



JOE CLIFFORD

April 16, 1920 - January 27, 2020

Joe Clifford, exemplary father, loyal husband, loving brother, WWII veteran, county agent, farm cooperative educator, community volunteer, devout Catholic, and happy wanderer, died peacefully in the early hours of Monday, January 27, 2020 in Caledonia, MN after several days of visits and prayers with family, friends, and relatives. He was 99.

Born on April 16, 1920 to Michael and Agnes (McDonald) Clifford, Joe and his sisters weathered the Great Depression on the family's Hauge Ridge farm, five miles north of Caledonia. He also attended St. Mary's Grade School and graduated from Loretto High School in 1939. He was the 4-H vice president and participated in boxing and football as time allowed. Six months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, he enlisted with the US Navy. During his three years and three months of WWII active duty military service, he served in the South Pacific as part of an aviation repair team on the island of Espiritu Santo and later, wanting to get closer to the action, transferred to the USS Half Moon as a Machinist 1st Class. In November of 1945 he returned to civilian life having received the Navy's Good Conduct and Victory medals.

With help from the GI Bill, he enrolled at the University of Minnesota, joined the service fraternity Alpha Gamma Rho, and completed his degree in Agriculture Education in 1950. He then went to work as County Agent for Martin County, MN. There he led the 4-H Livestock Loss Prevention Team to a

National Championship and advised Martin County 4H and FFA chapters. He later earned FFA's Honorary American Farmer Degree in 1962. Due to his successes in Martin County, Midland Cooperatives offered him a job as organization relations specialist in the Twin Cities. In the 70s and 80s he served as Assistant Director to the Minnesota State Fair's Youth Camp where FFA members across the state ushered concerts and horse shows.

Joe met his future wife, Betty Ussher at the University of Saskatchewan during a 1955 work trip; a year later they got married at St. Paul's Cathedral in Saskatoon on September 29, 1956. Over the next 14 years, they brought seven children into the world: six boys and one girl - all of whom provided both parents a mix of pride, joy and occasional bewilderment. Joe was thrilled to have five of his sons become Eagle Scouts, and marveled at his daughter's many achievements in 4-H and FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America).

After eleven years in Member Relations, Joe became a Midland Petroleum Sales Rep and relocated his family to Colby, WI in 1968. Then in 1976 he became Plant Manager of Midland's first Regional Seed and Fertilizer Distribution Centers located in Unity, WI. Coming full circle when Midland merged with Land O' Lakes Cooperative in 1982, Joe returned to work in LOL's Headquarters, once again in Member Relations. In retirement he worked part-time as a substitute teacher in and around Colby, and during the summer, toured nearly every state in the US and several Canadian Provinces on his trusty Honda Goldwing motorcycle. During his work years, Joe had traveled to Jamaica and Czechoslovakia to teach farmers and fishermen the benefits of cooperatives. At the age of 68, he traveled to Ireland and hitchhiked through the Emerald Isle in search of relatives, ancestors, and adventure.

Throughout his life, Joe volunteered at his local Catholic churches as server, lector, usher, choir member, and Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion

for the homebound. In 2006 Joe returned to his roots in Caledonia and broadened his commitment to community service. In addition to being a volunteer driver for Houston County's SEMCAC, a community action organization that provides support for independent living, he also delivered meals to senior citizens who were homebound. In 2010, at the age of 90, he received Houston County's Outstanding Senior Volunteer Award.

Living independently until age 93, Joe entered Caledonia Care and Rehab after battling sepsis for six weeks. In his final years, he learned how to accept "a bit" of help from his caregivers, friends, and family to whom he had given so much during his years as an active member of his original hometown, his church communities, his family's hometown of Colby, and his country.

He is survived by his daughter Mary Schlageter and her husband Mike; his sons Michael (Annemarie), James (Tlalli), John, Richard, and Robert (Kim Howard); his grandchildren Lauren (Drake Steed), Adam Clifford, Jonathan Hepner (Krista), Nick Hepner; great grandchildren Thomas, Maria, Dominic, Cecilia, and Elena Steed; and a multitude of nieces, nephews, great and great-great nieces and nephews, and no shortage of cousins as well.

Joe was preceded in death by his wife, Betty, in 2011; his son Bill in 1986; his sisters Evelyn in 1989, Rita (Clifford) Loushine in 2004, Lucille (Clifford) Swing in 2012 and great grandchild Paul Francis Steed in 2017.

