



John "Jack" Smith

August 2, 1921 - March 14, 2015

John P. "Jack" Smith, 93, of Kankakee, passed away Saturday (March 14, 2015) at Riverside Medical Center in Kankakee.

Surviving are his wife of 70 years, Ruth Lewis Smith; son, Mark A. (Cheryl) Smith, of Bourbonnais; daughter, Becky L. (Casey) Hamill, of Englewood, Colo.; three sisters, Mary Veld, of Kalamazoo, Mich., Dorothy Shoemaker, of Three Rivers, Mich., Kathy (Ken) VanderBroek, of Jennison, Mich.; sister-in-law, Marilyn Smith, of Kalamazoo, Mich.; five granddaughters, Jennifer (Alun) Champion, of Stillwater, Minn., Jessica (Andy) Corbus, of Bourbonnais, Hillary (Rob) Humphreys, of Nashville, Tenn., Libby (Ethan) Antonson and Heidi Hamill, all of Denver, Colo.; nine great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

Preceding him in death were his parents, Harm and Catherine (Koets) Smith; and two brothers, Robert Smith and Donald Smith.

Jack was born Aug. 2, 1921, in Kalamazoo, Mich. He graduated from Kalamazoo Central High School in 1939. After serving in the U.S. Army, he married Ruth Lewis in Kalamazoo, Mich., on Nov. 22, 1944. Jack began his career selling jewelry and fine candy. When the couple settled in Morenci, Mich., he became the long-term proprietor of Smith's Good News. "Smiling Jack" loved his work and used his early career expertise to grow the business

into the "world headquarters," and delighted in serving the people of Morenci. He retired in 2001, after 47 years.

He enjoyed hunting, fishing, swimming and traveling the country with Ruth, visiting family and friends. He was a member of First Baptist Church of Morenci, Mich. In 2007, Jack and Ruth moved to Bourbonnais to be near family.

"Absitively posolutely" people remember Jack for his willingness to help, big personality, kind heart and good humor. When asked how he was, with two thumbs up, Jack would always say, "Great!, Just Great!".

And he was.

A graveside service will be held on Saturday, April 18th at 11:00 AM at Oak Grove Cemetery in Morenci, Michigan.

Tribute Wall



“ We had such great times visiting when we lived in Morenci. Jack was a man of honor. A true gentleman. A man of God. His faith was precious. I still remember the poster he had on the wall behind the counter. "God first, Others second, myself last." He never forgot that and that store was a success because of that love he had for Jesus which we shared with others in such a gentle, non-judgmental acceptance of others. No other man in my life experience ever came to the high level of integrity as did Jack. I will never forget Jack and will always be indebted to him for the lessons on life he instilled in others. Fair thee well Jack.. Well done good and faithful servant.

John Paschen - April 27, 2015 at 09:58 AM



“ I can't remember a time when Jack Smith was not a part of my growing up years.
Jack & his "sweet smelling - happiness store" were neighbors with my parent's "grocery and meat market" (Herb & Twila Knoblauch). As an adult, I look back and recognize so many of life's lessons that I learned from Jack.

*Morenci was Jack's town and Jack was one of Morenci's finest.
By example, he showed us all what we should strive to become.*

My sincere sympathy to Ruth and the family.

Marlene-Reppert-Knoblauch-Gorsuch-Baker

Marlene Baker - April 13, 2015 at 05:42 PM

MS

“ Our family absolutely loved Mr. Jack! He was a blessing at church and did a fantastic job of leading "Joys and Concerns"! And who can forget his obvious gift at our talent show? ? What a wonderful man, a gentle husband and a great business leader. We were so blessed to share with him in the family of God. As Jack always said: "Wow.....wonder of wonders"

Mickey and Sarah - April 09, 2015 at 07:21 PM

TW

“ Tina Paschen Waganfeald lit a candle in memory of John "Jack" Smith



Tina Paschen Waganfeald - April 09, 2015 at 10:40 AM

TW

“ What a wonderful man. Condolences to the Smith family.

Tina Paschen Waganfeald - April 09, 2015 at 10:38 AM

 Loretta Cox

“ As a kid (30 years ago), I would go into his store in Morenci and he always had the biggest smile! He taught me a lot about cameras back then!

