



Mr. Joseph Harry Stephenson

August 8, 1931 - March 22, 2023

Rev. Joseph H. Stephenson, age 91, of Arab, AL passed away peacefully on March 22, 2023. Brother Joe, as he was affectionately known, was born in Ellettsville, Indiana on August 8, 1931 to his parents Paul and Kathryn Stephenson. Although he grew up on the farm and was expected to continue in the farm equipment business, young Joseph answered the call to pastoral ministry. He attended Anderson College in Indiana and got his degree in Theology, where he also enjoyed being a cheerleader and singing in a trio with his twin sisters Ruth and Lois. After serving his country in the Marine Corps between 1953 and 1955, Brother Joe pastored his first church in Jacksonville, NC. His sons Gary and KJoe were born in 1956 and 1959. He went on to pastor churches in Huntsville, AL, and Long Beach, California. While living in Huntsville, Brother Joe taught 6th grade at Madison Pike Elementary School from 1962-1968, where he led the 6th grade “patrol boys” in security duties and marching competitions.

Upon moving to Arab, AL, Brother Joe fell in love with the town, and his forever soul mate Dean Stephenson. They were married in 1974, and Joe became a dad to her son Wayne Leonard. Brother Joe and Dean teamed up with Rev. Jimmy and Carol Lynne Usher, and started a congregation of the Church of God in the Stephenson’s family room. The team adopted the name Worship Center, and later moved to and became the Twelfth Ave. Church of God. Brother Joe also helped found the Worship Center in Albertville, AL. At the same time Brother Joe touched many lives through a counseling service

called Operation Outreach. He also began a poultry farm with 6 houses for the purpose of turning the profits into funds for planting churches in Alabama through Kingdom Builders. Brother Joe also made several mission trips, including to Nicaragua after the earthquake in 1972, where he spent his honeymoon with his new bride Dean! Additionally he made several trips to Honduras, where he helped initiate a program for building metal silos for poor farmers to store their grain.

Joe and Dean enjoyed supporting their 2 sons Gary and KJoe on the Arab High School wrestling team. They also opened their home to the late Gary Louk and helped raise him from childhood through high school. Brother Joe enjoyed old and classic cars, and having them restored. In his recent years, Brother Joe was well known for being Santa Claus, and spent many Christmas seasons dandling children on his knees at malls in Florida and Texas. With his grand sense of humor and a gift for poetry, Brother Joe enjoyed entertaining groups with his jokes and recitations. He will be truly missed.

Joseph was preceded in death by his wife, Ola Dean Stephenson; his brother Paul Jr. Stephenson; and his sisters, Lois Wrightsman and Margie Shell. He is survived by his brother, Tom Stephenson; and sister, Ruth Walters. He is also survived by his 3 sons, Wayne Leonard, Gary Stephenson, and KJoe Stephenson; 13 grandchildren, and 9 great grandchildren.

There will be a Memorial Service on April 2, 2023 at Twelfth Avenue Church of God, Arab, AL. at 2:00 p.m. Preceding the service will be a visitation from 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Pallbearers: Ben Stephenson, Seth Stephenson, Garrett Stevenson, Jarod Stephenson, Brent Inkelaar, and Chris Leonard.

Arrangements entrusted to Arab Heritage Memorial Chapel.

Cemetery Details

Arab Memorial Cemetery

565 South Main Street
Arab, AL 35016

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 2. 12:30 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Twelfth Avenue Church of God
100 12th Avenue North East
Arab, AL 35016

Service

APR 2. 2:00 PM (CT)

Twelfth Avenue Church of God
100 12th Avenue North East
Arab, AL 35016

Tribute Wall

DS

“ I am Deb Sable and my sister Kristy Louk and I will never be able to thank Joe and Dean enough for taking in our late brother, Gary Louk. They both saved his life and made his future. Blessings always.

Deb Sable - April 25, 2023 at 05:06 PM

WA

“ I remember the time I spent with Joe, working in youth camps at Camp Chula Vista. I was amazed at his incredible ability to connect with kids. His infectious smile won the heart of many! Joe was the real deal. He loved Jesus, and he loved people.

Wayne Anderson

Wayne Anderson - March 28, 2023 at 08:28 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Mr. Joseph Harry Stephenson.



March 28, 2023 at 12:08 PM

SN

“ I guess my favorite memory is putting flowers out in his yard. Last ones were roses around the trees . He really enjoyed flowers the last 2/3 years of life. We also made a trip to see “The Ark”. Really special memories.

Sandra Nelson - March 27, 2023 at 10:18 PM