



Marvin "Jack" Smoot

May 27, 2022

Marvin "Jack" Smoot and his identical twin brother, Robert "Gene" were born on July 27, 1932 in Rover, Mo. Their parents, Ellen (Wright) and Allen Smoot had no idea what was in store for them. Jack was named after the family's mule so they changed the name of the mule. Most of their childhood was spent running and throwing rocks at anything that moved, including each other. Very few people could tell them apart.

During their high school years, Jack usually played with eight fouls because he was a "hacker". Jack wore #3 and Gene wore #8. The opposing coaches always suspected they switched jerseys at half-time but could never prove it. They developed a sense of humor very early because they loved playing tricks on people.

After H.S. graduation, they worked in Peoria, IL at Union Pacific Railroad. Their mother was an educator and encouraged them to return to Missouri and attend college. They enrolled in Ozark Baptist College in West Plains, MO. After a few years, they realized they were going to be drafted and they wanted to stay together so they enlisted in the Air Force. They were able to stay together their entire careers in service.

In August 1953, Jack married Anna LaWanda Huddleston. They were promptly assigned to the Air Force Base in Albuquerque, NM. Jack and Gene both played for the traveling baseball team. Jack was recruited by the minor leagues but hurt his pitching arm in a tournament and was never able to throw his fastball again. Unfortunately, the Korean Conflict had other plans for the

twins.

Jack and Gene were transitioned to Spokane, WA for additional training. They were placed in a Special Forces Unit called The Rangers. They quickly found themselves on a “special cruise ship to Korea”. They played a lot of tricks on their Sargent because he could never tell them apart.

Upon returning to the United States, Jack was stationed in San Diego for a short period. Eventually, he returned to MO and enrolled in College at Southwest Missouri State University in Springfield, MO on the GI Bill. His brother Gene joined him in a few months and they both pursued degrees in physical education.

In 1957, Jack and LaWanda had a son, William John. Upon graduation, they moved back to West Plains, MO where Jack was the assistant basketball coach to legendary Jim Peters. One of Jack’s greatest achievements was when his “B” team entered the WP Tournament because another team had to drop out at the last minute. The final championship game came down to Peter’s undefeated WP “A” team and Smoot’s “B” team. There was pandemonium in the gym when the “B” team beat the elite, undefeated “A” team. The WP “A” team went on to win third place in the “L” state championship finals later that year.

In 1958, Jack and LaWanda had a daughter, Patricia Margaret. Jack coached several more years in WP until he received a phone call from Superintendent Louis J. Donati, and school board president, Guy Hutchison. He happily accepted the position of head coach and physical education instructor.

One of the first games Jack’s Tiger team played was against the Lafayette Lancers in Ellisville, MO. It was coached by his twin brother, Gene. St. James beat the mighty Lancers. Jack’s team went 24-0 in conference play that year. He taught physical education and coached softball, baseball, volleyball, and basketball during his two years at St. James High School. At the 50th reunion for the class of 1962, many of Smoot’s female P.E. students told him they still hated him for making them run laps up the bleachers.

In 1963, State Farm contacted Jack and he made the very difficult decision to

transition into the business sector. He was very proud to work for State Farm. He won many elite awards (Crystal Excellence, Bronze Tablet, and Golden Triangle). While he had a very distinguished career (52 years) with the company, he always missed his coaching years and wondered what might have happened if he had remained in the field.

While his coaching career was short lived in St. James he never forgot the relationships he built. He remained "Coach" to his players until the very end. Jack influenced many students in coaching and employees at State Farm. He took pride in helping several individuals obtain employment from State Farm. He had a reputation for nicknaming everyone he coached and worked with in the insurance industry. His nicknames were occasionally not too politically correct, but they were deeply loved and cherished by those receiving them. He even had nicknames for the nursing staff at the Missouri Veterans Home where he resided for the last eight months.

Jack loved teaching Sunday School for the Boys Town boys at the First Baptist Church where he and LaWanda were members for many years. He had a knack for encouraging others. He always wanted to help young people and felt a tremendous responsibility to influence them in a positive way.

Jack's most cherished relationship was with his family – his wife, LaWanda of sixty-three years and his two children, Bill and Patti and his sister, Sue and other extended family members. He was immensely proud of them even though he sometimes had difficulty expressing his love, as did many men of his generation. His smile, laughter and zest for life was contagious. He will be dearly missed by his children and other family members. He always appreciated the people of St. James welcoming his family and supporting them in his coaching and business career.

Jack is survived by his daughter, Patti Smoot, of Chesterfield, MO; son, Bill Smoot and wife Brenda, of St. James, MO; sister, Sue Johnson and husband Jim, of Fort Smith, AR; a host of extended family and many friends. In addition to his parents, Allen and Ellen Smoot, Jack was preceded in death by his

beloved wife LaWanda Smoot in 2017; twin brother, Robert Gene Smoot in 1999.

