

In Memoriam

Sam McReynolds

Sam McReynolds, Starkville, Miss., 77, passed away March 3, 2019, at the Martha Jo Leslie State Veterans Home in Kosciusko, Miss., after an extended battle with Parkinson's disease.

He was born in Starkville on June 1, 1941, son of James Marion McReynolds and Mary Pauline Swan McReynolds. He graduated from Starkville High School in 1959, where he beat a longstanding track record for the mile run.

McReynolds earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Mississippi State University in 1963 and a master's degree of business administration from the college three years later. He was a member of Sigma Chi fraternity.

His greatest life achievement was capturing the heart of Frances Coburn, whom he married in 1967.

He was a member of the American Jersey Cattle Association and enjoyed friendship with Jersey breeders across the country.

McReynolds worked for Mississippi Chemical Corporation in Yazoo City until the family moved to Starkville in 1979. He was co-owner and manager of Farm Services Inc. and ended his real estate career with Coldwell Banker S.R.E. Realtors.

His later years were spent in Charlotte, N.C., and Kosciusko.

He was a founding member and ruling elder of Grace Presbyterian Church.

Sam will be best remembered for his love for people of all ages and interests. He gave freely of his time and talents, with much of his life spent coaching his kids, grandkids and every other youth wanting to play ball. He was the ultimate host, always welcoming friends and strangers alike to his home, church and Left Field Lounge (centerfield rig). He loved dancing, singing Broadway show tunes and cheating at cards, just to see if he would get caught.

McReynolds is survived by a daughter, Pauline (Polly) McReynolds (Bob) Stone, Charlotte, N.C.; a son, Frank Sage McReynolds, Ocean Springs, Miss.; three brothers, James Marion (Gwen) McReynolds Jr., John Thomas (Kay) McReynolds and Charles Fletcher (Betty) McReynolds; two grandchildren; and nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his wife, parents and sister, Sarah Felicia McReynolds.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorials be made in his name to either Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS),

5422 Clinton Blvd., Jackson, MS 39209 (www.rts.edu) or Veterans Outreach of Kosciusko, P.O. Box 172, Kosciusko, MS 39090 (veteransoutreachofms@gmail.com).

John Robert Rankin

John Robert Rankin, Faunsdale, Ala., 95, passed away April 5, 2019.

He was born October 7, 1923, in Catherine, Ala., the third of five children born to the late Amzi Godden Rankin Sr. and Susie Legg Rankin. Later, his family lived at Springlake Farms near Birmingham, Ala. and Jemison Farms at Alfalfa, near Demopolis, Ala.

John's strong drive showed early in life as he survived infant colitis and then malaria. He was a Boy Scout and despite a polio epidemic and the Great Depression, traveled by train to Washington D.C. for the Boy Scout's Jamboree. He attended elementary and high school in Demopolis, where he played on the high school football team.

In 1939, his father purchased the property that became Cedarcrest Farms, in Faunsdale. When his two brothers enlisted for military service in WWII, the local draft board was petitioned that John Robert remain at home to run the operation. He attended Alabama Polytechnic Institute (later Auburn University), though his college education was shortened by the war and work at Cedarcrest. With his father, one employee and his pre-teen brother, he pulled the farm through the rationing and limited resources of WWII.

When his brothers returned from military service, together they built a herd of "Registered Jerseys of the Finest Kind" and a large farm operation to support it. Later sons, nephews, nieces and a host of dedicated employees joined in decades of work.

With his brothers, he showed Cedarcrest Jerseys on the national show circuits and Canada and became internationally known for genetics that have shaped the Jersey cow of today. In 1980, the Rankins received the AJCC Master Breeder Award as Mrs. A.G. Rankin and Sons.

In addition to keeping dairyman's hours for more than 90 years, he mentored young people in Marengo County 4-H. He was a lifetime member of the Presbyterian Church. He served the Faunsdale church as deacon and then ruling elder.

Rankin was a director for Dairyman Incorporated, sat on the board of Alabama Farmers Federation and belonged to the Alabama Cattleman's Association.

His circle of friends was far-reaching. He had long been called Ironman by many at Cedarcrest and in his years of difficult

health, high toughness only grew. He was driven to keep to a strict schedule of activity despite infirmities. He loved surveying crops, land and cattle to see "what's going on" from his work pickup.

He was dedicated to exercising at Fyzical and Brian Whitfield Memorial Hospital Wellness Center in Demopolis, where he made and inspired many friends.

He is survived by brother William Dickason (Doris Strobel) Rankin; five children, Kay Rankin Beckett, John Patrick (Erin) Rankin, Ann Rankin (Ray) Price, Mary Rankin (Bob) Jackson, and James Robert (Amy) Rankin; 20 grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by siblings Amzi Godden Rankin Jr., Rebecca Rankin Sherling and Joe Lipsey Rankin.

Memorials may be made to your favorite charity or his, Palmer Home for Children, P.O. Box 746, Columbus, MS 39703 (662/328-5704; palmerhome.org).