Loretta Cox - April 08, 2015 at 10:10 PM

RB

“ A very special man, many words of wisdom were spoken by him. Loved the way he would do a twist on his words. Hugs to the family.
Ruth Ann Powers Baeyen

Ruth Baeyen - April 05, 2015 at 08:38 PM



“ A meaningful memory to me.....
Whenever I called and talked to Ruth she'd hold the phone out to Jack so I could shout hello to him, he would always shout back "Hi Kath, you're lookin good". He always called me Kath, which I will hold near and dear to my heart, no one else ever called me by that name.
Kathy VanderBroek

Kathy VanderBroek - March 21, 2015 at 08:19 PM



“ *Cathie & Clarence Miedema lit a candle in memory of John "Jack" Smith*



Cathie & Clarence Miedema - March 19, 2015 at 12:37 PM



“ *Kathy VanderBroek lit a candle in memory of John "Jack" Smith*



Kathy VanderBroek - March 18, 2015 at 07:36 PM

SB

“ I will always remember Jack and my visits to his store. What a treasure it was to wander around, buy a bit of candy and visit with Jack.

My parents lived in Florida and annually visited Morenci. My Mom actually waited until their scheduled visit in order to buy an expensive camera from Jack. She knew he would set her up with exactly the "right" camera. Mom used that camera for many years always recalling the excellent care Jack had taken with her over that purchase.

Jack and Ruth were wonderful examples to me in my years in Morenci. Ruth's lovely smile (at the doctor's office!) and Jack's generosity.....wonderful memories.

Zechariah 3:7 (NASB)

Sherrie Paty Barber

St. Cloud, Florida

Sherrie Paty Barber - March 18, 2015 at 02:38 PM

KV

Jack is our brother. We all looked up to him, not because of his height, but because of his big heart. Jack had a heart of gold. He always had a smile. We all have precious memories that wouldn't fit on this page. We'll miss him for sure, but we look forward to the day we'll all be together again in Heaven at a big Smith Family Reunion. We love you Jack.

Mary, Dort, and Kathy

Kathy VanderBroek - March 18, 2015 at 07:34 PM

GR

“ Sorry the hear about Jack Smith's passing. He was a great person. I just heard a great story and would like to share ---- 50 years ago I lived in Morenci with my family of 4 sons. My sister and I shared kids. The day I had to go to the bank, I had my 4 boys and her 2 boys. Now ya can't take 6 boys (ages 3 to 7) into the bank for 5 minutes! You just can't! I left them in the car (today I would get thrown in jail for that) and from what I heard YESTERDAY, they were raising cain so bad that Jack threw a bunch of candy out the door and the boys were so busy picking it up they forgot to fight! Doesn't this sound like something Jack would do?

Gyneth Richardson - March 18, 2015 at 11:14 AM

DN

“ My Deepest Sympothies to Mrs. Smith, Mark, Becky with the recent loss of your loved one "Jack Smith" he will be forever remembered in the hearts & minds of our hometown Morenci, Michigan. {RIP Jack} Debra (Neill)

Debra Neill - March 17, 2015 at 11:52 PM



“ *To the Smith Family,
Please accept our condolences. Jack was such a powerful fixture to so many in Morenci, not only as a business person but as a Christian ambassador. His smile was infectious and his demeanor comforting.*

I remember having a paper route as a boy and Jack would always tell me to stay warm during the winter months. Later on as we became adults, I considered Jack a friend and a mentor. His Christian influence will be spoke of from generations to come. We know that he is now rejoicing in perfect health before his Lord and Savior.

*May God's perfect peace comfort you at this time.
Rod & Debbie Wilson, Somerset, Kentucky*

Debbie Wilson - March 17, 2015 at 07:03 PM

RR

“ *The world would be a better place to live if there were more people like Jack Smith.*

Ray Roddy - March 17, 2015 at 03:46 PM



“ To quote an often-used phrase, "the world's loss is Heaven's gain." Jack was such a precious soul. He made every person he spoke to feel like they were the most important person to him at that place and time. He was such an example of how a Christian should live. God's love poured through him.
Becky, I never went into your dad's store that he didn't fill me in on how you were doing. I missed the updates when we moved from the area and I no longer stopped in to say "hello" to Jack.
The world is a better place because of him. None of us could ask to be remembered in a better way.
My thoughts and prayers are with all of you as you grieve the loss of this special man.
~Jeanie (Kime) Bachman

Jeanie Kime Bachman - March 17, 2015 at 03:14 PM

LM

“ We are so sorry to hear of Jack's passing. He was one of the nicest men we have met. He brings back so many wonderful memories of our childhood in Morenci and going into his store. So saddened by his passing but blessed to have known him. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family. --Pat & Lenna (Dietrich) McCaskey

Lenna McCaskey - March 17, 2015 at 02:17 PM

JT

“ Jack was a wonderful person I remember going in his store also always a smile and a hello.
Rip jack Jen thompson



Jen thompson - March 17, 2015 at 12:30 PM



“ Jack was such a nice man always smiling and always have positive and good things to say. I remember how multiple times she would help people out in the community with their swimming pools and also with their cameras

Lloyd McClain - March 17, 2015 at 12:29 PM



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Lloyd McClain - March 17, 2015 at 12:29 PM