A funeral Mass in Hope of Resurrection will be celebrated at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, February 8, at St. Mary's Church 513 Pine Street Caledonia, MN. Visitation will be held on the day of the funeral starting at 10:00. There will be a luncheon at St. Mary's following burial. The family would like to sincerely thank Bernie McCormick and the McCormick Funeral Home of Caledonia for assisting the family with arrangements.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that people donate to the University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives - <https://uwcc.wisc.edu> - (search "donate") the organization that sponsored Joe's trips to Jamaica and Czechoslovakia to promote the cooperative model.

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 8. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Saint Mary's Catholic Church
513 S Pine St
Caledonia, MN 55921
(507) 725-3804

Mass

FEB 8. 11:00 AM (CT)

Saint Mary's Catholic Church
513 S Pine St
Caledonia, MN 55921
(507) 725-3804

Tribute Wall

GR

“Late entry here but I'm certain Joe wouldn't mind. My sincerest condolences to the entire Clifford family. While I'm proud to have grown up in Colby, WI, having Joe, Betty, and the Cliffords in my life enhanced the experience in so many ways. Joe was one of the first adults to treat me like an adult, genuinely interested in my answers to his questions about what was happening in my life. He was always very proud of his children and I was lucky enough to feel his pride through his words and letters to me throughout my travels and adventures. Joe, I think of you often. Until we meet again. Greg Rachu

Greg Rachu - February 19, 2020 at 03:23 PM

JC

thanks Greg - you and Zobeida and Ian were always special for Dad. We look forward to seeing our favorite pair of docs!

jim clifford - February 19, 2020 at 11:28 PM

MS

Thanks, Greg - ditto what my brother, Jim, said. He sure did enjoy hearing your name mentioned as I'd bring up memories to him in his later years, he always would have a chuckle, I imagine him remembering some hilarious moment that had you in it. Awesome.

Mary Schlageter - March 27, 2020 at 10:25 AM

CE

“ I never met Joe, but I was friends in high school with two of his boys, Mike and Jim. They were younger than I, but we all were in Spanish Club and that's how I got to know them. Mike and Jim were awesome kids, and after having read about their dad, I know why! I don't know if you remember me, Mike and Jim, but please accept my condolences. It's tough to lose a parent; I lost my dad in 2015. Hope you are both doing well.

Cindy Ellenbecker
New Holstein, WI

Cindy Ellenbecker - February 07, 2020 at 07:30 PM

JC

Thanks Cindy yes we remember you from high school and of course we all used to hang out at the local A&W. Our parents were always in attendance for all the CHS events including band, theater, football, basketball, track and field, baseball etc so i'm sure they saw you too. I recall you and your friends were always helpful to us members of the younger high school classes and we could only hope to follow in your footsteps. Hello to everyone in New Holstein! Be sure to visit us if you are in the Madison / DeKalb /Denver / Boise or San Diego areas!

jim clifford - February 07, 2020 at 09:05 PM



“ My family and I have many wonderful memories of Joe, Betty and the children. By far, most of our memories revolve around BSA Troop 383 and 5 eagle scout sons from one family. Mary and I shared solidarity in being the only "girls" in the bunch. Joe was so caring and wonderful - always looking out for everyone else. I cant recall the last time I saw him for certain but I remember him at some many events or visits. Joe also provided free transportation to me when in college - he would swing by UWEC and anyone wanting a ride home could go with him. All in all, I remember Joe and the Clifford family as just being part of my general life throughout college. Many prayers and warm thoughts from our family to yours as you celebrate the life of a wonderful, caring, considerate, kind, sweet and just all around amazing man. We are all better off for having called him friend and influencing our lives. Being the token girl, I learned some interesting things being part of a entrenched Scouting family.....but I also met some wonderful young men along the way and all of it shaped my future. It is bittersweet to look back such memories of a more innocent time. God's blessings to all.

Adam - I loved what you wrote about your Grandpa. I eulogized both of my grandmothers at their funeral at age 98 and 102 respectively. It was an honor, one of the hardest things I have ever done but no greater expression of love to them. I am sure your Grandpa Joe is smiling down on you today and every day and he knows you are with him in spirit and he is in you heart always - nothing to feel guilty about!!

Scott and Karla (Zygowicz) Halverson

Karla Halverson - February 06, 2020 at 12:42 PM

MS

Karla - what wonderful memories you reflect on here, and your thoughtful caring is heart warming. Yes, Scouts sure did envelop our families, didn't it? We really were the only girls! How lucky were we to have now such great memories of those times we likely took so for granted then? Warmest regards to you and your whole family. Thank you for taking the time to reminisce and share such kind remembrances of our Dad. We will miss him a lot, and we will celebrate his life well lived. ~ Mary Clifford Schlageter

Mary Schlageter - February 06, 2020 at 09:09 PM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of JOE CLIFFORD.



