

Dr. Joseph Raymond Morton, Jr, Ed.D

Dr. Joseph Raymond Morton Jr, Ed.D, passed from this world on Saturday, April 17th at St Francis – Bartlett hospital after a short illness. He was 87.

“A thoughtful speaker...and expert mathematician...a witty conversationalist...a concerned educator...a fan of bird hunting...a capable administrator...and active sports coach...and now, an (Ed. D).” This quote from a newspaper article written by Mary Baltz, published on May 30, 1979, sums it up pretty well.

Joe was born to Joseph Raymond Morton, Sr and Dorothy Rich Morton on August 2, 1933 in Memphis, TN and raised in Moscow, TN. After graduating from Fayette County High School in 1951, Joe earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics from Memphis State, Master’s degrees in Educational Administration & Supervision (Memphis State) and Math & Physics (Ole Miss), and an Educational Doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction. A U.S. veteran, Joe faithfully served his country in Germany as a member of the Army’s 1st Infantry Division.

Joe’s illustrious education career included teaching stints in Cabool, MO and Canton, MS before moving to Germantown High School (M.C. Williams HS, at the time) in 1963 and beginning his 36 years of service in the Shelby County Schools (SCS) system. Joe taught at Germantown for 5 years (voted Most Popular teacher by the students), before being selected to serve as the county’s Supervisor of Math Instruction in 1967. In 1972, he became principal at Millington Central High School where he skillfully guided the Trojan legion for 15 years. He then served as SCS’s Supervisor of Testing and Director of Research & Planning for 10 years and Assistant Superintendent-Operations Division for 2 years before retiring in 1999. During this time, he was active in Millington’s Optimist and Rotary Clubs.

In retirement, Joe and Jeanne moved to the Davies’ Plantation area in Bartlett where they lived before becoming beloved members of the Robinwood Retirement community in 2014.

Joe loved sports – participating, coaching, spectating. Basketball was probably his favorite and he played at Fayette County High School and on his Army brigade’s team. He was the head basketball coach and an assistant football coach for several years at Cabool High School (MO) and continued coaching football for his two years at Canton High School (MS) before switching his focus to school administration. He also was an avid quail hunter which he did in Fayette County (TN) from the time he was a youth and the family looked forward to the annual quail dinner at his parents’ home each winter. In the late 1960’s, he helped establish the first youth baseball program in Germantown and built the Germantown Blues and Germantown Dodgers “dynasties” which he led to numerous league and county championships. After moving his family to Millington, he took over the floundering Pirates “franchise” and led them to a league championship. After retirement, he was an annual participant in the local and state Senior Olympic Games



winning numerous medals in track & field, badminton, and table tennis although he could never quite match Jeanne’s exorbitant medal counts. Joe and Jeanne were longtime supporters of Memphis (State) Tiger athletics, faithfully attending every football, men’s basketball, and women’s basketball home game for decades and often traveling to away contests, bowl games and tournament games. One of his highlights was going to NYC for the Tigers’ NIT Championship in 2002 and setting Naomi Judd straight when she mistakenly took him for a blue-jacketed Kentucky Wildcat fan while walking down Broadway. We are quite pleased that Memphis football and men’s basketball each won their final games in their most recent seasons to send him off with a smile on his face.

Joe loved to breakout his guitar at family gatherings for a “hootenanny” and entertain with songs by Hank Williams (Sr), Johnny Cash, and others – in retrospect, he was actually quite good and he could also play a little piano. Friends and family looked forward to his Christmas letters in which he humorously conveyed the significant (and insignificant) personal events of the past year. In his fifties, he obtained a pilot’s license and purchased a Beechcraft Musketeer (N4015T) which he deftly piloted out of Charles W Baker Airport for a number of years. Joe was an enthusiastic participant in the square-dancing scene during much of the 90’s which he enjoyed doing with Jeanne, and his sister Jan and brother-in-law James (Walter).

Joe was preceded in death by his parents and sister Janice and her husband James Walter Dacus. He is survived by his loving wife, Jeanne Hockett Morton; adoring children Joe Ray (wife Laura Jean), Allyson (husband Jeff Rast); three beloved grandchildren Ellie Robinson, Rhyann Elise Wilson, and Jared Morton; other extended family members include Dottie Northam (niece), Murray Dacus (nephew), Sheldon Dacus (nephew), Nell Seymour (aunt), Dan Seymour (cousin), Al Lowery (cousin) Donna Johnston (sister-in-law), Eugenia Hockett (sister-in-law), Steven Johnston (nephew), and Kim Jones (niece).

Joe was a lifelong member of the United Methodist Church and was a member of the Moscow, Germantown, and Millington congregations during his lifetime.

Joe had a profoundly positive impact on the thousands of students, players, and adults that he encountered during his life and the world is a better place for him having been a part of it.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his honor to churchhealth.org, Le Bonheur Children’s Hospital, or the University of Memphis athletic department.

A memorial service will be held at 2pm on Thursday, April 22 at Memphis Funeral Home and Memorial Gardens, located at 3700 North Germantown Parkway. The service will be preceded by a Visitation at 1pm. The family asks attendees to wear a mask and practice social distancing to enhance the safety of all.

The family would like to thank Dr. Robert Krause for providing Joe with excellent medical care for many years and the folks at Crossroads for wonderful care and support during his final days.