GL

“ Jack was icon of Morenci. Truly loved this guy! He was always so friendly. He always had a smile for you when you came into the store. I just liked to go in a talk to him, he always had time for you. My husband delivered papers for him for many years. He meant alot to him. Our sympathy to Ruth, Becky and Mark

Sincerely, Mike and Glenda (Lipp) Lichtenwald

Glenda Lichtenwald - March 17, 2015 at 12:16 PM

JT

“ Jack was a man that brought a word of encouragement to anyone who encountered him. He recognize the importance of a child as much as an adult. His store was the place you bought chocolate, had your film developed and bought your first good camera. But, more importantly, it was the place you would stop in to get a word of encouragement for the day. Jack was not only a stand up man in the community, but a man of God at church. I always loved to hear his testimony at the First Baptist Church where his WOW could be heard when he shared God's goodness. He had a passion to be sure the world knew the difference Jesus had made in his life. Ruth, our sympathy is with you and the family. Mom has missed you so much since you left town and speaks of you often. You will be in all our prayers in the days ahead.

Jack loved music in church and the song that comes to mind is
"Oh what a day that will be when my Jesus I shall see
When I look into his face and see the glory of his grace"
I imagine he is saying many WOW's today.....

Thank you for the Godly example of a man of who loves his Lord,

Jeanie Ort Thompson

Jeanie Thompson - March 17, 2015 at 09:43 AM

KN

“ Jack was such a great man, always so up beat. Always loved going into his store when he had it.

kathy nino-skates - March 17, 2015 at 09:33 AM

FB

“ *The man was treasure to the city of Morenci
And will never be forgot. I was one of many
That delivered papers for him in this town
He talked to many students at school about
Going ahead in a career in business I thank
Him for all the talks we had. Trully a friend.*

Francis D. Bell - March 17, 2015 at 07:56 AM

JW

“ *George and I will always remember Jack.
George said he was one of a kind. Whenever
we went in his store we came out different.
What a testimony for the Lord. George and
Judy Walton*



judy walton - March 17, 2015 at 07:50 AM

BZ

“ *I am sadden to hear of Jacks passing. Yeti know we will meet again.
I credit him with one of many who prayed.for me and my family
coming to know Jesus. My sincere condolences to all. Bev Zuvers*

Beverly Cochrane Zvers - March 17, 2015 at 07:42 AM

JW

“ *Smith's News World Headquarters was an institution and will always
be high on my list of great Morenci memories. RIP Jack Smith.*

jim whitehouse - March 17, 2015 at 07:19 AM

BA

“ I loved going to Jack's News Stand. He knew all the kid's names, always had a smile, and if I was short of money, he would pony up what I needed, so kindly, I would get over my embarrassment. Such wonderful man.

Bev Averill - March 17, 2015 at 07:11 AM

CL

“ Such a kind and sweet man! I smile when I think about his never-ending patience when my childhood friends and I would go into his shop and linger...a little too long sometimes. He always called me by my first name and that made me feel so special. Such a great man!

Candi Leitner - March 17, 2015 at 06:48 AM

CS

“ I remember going to see Mr. Jack as a young child and he always had a smile...candy...and a hug! Such a wonderful man!



Cyndee Sanders - March 17, 2015 at 06:12 AM

SD

“ Sybil Diccion lit a candle in memory of John "Jack" Smith



Sybil Diccion - March 17, 2015 at 01:59 AM

SD

"The deep pain that is felt at the death of every friendly soul arises from the feeling that there is in every individual something which is inexpressible, peculiar to him alone, and is therefore, absolutely and irretrievably lost". Arthur Schopenhauer could not have expressed our feelings any more perfectly. John Peter Smith was someone worthy of emulating and the loss of this dear man is inestimable. Though he was not physically present since his move to Bourbonnais, the Spirit of Jack Smith never left the town he loved and his legacy remained intact as witnessed by all the messages of love. May God bless Ruth, Becky and Mark.

Sybil Diccion - March 17, 2015 at 02:21 AM

MH

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Marion Hunt - March 17, 2015 at 12:42 AM

LB

“ I'm sorry to hear of Jack's passing away. I've been gone from Morenci for 54 years and I still feel good and smile when we talk about Jack. I delivered papers for Jack and he always made this shy kid feel good.

Larry W. Brown - March 16, 2015 at 09:48 PM

DC

“ I sm so sorry to hear about Smilin' Jack's passing. Everyone in our community was touched by his kindness. Though he will be missed by all, he will live in our hearts. Truly a person worthy of emulation.