February 05, 2020 at 09:28 AM

JH

“ I first met Joe in 1980 when I moved to Colby in 1980. Joe was working at the Midland plant in Unity. A couple years later he moved on to work for member services in Minneapolis. Joe did so much for myself and my family and always had a smile on his face. What a great coop person. So glad I got to know Joe Clifford. My sympathy to the family and Thanks Rick for calling me. I have posted this on the Midland keep in touch account and hears from many former colleagues of Joe.. Jim Hager



Jim Hager - February 04, 2020 at 08:40 AM

JC

thanks Jim - yes we recall dad working first at the Minneapolis member relations office then in his central Wisconsin regional sales rep job then at the Unity plant and back in the Minneapolis LOL member relations office where he commuted from Colby for the last several years of his career. He believed in the cooperative idea.

jim clifford - February 04, 2020 at 10:34 PM



That's great, Jim. I always wondered what "KIT" meant. Keep in Touch, of course!

Rick Clifford - February 05, 2020 at 09:23 AM

MD

“ *I am one of the last of the McDonald cousins and remember him coming to Lanesboro to visit my family and taking me dancing in his sailor uniform. I was so proud!! When I saw him in later years he was always so kind and gracious. My love and prayers to the family.*
Mary Scanlan Doffing

Mary Scanlan Doffing - February 03, 2020 at 11:46 AM

JC

Thanks Mary - we have heard many great memories about our dad!

jim clifford - February 03, 2020 at 02:03 PM

TN

“ It was 1966 and sitting across the hall from Midland's Publications/Communications staff in the Johnson Street building was the cooperatives' Member Services department - with Elaine Johanson, Fred Halverson and the ever friendly and bouyant Joe Clifford. He put a smile on my face from my first day as a junior writer... and onward. Joe, as a fellow Irishman, you always made this city boy feel like an important member of a large agricultural cooperative even though I had trouble telling a cow from a horse. I have thought of you often since your retirement (and mine) and send my prayers and deepest condolences to all who loved Joe.

Terry Nagle - February 03, 2020 at 01:10 AM

JC

Thanks Terry. We have fond memories of the Johnson street office when dad would bring us with him on the weekends.

Jim Clifford - February 03, 2020 at 04:16 AM



Thanks, Terry. If the Midland KIT club has a newsletter, please feel free to forward Dad's obituary to them.

Rick Clifford - February 04, 2020 at 07:14 PM

MS

“ Posted for Stephanie Morrison by Mary Schlageter

Hello cute Clifford friends,

I wanted to express my deepest condolences to your sweet family. Mr. Joe Clifford was such a gem and will be deeply missed. I personally feel honored to have shared many long conversations with him gaining much insight into his life and what he held dear; each of you. I will always cherish his memory and he will forever hold a special place in my heart.

I can't help but think of a quote by Helen Keller which I've always found comfort in,

"What was once enjoyed and deeply loved, we can never lose. For all that we love deeply, becomes a part of us."

I send each of you big hugs and so much love!! Please don't hesitate to reach out if I can assist in any way.

XO!

Love, Steph

Mary Schlageter - February 02, 2020 at 03:36 PM

JC

Thanks for everything Steph!

jim clifford - February 03, 2020 at 02:04 PM

“ Posted for Adam by Mike Clifford

*Grandpa Joe
by Adam Clifford (grandson)*

I wanted to put out a short post about my Grandpa Joe, who passed away yesterday at the very ripe age of 99--only a couple months shy of 100. My grandpa has always been a source of inspiration and admiration to me. My favorite trips as a kid were visiting him and my Grandma Betty in Colby, WI. Living in the suburbs of Chicago I was always interested in their rural life. Their home was a world away from where I grew up, and his stories about life on the farm and his motorcycle trips across the country made me long for a similar adventure. I ended up attending the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, one hour southeast of Colby. While my grandparents had moved from their home in Colby, I made a couple trips to visit my grandpa in Caledonia, MN. My grandpa influenced my life in some fairly dramatic ways: he was the reason I got into boxing, a hobby that grew into an obsession and dominated my 20's. I still recall his exercise routine that he carried on well into his 80's which included plyometric knuckle pushups and lots of jumping on the rebounder (an exercise which Sierra has shown me is backed by a ton of science--we even have our own rebounder!). He always told me that the greatest exercise he ever did was pushing himself away from the table.

