



## Joseph "J.T." Toss Betterton Jr.

March 22, 1941 - July 16, 2024

Joseph Toss Betterton, Jr. died on July 16, 2024 at the age of 83. Known as "Joe", "J.T.", and "Son" he was the youngest of seven children and lived the balance of his life in Arab.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Joseph Toss Sr. and Princie Hyatt Betterton of Arab, brothers Garland and Glenton "Snap", and sisters Ida Ruth Cooley, Janette Handschumacher, Joyce Isbell, and Claudette Compton. He leaves his wife of 59 years, Donna Handschumacher Betterton; sons Joseph T. Betterton, III (Melanie) of Decatur, AL, Mark A. Betterton (Amanda) of Aurora, CO, and daughters Sarah Willis of Arab, AL and Martha Needham (Joey) of Cullman, AL; 15 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren and his longtime pet "Rosie".

Joe was born in Arab March 22, 1941. At the age of 11 he was stricken with polio, requiring him spend several months in Birmingham at the "Crippled Children's Hospital" (now Children's of Alabama) which left him with one leg stunted and much shorter than the other. He attended Arab High School where he served as Basketball Manager and graduated in 1959. Following High School he studied drafting at the Alabama School of Trades in Gadsden, where he graduated with Mechanical Drafting Certification in 1960.

During the 1960s Joe worked for several firms as a draftsman before moving

up to electro-mechanical designer and tool designer. He was very proud of the work he did on NASA's Saturn Project and Skylab project, where his designs ultimately made it into space.

In 1964 Joe married Donna Handschmacher from Webster Springs, WV with Joseph being born in 1965, Sarah in 1967, Mark in 1969, and Martha in 1972. In the 1970s Joe was called by the Lord to study at Baptist Bible Institute, followed by the family serving as missionaries in Webster County WV, founding a church in Cowen, WV. Following this, Joe and his family returned to Alabama, where he resumed work in mechanical design.

Joe's design work was noticed by Chrysler Corporation where he was soon employed and his designs resulted in over 40 patents he was listed on. He was recognized repeatedly by Chrysler Corporation to include by CEO Lee Iacocca. Joe was very very proud of these accomplishments, particularly his work on one of the first automatic light and windshield wiper switches. Joe retired in 2005 and he and Donna traveled extensively in their RV throughout the US.

A lifelong Alabama fan, Joe could be found on Saturdays in the fall watching Alabama football in the living room, wearing the Alabama shirt that Donna had made him.

Visitation will be held at Arab Heritage Memorial Chapel from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. on July 21, 2024 with a short memorial service to follow. No graveside service will be held. Internment will be at Gilliam Springs Cemetery in Arab, AL. Pallbearers: Luke Mansel, Joey Needham, Jacob Needham, Matt Needham, Jared Leedy, Logan Myers, Mark Barron.

The family requests that those who wish to express sympathy consider donating, in Joe's honor, to Children's Hospital of Alabama in Birmingham in lieu of flowers.

Arrangements entrusted to Arab Heritage Memorial Chapel

# Cemetery Details

## Gilliam Springs Cemetery

1351 North Brindlee Mountain Parkway  
Arab, AL 35016

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUL 21. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

Arab Heritage Memorial Chapel  
1340 North Main Street  
Arab, AL 35016  
(256) 586-4100

## Funeral Service

JUL 21. 3:00 PM (CT)

Arab Heritage Memorial Chapel  
1340 North Main Street  
Arab, AL 35016  
(256) 586-4100

# Tribute Wall

HC

“ *Hartselle Cross Country Spike Chasers purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Joseph "J.T." Toss Betterton Jr..*



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**Hartselle Cross Country Spike Chasers** - July 19, 2024 at 10:43 PM



“ *39 files added to the album Life Tributes*



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**Arab Heritage Memorial Chapel** - July 19, 2024 at 02:13 PM

TF

“ *The Barksdale Dental Lab Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joseph "J.T." Toss Betterton Jr..*

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**The Barksdale Dental Lab Family** - July 19, 2024 at 12:05 PM

TF

“ *The Barksdale Dental Lab Family purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of Joseph "J.T." Toss Betterton Jr..*



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**The Barksdale Dental Lab Family** - July 19, 2024 at 12:05 PM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Joseph "J.T." Toss Betterton Jr..*



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July 19, 2024 at 10:22 AM

SP

“ *Dear Donna, I am so sad for your great loss. I was privileged to meet Joe ten years ago at Camp Caesar. I feel as if Joe and I were friends although the time we spent together was short. I was struck by his sense of humor and by his devotion to you and his amazing family. I enjoyed 10 years of his poetry, mostly expressing his love for you. Few women are lucky enough to have even one love poem written for them by the man they love. You must have hundreds. Love to you and your beautiful family.*

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**Susan Jett Pflug** - July 18, 2024 at 07:19 PM

HF

“ *Hatcher, Reesman & Bennett family purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of Joseph "J.T." Toss Betterton Jr..*



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**Hatcher, Reesman & Bennett family** - July 18, 2024 at 10:01 AM

SW

“ *Sharon Wilson lit a candle in memory of Joseph "J.T." Toss Betterton Jr.*



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**Sharon Wilson** - July 18, 2024 at 09:18 AM

JV

“ *I'm sorry to hear of him passing. He was a classmates at Arab High. Prayers for all who loved him.*



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**jane Vaughn** - July 18, 2024 at 07:06 AM

KA

“ *Katrina lit a candle in memory of Joseph "J.T." Toss Betterton Jr.*



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**Katrina** - July 17, 2024 at 08:38 PM

KD

“ Katrina, Logan and Dale planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joseph "Joe" Toss Betterton Jr..

Katrina, Logan and Dale - July 17, 2024 at 08:36 PM

KD

“ Katrina, Logan and Dale purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of Joseph "J.T." Toss Betterton Jr..



Katrina, Logan and Dale - July 17, 2024 at 08:36 PM

MF

“ Mike and Pearl Cooley and family. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joseph "Joe" Toss Betterton Jr..

Mike and Pearl Cooley and family. - July 17, 2024 at 06:58 PM

MF

“ Mike and Pearl Cooley and family. purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of Joseph "J.T." Toss Betterton Jr..



Mike and Pearl Cooley and family. - July 17, 2024 at 06:58 PM