Graveside services for Jack will be held on Friday, June 3, 2022 at 1:00 PM at the Howell Memorial Park Cemetery in Pomona, MO officiated by his sister, Sue Johnson. Serving as pallbearers will be Bill Smoot, John Barry, Robert Tessaro, Wilson Hughes, Greg Emory, Leon Conway, Duane Steen, Chet Saladin, Woodie Mosher, Dennis Wilson, Guy Warnecke, Harold Hughes, Harold Burton, Jim White, Tim Vogel, Carl Roark, Jim Huss, Velmer Hancock, Dale Chilton, and Scott Gahr.

A visitation for family and friends will be held on Thursday, June 2, 2022 at the St. James Chapel of the James & Gahr Mortuary from 5-7PM. Memorials are suggested and greatly appreciated to the St. James Church of God. Cards are available at all James & Gahr locations. For online condolences and to view the Life Tribute video please visit www.jamesgahrmortuary.com

Cemetery Details

Howell Memorial Park

5604 US Highway 63
Pomona, MO 65789

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 2. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

James & Gahr Mortuary - St. James
117 Seymour St.
St. James, MO 65559
(573) 265-3232
dcjames@fidnet.com
<https://www.jamesgahrmortuary.com/>

Graveside Service

JUN 3. 1:00 PM (CT)

Howell Memorial Park
5604 US Highway 63
Pomona, MO 65789

Tribute Wall



“ James & Gahr Mortuary created a Tribute Video in memory of Marvin "Jack" Smoot



James & Gahr Mortuary - May 31, 2022 at 12:42 PM



“ I usta come in a gym where Mr Smoot was officiating a basketball game & he'd flip me off in front of everyone, he was so kewL. Love u Patti & Bill - craig

Craig james(c j) - July 30, 2023 at 12:37 PM



“ Marvin "Jack" Smoot

January 30, 2023 at 04:37 AM



“ Marvin "Jack" Smoot

January 30, 2023 at 02:54 AM



“ *Rosemary Vines lit a candle in memory of Marvin "Jack" Smoot*



Rosemary Vines - June 09, 2022 at 10:12 PM



“ *Bill, Patty, and family. I am so sad for us here that Jack is no longer with us but revived in the knowledge that he and LaWanda are together again and never to be apart. I have so many memories of Jack. I got a few stern, fatherly scoldings in the office there about my driving! But Jack always knew where the well placed humor should be! I'm sure when I was not around he told my dad to take it easy on me, knowing he likely did much the same. It wasn't long ago, I saw Jack out with Patty and we got to chat a bit. Jack reached out, put his hand on my shoulder and said "hey, I love ya kid"! He may have been a twin, but there was only one "Jack" and I sure loved him for that. Y'all are in our thoughts and prayers. I pray God grant his grace on you to help you with your grief, consoling you with the promise kept of life everlasting. I will miss you Jack.*

Darin Boggs - June 02, 2022 at 04:41 PM



“ *Basket Full of Wishes was purchased for the family of Marvin "Jack" Smoot.*



June 02, 2022 at 12:08 PM

MF

“ *Mary Lou James and The Williams family purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Marvin "Jack" Smoot.*



Mary Lou James and The Williams family - June 02, 2022 at 09:57 AM

JD

“ *Dear Patty and Bill, I am so very sorry for this loss in your life. My boys loved it when Jack and Stan got together and told stories about their freshman year of college and playing basketball. They did have fun together, and a long friendship.*
Sincerely, Joyce Darr

Joyce Darr - June 02, 2022 at 01:25 AM

JB

“ Coach Jack Smoot . . . a gem of a man who entered my life and the lives of the Class of '63 as Juniors and probably wondered as he walked through the halls of the school what kind of a hand he had been dealt. Before his time at St. James, as Freshmen and Sophomores, the Tigers were Terrible. Yet two years later he had changed the school's Win-Loss record but more importantly its basketball culture. After two years "Coach" transitioned his whistle and lineup card featuring Chet, Leon, Robert, Dennis ,Wilson, Greg, Carl and others for a clipboard and an insurance application. But in that short period of time, when kids desperately need someone to show an interest, to challenge them, he did just that. He touched so many lives; mine among them for sure I think of him quite often as he had such a way about him. This is a bit tongue in cheek but, I can still recall his gentle, encouraging voice ring out to "try work harder, to do better". It came out something like this in is booming voice..."BARRY, HIT THE BOARDS". He was a wonderful influence in my life and for that I am most grateful. I had great respect for him growing up but his influence on my life will last my lifetime. Love you, Coach Smoot. You were truly a gem.
John Barry

John Barry - June 01, 2022 at 08:23 PM

HC

“ Jack was a wonderful guy and a good friend. It was a great honor to care for him at the Veterans Home. He will be missed. RIP my friend.

Hank Chatman - June 01, 2022 at 04:20 PM

KD

“ After watching the powerful video and reading the beautiful obituary, I feel honored to have met Jack for a few brief moments when I was visiting my own father at the Veterans home. He was surely loved and adored. Sending so much love to his amazing daughter Patti and the rest of his family.