In the wake of the news of his death, my dad and I briefly discussed what I should do, being on the other side of the planet with an impending funeral and the death of my last grandparent. My grandpa marks the closest person to me who has ever passed away. I realize how lucky I am to have had 31 years with him, and to know what a ridiculously full life he led.

I've decided to stay out here, as my dad said, it's what he would have wanted. He wasn't the type to make a big deal about goodbyes, and he was a pro at the Irish goodbye, simply leaving

without a word during family get-togethers. It's a hard decision to make, and I can't help but feel overwhelmingly selfish about it.

In some ways his death has come as a slight relief to me. I was lucky enough to spend an afternoon with him a few weeks ago. He has declined significantly in the past several years ever since being checked in to a nursing home in Caledonia, MN. He went from driving people much younger than him to doctors appointments to being checked into a nursing home within a couple weeks. He was right around 92 at the time. From then on his memory faded rapidly and his health declined. I wanted to see him reach 100, but mostly to maximize my time with him as part of my life.

He was extremely friendly and quick-witted with a grip as strong as mine up until his last days. He would squeeze my hand like a vice at every goodbye and I would indulge him when he asked me to try and squeeze back "with all you've got." He never once flinched. But while he maintained a good humor until the end, he seemed to mostly stay in his room, passing the time. It felt to me like he was in purgatory; neither good nor bad, just waiting.

So as I fight rather unsuccessfully to hold back tears while I write this, I take some solace in the fact that the waiting is over. I really hope I'm not disappointing anyone by staying here and I'm truly sorry if I do. Mostly I'm sorry to miss the chance to see everyone in my family and reminisce over what an extraordinary man he was. He was the epitome of "The Greatest Generation."

So like him, this afternoon I plan to cheers him with the local equivalent of a Miller Lite, drink half, and put the remainder in the fridge for tomorrow. And maybe I'll do some pushups in his name too.

This one's for you Grandpa Joe. Rest In Peace.

Michael Clifford - February 02, 2020 at 09:43 AM

JC

Thanks Adam - dad always enjoyed hearing about your many travels!

jim clifford - February 03, 2020 at 02:05 PM

MC

Thanks, Adam! I know your grandpa appreciated your spirit of adventure and he loved you and your sister very much.

Dad

Mike Clifford - February 05, 2020 at 07:54 PM

MC

“ Posted for Larry Hillesland
Subject: From Larry Hillesland - How I knew Joe Clifford

Hi Mike, My wife Judy is sending this notice from our church computer . I'm so glad that you contacted us. We both have such fond memories of him.

My name is Larry Hillesland and Joe was a dear friend of mine. I first met Joe in the 1950's when I was a FFA member in Alexandra, Minnesota. My FFA chapter was involved in the Co-op movement and I went to receive an award at a Co-op event in Minneapolis. Joe was involved with the student part of that program. We met again later that year at a Co-op camp in Wisconsin where Joe was the program director. I was a camper at the State Fair Youth camp in 1958 & '59 where FFA and 4- H boys were ushers for the grandstand shows. I join the camp staff in 1960 - and Joe was there too! I later became the superintendent of the State Fair Youth Camp and Joe was my assistant. That is where our deep friendship really began. I never made a decision involving the campers or staff without first consulting Joe with his knowledge, experience and gentle ways with the youth. Joe was so valuable to me and to all the staff. We had many good times discussing all aspects of life. Even though we came from different religious background we found we had many of the same views and often talked about where we were in our christian walk.

After we retired from the camp and the camp closed, we remained long-distant friends. Joe loved to travel all over the U.S and sometimes would show up at my house on his trusty Gold Wing for a surprise visit - such fun! My daughter called him the "Little Man on the Big Bike"! Joe was a godly influence in my life and I learned so much from him. I think when God made Joe He must have retired the mold! Precious Memories!

Michael Clifford - February 02, 2020 at 09:40 AM

JC

Thanks Larry - our dad had a great time in FFA and with the State Fair Youth Camp!

Jim Clifford - February 03, 2020 at 02:06 PM

MC

*Hi Larry, Thank you for your kind thoughts. I know my dad was honored to be able to contribute to the Youth Camp at the MN State Fair.
Mike Clifford*

Mike Clifford - February 05, 2020 at 07:52 PM

PC

“ *We so very much cherished our beloved Uncle Joe - our mother's brother. Always charming us with his Irish wit, it was an absolute joy to be in his presence. He was indeed a "gentle" man in the very best sense of the word. We will greatly miss him. With prayers for our Lord's comfort to his family and to all who knew and loved him.*

Peggy Clifford - February 01, 2020 at 03:34 PM

JC

Thanks Peggy. Dad always enjoyed your music and sense of humor!

