



John J. Roach

SEPTEMBER 2, 1929 ~ FEBRUARY 24, 2018 (AGE 88)

OBITUARY

SERVICE DETAILS

TRIBUTE WALL

FLOWERS & GIFTS

Madison –

John James Roach died on Saturday evening, February 24, 2018. John was born to John Wiley Roach and Margaret McCann Roach on Sept. 2, 1929, in Appleton, Wisconsin. When John was in fifth grade, the family moved to Madison, Wisconsin, where he attended Blessed Sacrament Grade School and Edgewood High School. He would recall that when the family arrived in Madison they were still delivering milk by horse and cart.

John was a fine athlete at Edgewood and played on the great Earl Wilke undefeated football teams of the mid-forties. He was also an all-state basketball player for the Crusaders and helped start the school's baseball program.

John attended UW-Madison and studied kinesiology while playing baseball for the Badgers and in the famous Madison Industrial League at Breese Stevens Field. As an Industrial League All-Star, John batted against the great Satchel Paige when he toured Madison with the Kansas City Monarchs.

While at Edgewood, John met Mary Gene Heller. They were King and Queen of the 1946 Edgewood Prom and were married in 1952.

After graduation from the UW and marriage, Roach was signed to a minor league contract by the Boston Braves and played for the Appleton Papermakers. He was leading the team in hitting but was cut when they were due to give him a bonus. John would often say he would still be playing if he could hit the curve ball. Roach returned to Madison where he coached football, basketball and baseball under Earl Wilke at Edgewood High School. He also worked part time at Badger Sporting Goods sweeping floors.

John eventually joined Badger Sports full time and three decades later became its president. He worked with coaches, teachers, principals and superintendents throughout Wisconsin, providing athletic equipment and counsel for nearly every high school in the state.

John was a member of the Madison Baseball Hall of Fame, the Edgewood High School Sports Hall of Fame, and was a recipient of the Dominican Mazzuchelli Award for Service to Education.

John is survived by his children, John (Diane), Robert (Julie), Mary Beth Drabik, Susan Cates, Daniel "Horton" (Carol) and James (Heather); grandchildren Katie, Maggie and John Thomas; Mollie (Chris) Harrington and Sean; Daniel and Maura; Nicholas; Jessica (Brian) Ripp, Stacie (Kyle) Brabender and Emily (Adam) Triebold; Angie and Will; great-grandchildren Amelia, Dean and Joel; Abigail and Owen; and special friend Edith Dobrinski.

Preceding John in death were his wife Mary Gene, his parents John and Margaret, his brothers Bobby and Patrick, his sister Ellen, and his son-in-law Gary Drabik.

A visitation to honor John Roach's life will be held from 4-7 p.m. on Thursday, March 1, at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church, 602 Everglade Drive, Madison. A Mass of Christian Burial for John will be held at 11 a.m. Friday, March 2, at St. Thomas Aquinas, with Father Bart Timmerman officiating, with an additional visitation from 10 a.m. until the time of Mass. Burial will follow at Resurrection Catholic Cemetery.

The family of John Roach requests that any donations in his name be made to Edgewood High School of the Sacred Heart.

John was a generous father and friend.

To view and sign this guestbook, please visit: www.ryanfuneralservice.com.