Kim Duncan - June 01, 2022 at 03:12 PM

CS

“ No words can describe the loss of a family member. What eases the pain is. Knowing Jack is no longer in pain. He will be missed but not forgotten.

Letting him go with a smile in your heart. Is

brought on by knowing one day you will see him again & sitting next to him in the present of the lord.

For now let the healing of your loss begin by all the memories you and other's have of him, by sharing your thought and memories and the celebration of his life.

Chet & Donna Saladin



Chet Saladin - June 01, 2022 at 10:07 AM

MH

“ Jack Smoot....

A great family man and father.

His successes in basketball coaching and his "famous" basketball refereeing style was well known throughout mid Missouri.

Jack was the "master" of "pinning" nicknames to all State Farm agents, claims reps, underwriters, and even the S.F. management ranks.

As a State Farm agent, he was a very successful agent and took extra pride in taking good care of his employee Barb, as well as as of his policyholders.

When visiting Jack's office.....you never knew what to expect, but you would always come away with "Wow, what an experience"!

Jack was well respected for his involvement with his Sunday school teaching and his Christian beliefs.

What a story of life Jack left to all of us. We wish comfort for the Smoot family

Mike and Judy Heitman

Mike Heitman - May 31, 2022 at 01:30 PM

DE

I was fortunate to know Jack and his family while working at State Farm in Missouri in the 80s. Jack and LeWanda were always kind and I remain a friend of daughter Patti that loved her parents deeply. Best wishes to the family. In remembrance of a life that touched many. David Emery

David Emery - June 01, 2022 at 06:29 PM

SH

“ Stephanie Reese MO Vets Home purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Marvin "Jack" Smoot.



Stephanie Reese MO Vets Home - May 31, 2022 at 09:17 AM

“ Just want the people of St. James to know how I feel about Jack. I had already graduated high school before Jack and family came to St. James. First time I saw Jack was when he came to St. James to interview for the head basketball position at the High School. Couple of years later, and for some unknown reason to me, he convinced the coach at Southwest Baptist College that he should consider me to play BB there. I was shocked that the Coach at SWBC might get interested in me, but Jack sold him on talking to me and having a visit to the school before Christmas time was over. Jack was a friend much like a father to me over the next 60 years.

Jumping further, during the Christmas holiday season of 1966, Jack called me at home see how things were going during my senior year. After a few exchanges, he asked me if I was to be at home the next day. I said yes as I still had 2 more days before heading back to SWBC to finish out my senior year. Jack quickly said that I needed to be in Columbia at 8:00am the next morning at the State Farm Insurance Regional office there.

I spent the entire day there before heading back to St. James with a position in their region of Missouri and Kansas upon graduation. That stunned me, but it also made my Senior year much less stressful. That start of a job with a large Insurance company was the start of a career which lasted 37 years and 7 moves before retiring.

I am not bragging of the things Jack has done for me then and in his retirement. I have always been impressed with Jack and his drive to succeed, but also have a desire to help others. Life has ups and downs, but when someone does things like Jack has done for me me, it is easy to think how FORTUNATE you are to have friends like him. WILL MISS YOU ALWAYS JACK

Harold Burton - May 30, 2022 at 11:58 PM

SR

“ I had the pleasure of helping take care of Jack these past few months. He was a wonderful gentlemen and I'm so thankful that I got to be a small part of his life. His sense of humor and our talks will always bring a smile to my face. My thoughts and prayers are with his family during this difficult time. Rest in peace, Jack. You will be missed.

Stephanie Reese

Stephanie Reese - May 30, 2022 at 11:35 AM

TM

Jack was a great guy. Always enjoyed spending time talking with him. His family is in our prayers in this difficult time.

Tom Mounce - May 30, 2022 at 12:56 PM

MC

I played two seasons for West Plains when Coach Smoot was the assistant coach, and was also in his Social Studies class in school. He was a good coach...never got too excited or over critical...always even tempered, but also loved a good joke and had a great sense of humor. Everybody loved him because, yes, he was an adult and we were a bunch of crazy kids, but he never seemed to care much about the dividing line between us. He was a friend when you needed him to be, but otherwise wasn't always trying to change or preach at you. The truth is, and I can see this now, he was still a kid too, inside. I didn't see him again after I graduated, but feel sure he would've recognized me many years later if our paths had crossed. His nickname for me was Goose. Well done, old friend, and rest in peace. Maybe we'll see each other again in the great beyond.

Michael Cochran - June 01, 2022 at 05:02 PM

JL

Jack and Gene were friends of our family. They were great teachers and Ellen was a wonderful , beautiful woman.

Jeannie Baty Layman - June 01, 2022 at 08:04 PM



“ *With Distinction* was purchased for the family of Marvin "Jack" Smoot.



May 30, 2022 at 11:06 AM