Jim Clifford - February 01, 2020 at 05:10 PM



“ *1 file added to the album Memories Album*



Rick Clifford - February 01, 2020 at 03:18 PM

TP

“ Prayers and deepest sympathy to your family. I remember Joe with the best memories. He first as a respected father and later as a great Substitute teacher for me. Joe had so many life experiences that. I feel blessed to have known him. May he Rest In Peace.

Teresa Pinter - February 01, 2020 at 03:13 PM

JC

Thanks and know that dad liked to point out that the students often told him that he reminded them of President Bush!

Jim Clifford - February 01, 2020 at 05:12 PM

DB

“ Sympathies to the entire Clifford family. Joe was a kind man. I remember him from my years as his neighbor in Colby. May he rest in peace.

Denise Boyer

Denise Boyer - January 31, 2020 at 07:44 PM



Thank you, Denise. We had a great neighborhood there on South Main Street. Lots of great memories.

Rick Clifford - February 01, 2020 at 03:03 PM

JC

Thanks Denise. Dad always had great memories of our Main street kids including you and Dale! Hello to Kevin too.

Jim Clifford - February 01, 2020 at 05:15 PM

MS

Hi Denise - we so appreciate your thoughts on Dad, and yes, what great memories of growing up next door to you and Dale on S. Main St., and all our super S. Main St. neighbors....I often say it was about the best way to have our childhood, and what wonderful memories - couldn't ask for anything more.

Mary Clifford Schlageter - February 01, 2020 at 05:58 PM

LR

“ *Loushine Family, Bill Sr, Bill, Tom, Bob, Rick purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of JOE CLIFFORD.*



Loushine Family, Bill Sr, Bill, Tom, Bob, Rick - January 31, 2020 at 04:18 PM



“ *Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of JOE CLIFFORD.*



January 31, 2020 at 02:56 PM

JT

“ *Joe was a favorite of mine and I share in your sadness. He was famous for being involved with Wisconsin Farm Progress Days so you can see how long I've known Joe. What a wonderful person he was! I also worked with him for Midland Cooperatives and LOL. Jim Tubbs (former Member Services), 984 Watermolen Ave., Green Bay, WI.*

Jim Tubbs - January 31, 2020 at 02:38 PM



Thank you, Jim. I have a vague memory of going with Dad to Farm Progress Days. He loved working for Midland.

Rick Clifford - February 01, 2020 at 03:05 PM

KF

“ *My thoughts and prayers are with the family.*

Kathy Friday - January 31, 2020 at 02:34 PM

JC

Thanks Kathy!

Jim Clifford - February 01, 2020 at 05:16 PM

JG

“ *I'll always remember Mr Clifford and his beautiful wife as very intelligent and energetic. After reading his beautiful obituary it impresses me with how greatly lived a life can be! My condolences to you all.*

Jill and Joe Goodwin - January 31, 2020 at 01:28 PM



Thank you, Jill and Joe. Yes indeed, he quietly went about getting things done. It gave his life purpose, and he knew it was important work, both the professional and the volunteer work.

Rick Clifford - February 01, 2020 at 03:07 PM

BC

Thank you for your kind words about our Dad, Jill and Joe. He was definitely one of a kind.

Bob Clifford - February 02, 2020 at 12:13 PM

AF

“ Appreciative Army Guy, Lt. Don Farrimond purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of JOE CLIFFORD.



Appreciative Army Guy, Lt. Don Farrimond - January 31, 2020 at 12:44 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of JOE CLIFFORD.



January 31, 2020 at 11:23 AM

TW

“ While I'm saddened to hear of Mr. Clifford's passing, I'm uplifted to have known him for a period of my life and know what a life well lived that he led. Be it driving us around for the scouts paper drive or telling us to settle down in the basement over heated ping pong matches he was always a kind and gentle soul that I admired. I'm privileged to have had him in my life.

Tim Wavrunek - January 31, 2020 at 11:13 AM



Thanks, Tim. So many fun memories of hanging out in our basement. Pool table, ping pong table, fridge, punching bag, board games. That basement had it all

Rick Clifford - February 01, 2020 at 03:09 PM

BC

Thanks, Tim. Your kind words about our Dad mean a lot. He believed that Boy Scouts helped build character and good citizenship. And although we weren't wealthy, Dad relished the fact that we could have friends over to play table tennis, billiards or one of the many board games in our basement.

