



Joe D. Swalwell

September 1, 1928 - May 20, 2023

Joe D. Swalwell, 94 years old, passed away on May 20, 2023, at Midland Hospice House, Topeka KS.

He was the son of Earl E. Swalwell and Laura Vivian Bail-Rogers. Joe was born on September 1, 1928, in Topeka. He grew up in North Topeka attending Quincy Elementary, Curtis Junior High and Topeka High School, Class of 1947. He attended Washburn University and served in the Kansas National Guard.

Joe met the love of his life, Frances Heise, while they both worked for Crosby Brothers Dept. Store as high school students. Frances was from Scranton KS and went to Capitol Catholic (now Hayden High School). Her parents were Joseph A. and Inez (Foster) Heise. Joe and Frances were married on October 15, 1948, in Assumption Church and would have celebrated their 75th anniversary this year.

While at Crosby's, Joe worked his way up to department head and buyer before he left after 15 years. He went to work at Zercher Photo from 1960 – 1976 in marketing and operations. Joe left the retail world behind and joined Platt College as Director of Admissions in 1977 through May 1984.

In June of 1984, he became Director of Downtown Topeka, Inc. Once again,

Joe was working downtown in the city he loved to call home. Business Improvement, Urban Development and Revitalization were his passions. He retired in 1998.

Joe had fond memories of his childhood, even in the midst of the depression. Capper picnics, free swims in the morning at Garfield pool, meeting under the streetlights for ditch 'em, pop bottle cap baseball, roller skating, nickel movies, cashing in pop bottles, and junk collecting in the alleys. A core group from the neighborhood and Curtis Junior High continued to get together after they had married and started raising families. They met once a month for dinner for over 60 years. The "Pot Luck" group is a true treasure of friendship through the years.

Joe was a history buff, especially anything Civil War, Lincoln and Native American. He and Frances travelled with a collection of Native American prints made from the original glass plate negatives. The prints were recently donated to a museum to continue being used as an educational resource.

Volunteering was important to Joe. He dedicated time to Most Pure Heart of Mary and Christ the King parishes in Topeka, Catholic Charities, and the Rotary Club. He committed years with the Learning Disabilities Association at the county, state and national levels.

Joe is survived by his wife, Frances; and their children, Steve Swalwell (Lisa), Jeannie Schnellbacher (Jim), Jane Pennington, Susan Swalwell (Ralph), Linda Martin, Bill Swalwell, John Swalwell (Karen); grandchildren, Francesca Donovan (Joe), Ian Swalwell, Otto Schnellbacher III, Nicole McCoy (Tully), Marquis Pierce, Lauren Moore (Cole), Linnea, Carl and Gretchen Swalwell, great-grandchildren, Jack and Katie Donovan, Tully and Rory McCoy, Addilyn, Easton and Evan Moore; brother, Elmer Swalwell, along with numerous nieces and nephews. Joe was preceded in death by his brothers, Richard

Wayne Douglas, Jim, Bob, and Bill Swalwell.

Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at Christ the King Catholic Church, 5973 SW 25th Street, Topeka, KS 66614. Inurnment to be held later.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Midland Care Hospice or Catholic Charities and sent in care of Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home, 2801 SW Urish Road, Topeka KS 66614.

Condolences may be sent online to www.kevinbrennanfamily.com.

Previous Events

Mass of Christian Burial

JUN 14. 11:00 AM (CT)

Christ the King Catholic Church
5973 SW 25th Street
Topeka, KS 66614

Tribute Wall

MD

“ So sorry to hear about Joe's passing. I didn't realize he had passed until I was searching for some old DTI news. So nice to see him after he retired at St Pat's every year. He will be sorely missed. ~
Maura Dingman

Maura Dingman - July 26, 2023 at 12:48 AM

LD

“ I'm so very sorry about your Dad passing. I remember being at MPH and singing in the Folk Group and seeing your Dad singing along. He was a very special man. His kindness, generosity, thoughtfulness, and love for your Mother and family was so special to see. Your family is in my thoughts and prayers. Linda Donnelly

Linda Donnelly - June 16, 2023 at 09:25 PM

JH

“ Saying prayers of deepest sympathies for the loss of your wonderful dad, husband, and grandfather! His life was a testament of love of family. Love and thoughts of comfort to your mom, Jeannie, Susan, Linda, Steve and your whole family. ❤️ 🙏

Jennie Heim - June 15, 2023 at 10:29 PM

RH

“ My sympathy to the family. I don't know you but your parents were wonderful friends. I was in the Hardee's coffee group from CTK. Have good memories of our times together over the years. Your dad always said when asked how he was, "Better than I should be". Rita Hulsing

Rita Hulsing - June 14, 2023 at 11:54 AM

FM

“ Memories, he actually made things happen in DTI. Understanding and a soft touch got results. Our offices were close. Always admired him and learned a lot from him.

