or improve.

As much as he loved travel and new adventures, he was equally content at home. He was an avid reader who kept abreast of current issues and also loved history. Perhaps it was his love of history that honed his memory into a steel trap for details. For example, he could tell you what day of the week and what time it was when he drove his first car!

In the latter years of his life, Johnie was spoiled hopelessly by his family. He enjoyed traveling with his sons-in-law, Sam and Roger, including a most memorable trip to the WWII Veterans Memorial in Washington; journeying to the top of Pike's Peak at age 88; tagging along with Sam on various mini-trips; outings with his son, Bud, to visit automobile museums; and watching his beloved Cubs play, especially in 2008 when he was publicly recognized at Wrigley Field for his life-long support and encouragement for those loveable Cubbies.

He had a wonderfully positive attitude about life and a great sense of humor. Many will remember the way in which he would throw back his head and laugh. Diligence and self-discipline were part of this DNA. Late in life he began riding a stationary bike and was so proud of having peddled 25,000 miles before his 90th birthday.

After the death of Mary Margaret, his daily companion was his oldest daughter, Margaret, who faithfully visited her Dad every day to provide love and to support; and to make sure all of his needs were met. No issue, big or small, ever escaped her eagle eye when it came to her parents!

With Margaret's encouragement, John wrote a book about his WWII experiences. The book became their joint project and labor of love. It includes a view of history as well as aspect of the then-soldier's life – including a short ditty on ShortSnorters. A copy was given to each of his children/grandchildren

and the Herscher Area Historical Society Museum.

Despite being gifted in so many ways (athletics, music, dance, engineering and business), John remained extremely humble and focused his attention on others, whether that was service to his country, service to his community or providing for his family. He instilled in his family the importance of hard work, loyalty, family and social responsibility, community service, respect for different cultures/languages... and the importance of always being on time!! It is no surprise he was so loved and respected by his family, friends and neighbors. Although he would never want to be thought of as a hero, he was exactly that to a large number of people. Like fine wine, he was a great husband, Dad and Grandfather who became even better with age.

John, Johnie, Dad and Grandpadad, as he was known, is survived by one son and two daughters: John "Bud" (Carolyn) Brown of Monticello, IL; Margaret (Roger) Jensen of Herscher, IL; and Trish Brown (Sam) Cordes of Chicago. His grandchildren include: Randy (Alla) Brown of Cincinnati, OH; Kelly (Pat) Maciejewski of Bloomington, IL; Jeannie (Tom) Justie of Arlington Heights, IL; Rob (Kris) Jensen of Darien, IL; Michelle (Tim) Sussman of Naperville, IL; Kelly Cordes of Estes Park, CO; Carter (Anna) Cordes of Omaha, NE; and Tanya (Germaine) Cordes of Plano, TX. He is also survived by 13 great-grandchildren and his only sister, Margaret Weddle of Metamora, IL; and his neighbors, Rich, Mindy and Dakota Flynn, who lovingly watched over him for many years.

Also, a note of thanks to the great staff of Hospice of Kankakee Valley.

Finally, a very special appreciation to Harvest View Assisted Living where John spent the final four months of his life. The entire staff at Harvest View was absolutely amazing. Their concern and care were genuine and heartfelt and will never be forgotten.

A memorial visitation will be held at St. Margaret Mary's Catholic Church in Herscher from 9AM until the 11AM memorial mass on Saturday, March 7. For those unable to attend, consider lighting a candle in his remembrance at that time. Following the mass, a lunch will held at the church.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made in the name of John Brown to support either: (a) St. Margaret Mary's Church (207 E. 5th St., Herscher, IL 60941); (b) the Disabled American Veterans Charitable Service Trust (3725 Alexander Pike, Cold Springs, KY 41076); or (c) masses.

Previous Events

Memorial Visitation

MAR 7. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church
350 N. Main Street
Herscher, IL 60941
(815) 426-2153
<http://www.saintmargaretmaryherscher.org>

Memorial Mass

MAR 7. 11:00 AM (CT)

St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church
350 N. Main Street
Herscher, IL 60941
(815) 426-2153
<http://www.saintmargaretmaryherscher.org>

Tribute Wall

AC

“ You all are in thoughts and prayers. Grandpa Johnny was always sweet and welcoming to me.