Bob Clifford - February 02, 2020 at 12:26 PM

RC

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Rick Clifford - January 30, 2020 at 10:53 PM



I drove Dad over to his nephew Father John Swing's home last summer and we had a wonderful impromptu reunion w/ my sister and two of his nephews: John and Bill and one of his nieces: Jeanne. Dad had fun rolling around in my cousin's electric wheelchair. A great day!

Rick Clifford - February 01, 2020 at 03:12 PM

JP

This video was taken in Father John Swing's garage on the Swing Family homeplace where Amy (Pavela) Wilson (great niece) and her children, Anna, Damien and Peter, Jeanne (Swing) Pavela (niece), Mary (Clifford) Schlageter (daughter), and Bill Swing (nephew) with his wife, Laurie, are enthusiastically serenading Joe with "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling"!

Submitted by Jeanne Pavela

Jeanne Pavela - February 06, 2020 at 11:29 AM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Mc Cormick Funeral Home - January 29, 2020 at 04:47 PM

CB

Joe exemplified what living a Christian life means. I'm sure as he went through the golden gates of heaven God said, "Well done, my faithful servant." My condolences and prayers to the Clifford family.

Cheryl (Sterzinger) Broeske - January 31, 2020 at 08:24 PM

MS

Thank you, Cheryl, for your thoughtful words, and I agree w/ you wholeheartedly...couldn't say it better. We so much appreciate your thinking of us.

Mary Schlageter - February 02, 2020 at 04:14 PM

BL

Bill loushine Sr. Feb 5 I'm Joes brother in law and blessed to have married Rita, his youngest sibling who gave me 56 wonderful years and 5 sons. Bill Jr his wife Patti and I visited with Joe in Caledonia a couple years ago, and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. I would call Joe every few months and conversations were always so great. Joe was about 11 months older than me, and we jested who would live to be 100. I'll miss Joe: and fortunate for the Cliffords, Swings, Pavelas and being a part o their beautiful families. So much more in my mind's memory which I will cherish for the rest of my life. Joe, RIP Bill

Bill Loushine - February 05, 2020 at 09:19 PM

JC

Thanks Uncle Bill - we enjoy the memories of visits to Chisolm and the cabin with the sauna and Twins games with Jess! Congrats on your 99th - I'm guessing you might have a birthday curling match at the bonspiel!

jim clifford - February 05, 2020 at 11:46 PM

JC

from Bob Loushine

Your dad certainly lived a full and adventurous life! It is my loss that I didn't know your dad well. Fortunately, through his actions, I have a story to share. One stormy evening in 1991, living in Columbus Georgia, my wife Sandy and daughters Amy and Bethany were about to have dinner when the phone rang and Uncle Joe was on the other end. He stated that he was passing through the area and he requested directions to our house for a visit. He was at a gas station only a mile away so I told him that I would drive there and then he could follow me home. As I arrive at the station, I see your dad sitting on a motorcycle, his trusty Honda Gold Wing motorcycle that I would learn more about later. He was splattered with mud and soaked to the bone as a result of driving up from Florida through the rain storm. With his slight frame and large motorcycle an image came to my mind of Willie Shoemaker on his race horse having just completed a circuit on a wet and muddy Santa Anita Race Track. As we pulled into our garage, my wife and daughters stared out in disbelief at this spry 70 year old man. After a hot shower and meal, we all sat around the table as Uncle Joe, with his kind and gentle voice, shared his stories of family, religion, travel, work and general philosophy of life. There are no digital devices that could have been more entertaining. However, I am now disappointed that we did not get a demonstration of his knuckle pushups! Also, we did not allow Uncle Joe to "wash" his own clothes and since we didn't have a clothes line, they were submitted to tumbling in our Maytag dryer. The next morning, Uncle Joe was up early and ready to hit the road for a new adventure. Our family has never forgotten this special visit by your dad.

"Death leaves a heartache no one can heal; Love leaves a memory no one can steal." May your family be comforted by your many loving memories.

*With Love & Peace,
Bob & Sandy*

jim clifford - February 07, 2020 at 03:00 PM

MC

*Wow, what a great story! Thank you for sharing it, cousing Bob L.
Mike Clifford
DeKalb, IL*

Mike Clifford - February 15, 2020 at 04:16 PM