Frank Meade

frank Meade - June 14, 2023 at 12:05 AM

DM

“ Linda,
So sorry to hear about your Daddy, My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family

Danny Martinez

Danny Martinez - June 13, 2023 at 08:27 PM

PB

“ Linda,

We were so sorry to hear about the passing of your dad. It is never easy to lose a parent. Please know our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. Cherish all the good memories.

Link and Pat Brown

Patricia S Brown - June 12, 2023 at 04:23 PM



“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Joe D. Swalwell.



June 12, 2023 at 01:41 PM

JM

“ Sorry for your loss. I worked with Joe at Zercher Photo for many years. Condolences to the family.

Jim Macfee - June 11, 2023 at 11:04 AM

CB

“ Linda and Sue
Sending my love to you and the Swalwell family!! Your Dad was a great example of what a good man should be to his wife and family!! May he rest in peace and soar with the angels in Heaven!! You are in my prayers!!

Cheryl Burkhart - June 10, 2023 at 05:45 PM

LK

“ On behalf of my parents, Fred and Joanne Guild, who have passed, the Guild family sends prayers to the family of Joe Swalwell. My dad and Joe worked together many years at Zercher Photo.

Leslie Guild Kelly - June 09, 2023 at 09:50 PM

AB

Was Joanne a teacher at McCarter Elementary?

Angela B - January 12, 2024 at 02:20 PM

BD

“ Offering my condolences to the Swalwell family. I didn't know your Dad very well, but I knew he was a great example of what a husband, father and man should be. The last video I saw of him singing to his lovely wife was priceless!! What an beautiful expression of their love! He is now be singing with the angels, praising his Savior! God bless all of you.
Barb DeWalt

Barbara DeWalt - June 09, 2023 at 04:58 PM

PE

“ I will always remember Joe as a good father, life-long friends with our family, and a strong supporter of the revitalization of downtown Topeka. His love and devotion to his wife was exemplary. He lit up a room and was always kind and welcoming. The world could use a lot more Joe Swalwell's. He ran a good race and now may he rest in eternal peace.

Patty Rupert Eckenberg - June 09, 2023 at 04:27 PM



“ So sorry for your loss, Sue! Vickie H.

Vickie Holthaus - June 09, 2023 at 03:08 PM

JS

“ Awwwww, dearest Uncle Joe whether it was fun times at the Heise farm or camping in Colorado he made you laugh with his movable scalp, ears and eyebrows not to mention his fun stories. You will be missed by all us nieces and nephews!

Julie Heise Snyder - June 06, 2023 at 04:08 PM

GR

“ Only fond memories of both your mom and dad, always helping out in some capacity. Talk about servants...wow! Linda, Sue and the rest of your family, tons of love and prayers for you all!

Gaye Rinehart - June 01, 2023 at 03:36 AM

TS

“ I've known Joe and the entire Swallowwell family since they moved in next door in 1955. Over the years Joe remained close to me and my family. He took my dad to Dr. appointments. He was ALWAYS there to help. Always!

When my parents died he was there to deliver kind words and assistance. To me Joe embodies everything the Bible teaches. Rest in Peace Joe. Heaven has a special place for you.

With great love.

Terry Sorensen

Terry Sorensen - May 25, 2023 at 08:20 PM

PE

I will always remember Joe as a great father, a wonderful friend to our family, and a great advocate for the city of Topeka. His love and devotion to his wife has been exemplary and endearing. He had such a great personality and I know how much your family will miss him. The world could benefit from a lot more Joe's. You have run a good race Mr Swallowwell. May you now rest in peace.

Patricia Rupert Eckenberg - June 09, 2023 at 02:41 PM

PJ

“ I am glad I snapped a picture with a good man the last time I saw Joe.

During my tenure on the City Council I had the privilege and honor of getting to know and work alongside many selfless civic minded people and one the best was Joe.

In an arena where a majority of the participant's mindset is that there has to be winners and losers, Joe was a rare exception. He always looked at the big picture and tried to have all parties benefit from his efforts. Joe may of represented Downtown Topeka Incorporated, residents of Oakland, East, North, West Topeka and residents in the surrounding area benefited from his labors. Sad thing was the bulk of his labors were done under the radar and sadly some politicized by self serving parochial officials. With his insight, hard work and perseverance our community is a better place!!!! THANK YOU JOE!!!



Pete Tavares Jr - May 24, 2023 at 07:30 PM