Anna Cordes - March 28, 2015 at 02:13 PM

DC

“ Grandpa brown was a really amazing guy I just can't stop thinking about him he was my great grandpa and love him so much and miss him :(



Dietrich cordes - March 12, 2015 at 02:04 AM

DC

“ Grandpa brown I miss you so much you was a great man really a great man I have memories of you and im going to hold on to those memories until the day I died this isn't not a good bye yet ill see you again one day with Jesus love you so much your grandson Dietrich Cordes



Dietrich cordes - March 11, 2015 at 02:11 PM

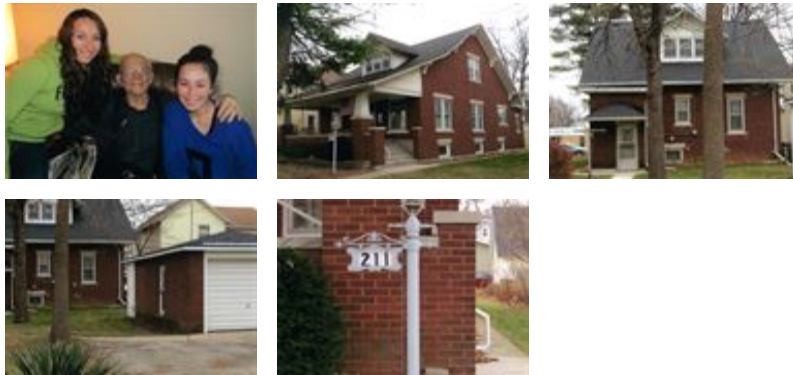
JC

“ Miss u Grandpa Brown! U impacted my childhood and life in so many ways. U taught me how to play pool.(which is forever one of my favorite things to play) and every experience with u was a blessing! Love You! Your Great Grandson Jamelle.

Jamelle Cordes - March 08, 2015 at 05:45 PM



“ 40 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Clancy-Gernon Funeral Homes - March 04, 2015 at 10:20 AM

MM

I remember being warmly welcomed anytime I visited the Brown home when I was growing up. Wonderful people. Mary Ann McGuire Martin

Mary Ann Martin - March 05, 2015 at 02:55 PM

CN

“ We met Johnie several times while Trish and Sam were living in Lafayette, IN - what a lovely person. My family visiting from England also met him (my Mother, known to Trish and Sam as "Mummy," and my sister and brother-in-law) and enjoyed his tales about his life and career! It is a privilege to have known him, may he rest safe in the arms of the creator.

Christine and Riall Nolan - March 03, 2015 at 12:04 PM

BW

“ Dear Trish and Sam,

You are in our thoughts and prayers! May the many good times and great memories give you peace at this time.

*Your family in PA,
Love,
The Wenckus
Mark, Billie Jo, Will, Kimmie and Bailee*

Billie Jo Wenckus - March 02, 2015 at 09:14 AM

SL

“ *I worked for John at the IGA store on main. The best people to work for ever!!! I remember the girls when they moved to Herscher and how proud John and Mary Marga. ret was of them...Blessings to all of you!!Elva Lambert*

Spud ad Elva Lambert - March 01, 2015 at 04:40 PM

EH

“ *I had the honor and pleasure of knowing John (and his family) since shortly after they moved to Herscher in the early 60's. 2 memories stand out. The first was when the IGA store was still on Main Street. One night while watching TV with John and family he asked if anyone would like some ice cream. After replying in the affirmative John tossed Trish and me the keys to the store and said "OK, go get some". The other was when I only had an old Ford pick up truck to drive. I went to pick up Trish one evening in my truck and John handed me the keys to his car (Buick I think?). That became the norm until I got a car of my own. A true gentleman and always a good friend. I am proud to be able to say I knew John.*

Everell Hayes - March 01, 2015 at 11:01 AM

DF

“ God bless you and rest your special soul Uncle Johnie. We treasured your life and honor your memory. We love you and will miss you. Dan, Kathleen, and Emily Weddle (NY, NY)



Dan Weddle Family - February 28, 2015 at 06:42 PM

AF

“ John was a fascinating man. I enjoyed his company greatly. Growing up next to a man this gracious was a honor. I know my family will miss him.

Amber Flynn-Jacobson

Amber Flynn-Jacobson - February 28, 2015 at 05:00 PM



“ 2 files added to the album LifeTributes



Clancy-Gernon Funeral Homes - February 27, 2015 at 11:25 AM



“ 143 files added to the album *LifeTributes*



Clancy-Gernon Funeral Homes - February 26, 2015 at 04:11 PM