David Carlson - March 16, 2015 at 09:19 PM

JT

“ Jack was a Beacon for Jesus that shone on all that came in contact with him. We loved doing business with Him. He was a true man of God. Janet Flint Tinney

Janet Tinney - March 16, 2015 at 09:03 PM

DC

“ Was such a Genuine soul!! Always made you feel like YOU were important when you walked into His store.. Will miss you.. YOU WERE A BIG PART OF THE SMALL TOWN.. 🙏🙏🙏

Debbie Collar - March 16, 2015 at 08:49 PM



“ Jack Smith was a true man of character. He was a kind and gracious soul.

Sally Kruger - March 16, 2015 at 08:39 PM

TS

“ Tracie "Bryant" Seiser lit a candle in memory of John "Jack" Smith



Tracie "Bryant" Seiser - March 16, 2015 at 08:32 PM

TS

Prayers to the family for your loss. My parents bought me my first 35mm camera from him. I remember it was a Ricoh and was quite expensive back then. They didn't have all the money up front, so he let them make payments so they could give it to me for Christmas. He was a very kind and compassionate person who truly cared about our community.

Tracie "Bryant" Seiser - March 16, 2015 at 08:47 PM

RS

“ Downtown Morenci remains a place of small stores along our sidewalks but never quite the same since Jack closed his shop. He offered personal service with a smile ... had a sense of humor and always good for a joke or an exchange of ideas. Our sincere sympathy to his family!

Renee Allen Schroeder - March 16, 2015 at 08:31 PM

PR

“ A true gentleman in every sense of the word. One in a million.

Pam Schultz Hall Rau - March 16, 2015 at 08:29 PM

CS

“ Nicest man I ever met. So sorry for your loss.

Carol Bachelder Steck - March 16, 2015 at 08:28 PM

KD

“ May Jack Smith, the true compassionate smiling face of Morenci's past be enjoying heaven with the angels now. All the lives he touched and made better with his business over the years will always be remembered. Not a child ever left without candy from his store he gave them. God certainly told him when he got to heaven "Great job, good and faithful servant". May Jack rest in peace forever now with God in heaven and his great legacy always be remembered dearly by all that knew him.

Kent Deatrick - March 16, 2015 at 08:24 PM

DV

“ *Dean And Darla Vasher lit a candle in memory of John "Jack" Smith*



Dean and Darla Vasher - March 16, 2015 at 08:13 PM

DV

Remember always being greeted with hello and good afternoon. Sweet, sweet man. Prayers

Dean and Darla Vasher - March 16, 2015 at 08:16 PM

MF

“ *Jack was such a mentor to our boys. He helped them spiritually, had a weekly bible study with one of our boys and followed them in their sports in high school. He was so interested in their lives and made such an impact on them. He really did help raise our kids! One of his favorite sayings was 'WOW' - 'wonder of wonders'. We are grateful for the part he played in our lives. Marvin and Cindy Fankhauser*

Marvin and Cindy Fankhauser - March 16, 2015 at 08:10 PM



“ *Kristy Shots lit a candle in memory of John "Jack" Smith*



Kristy Shots - March 16, 2015 at 08:07 PM



prayers for your family... Such a nice guy and touched lots of peoples lives in our town with his smile and sincerity.

Kristy Shots - March 16, 2015 at 08:09 PM

JD

“ *Loved going to Jack's as a kid. Mom would get film developed and we usually got a piece of chocolate :). Jack is and always will be a Morenci icon. God speed Jack!*

Jamie Dilworth - March 16, 2015 at 07:47 PM

MD

“ *Mrs. Smith, Becky, Mark - There are so many memories of growing up in Morenci but one of them is most certainly, a visit to the Newsstand - or to your home. Jack was an institution in Morenci. He is brought up in the "You know you're from Morenci" facebook site more than probably any one other person. Kind, gentle, a man of God. He impacted so many kids and adults from the moment you arrived in town.... Now, I answer to "MJ" quite automatically, but he was the first to call me that. It always brings a smile.*

*Mary Jane Borton Dopp
Schererville, IN*

Mary Jane Dopp - March 16, 2015 at 07:19 PM

LS

As a young pastor he was a great encouragement to me. He gave me camera. What a man of God

Larry Schwarck - March 16, 2015 at 08:22 PM

WC

When we first moved to Morenci, he made us feel so welcome. Remembered my name the very next time I came in to Smith's Love him & love you, Ruth."

Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death."

Isaiah 57:2 (NIV)

Tom & Wilda Craig

Wilda Craig - March 16, 2015 at 08:57 PM



Never have I known of a person, who despite ill health and aging maintained a positive and cheerful attitude throughout his life. Through good health and illness his God lavished upon him a cheerful spirit which was evident to all who had eyes to see. May his spirit find lodging in our hearts. Thank You Lord for giving to us such an example as Jack, and may his spirit so possess each of us. Ken VanderBroek

Kathy VanderBroek - March 21, 2015 at 08:26 PM