



Obituary

Born: Thursday, February 28, 1935

Died: Sunday, February 2, 2020

Joseph W. Erickson

Feb. 28, 1935 - Feb. 2, 2020

MISHAWAKA, IN - Joseph "Joe" William Erickson, 84, of Mishawaka, Indiana passed away on February 2, 2020 surrounded by his family. He was just shy of his 85th birthday. Joe was born on February 28, 1935 in Gary, Indiana to the late William Carl Erickson and Pearl Inez (Mixon) Erickson. On October 4, 1954 Joe married the love of his life, Glenya Marie Parsley, in Plymouth, Indiana.

They have lived in Plymouth, South Bend, Roseville, CA, Granger, and finally in Mishawaka.

Service Summary

Visitation

10:00 AM to 12:00 PM, Sat Feb 08, 2020

Gospel City Church

52277 Hickory Rd., Granger, IN 46530

Celebration of Life

12:00 PM Sat Feb 08, 2020

Gospel City Church

52277 Hickory Rd., Granger, IN 46530

Preceding him in death were his parents; the aunt and uncle who raised him from the age of 12, Alvin and Hulda (Erickson) Holm; his sisters, Mary Ann Allen and Joyce Pearl Morris; his son, William Glen Erickson; and great-granddaughter, Harper Blake Sorenson. Surviving family members are his wife of 67 years, Glenya; his four daughters, Pamela (Scott) Wilfing and Joyce (Dan) Bilbrey of South Bend, Kathleen (Dave Rutt) Erickson of Huntington Woods, MI, and Carol (Patrick) Allesee of St. Paul, MN; daughter-in-law, Connie (Allen Williams) Erickson of Grand Rapids, MI; and his son, Edward (Jenny) Erickson of Estero, FL. Also surviving are 23 grandchildren: Aaron (Stacey) Wilfing, Matthew Wilfing, Joseph (Pam) Wilfing, Daniel (Nancy) Erickson, Rebecca Wilfing, Anne (Edson) Rutt-Enriquez, Michael (Jaime) Erickson, David (Abigail Deely) Wilfing, Jason (Courtney) Bilbrey, Christopher Williams, Nathaniel Bilbrey, Nicholas Williams, Natalie (Bridget) Allesee, Ellen Rutt, Kelsey (Steven) Sorenson, Leah Rutt, Ryan (Courtney) Olesee, Lizzie Bilbrey, Sarah Bilbrey, Grace Erickson, Noah Erickson, Samuel Erickson, and Luke Erickson. In addition he is survived by 19 great-grandchildren: Zoe, Wren, Gavin, & Kolton Wilfing, Aaron Wilfing, Hendrik, Olivia, & Sofia Wilfing, Kian Limon & Silas Wilfing, Max & Vivienne Wilfing; Sophie & Paul Erickson, Luka & Dylan Erickson; Homer Williams; Norah & August Bilbrey. He is also survived by many nieces and nephews (great-nieces and great-nephews too) whom he loved, from both the Erickson and Parsley families.

Dad, Joe, worked at Bendix for 19 years in various positions; his final position was as a Technical Writer. After he was laid off at Bendix in 1971, he immediately went to work for Avionics, where he became a skilled and accomplished salesman. Leaving Avionics, he then worked in sales at Weldun International Industries, Stevensville, MI. He was

tasked with developing a sales office in California for Weldun and worked there until 1991, coming back to Indiana after the death of his son Bill. Dad liked to say he never went a day without a job, even after being laid off from Bendix. His skills as a salesman gave him the opportunity to travel all over the United States, and even to China and Japan. He would either drive or fly to his clients' locations, but preferred to drive. He was known to make special side trips to see his children and grandchildren if he was within four hours of where they lived. He may have visited for only 30 minutes, but he would always make the effort to visit. He retired from Weldun (Bosch) in 1997.

Dad loved sports of all kinds, especially baseball. Perhaps that love began when his father took him to his first Cubs game in 1943. He became a lifelong Cubs fan and could be seen wearing his Cubs shirts (or Notre Dame shirts) most days. He loved that they won the World Series in his lifetime. He played both baseball and basketball at Grovertown High School. After high school he began playing softball for the Men's Softball League in South Bend. He said that whenever the lights went on at Bendix Park field, he was there. With children came the need to earn extra money, so he became a referee for high school basketball games. The movie "Hoosiers" reminded him of the years he traveled to all those small Indiana towns for games.

As his family grew, Dad became active in Little League, specifically at Maurice Matthys Park. It all started when he went to retrieve his mitt his son Bill had taken to the park. From that mitt retrieval, Dad began many years of coaching and building baseball skills in the dozens of young boys on the West side of South Bend. We still hear from those "boys" about the important influence Dad had on their lives. He derived great pleasure hearing from them as adults. In addition to coaching, Dad also served as District Administrator for Little League District 11, and as President of Maurice Matthys Little League. In another effort to earn extra money and to improve the scorekeeping process, Dad designed his own book. He titled it the "J.W. Erickson Ideal Baseball Scorebook". For years, we, his children, would help fold advertising letters and stuff envelopes. He sent these advertisements to Little League parks in every town he could locate using phone books from the library. Dad became a proficient two-finger typist while preparing those letters manually. Even though the official Little League had a scorebook of their own, they sent Dad a letter telling him that his design was very good. Dad sold those scorebooks from our home for many years, then finally sold his books to K-Mart. K-Mart sold the scorebooks for many years after. Dad later became an avid golfer and would play whenever he had the opportunity. It became his other "favorite sport". He loved golfing with his sons and grandsons.

As much as Dad derived pleasure in his work and sports, his

greatest pleasure was the time he spent with his 23 grandchildren and then his 19 great-grandchildren. They brought him great joy.

Dad wanted to be remembered for his faith in Jesus Christ. He felt that being the only survivor of the drowning accident which took four members of his immediate family, including his father, God had a purpose for his life. He touched the lives of so many young men during his coaching years. And young men and women during the years he taught Sunday School. But most important to him was the impact he had on his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, whom he loved so much.

The family will hold a Celebration of Life on Saturday, February 8 from 10:00 to 12:00, with a service at 12:00 at Gospel City Church, 52277 Hickory Rd., Granger, IN 46530. The family requests that you make any donations in Dad's memory to Gospel City Church, Granger or to Southern Care Hospice, 1626 E. Day Rd., Mishawaka, IN 46545.

Family and friends may leave email condolences at www.welsheimers.com.

Charitable donations may be made in Joseph's memory to the following organizations:

Southern Care Hospice,
1626 E. Day Rd., Mishawaka, IN 4654

Gospel City Church
52277 Hickory Rd., Granger, IN 46530