



# Joseph Leon "Joe" Hardesty

## February 26, 2018

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JOSEPH LEON "JOE" HARDESTY, 63, beloved father and husband, passed away suddenly on February 26, 2018.

He was born on August 2, 1954, in Lafayette, Indiana, to Elizabeth Craven Hardesty and Leon Howard Hardesty. He grew up and attended high school in Frankfort, Indiana, after which he attended the United States Military Academy at West Point, where he obtained a Bachelor's of Science in Engineering in 1976. He retired from the military in 1999, having served five active duty years as a Field Artillery officer in the U.S. Army and fifteen years in the U.S. Army Reserve. He spent three years with the Eighth Infantry Division at the U.S. Army Garrison in Baumholder, Germany, during the Cold War.

He attended law school at the Louis D. Brandeis School of Law at the University of Louisville, where he served as the Executive Editor of the Law Review and met the love of his life and future wife, Julie Kathryn Lott. He graduated from law school in 1984.

Upon graduation, Joe began his career as an attorney at the law firm of Middleton-Reutlinger, after which he served as in-house counsel at BellSouth Corporation. He went on to become a partner at the law firm of Stites & Harbison in Louisville, where he worked until his passing. During his time at Stites, he focused his practice on construction and business disputes, represented the Construction Manager on legal disputes arising from the construction of the KFC Yum! Center, and was recognized as one of the top construction lawyers in the U.S.

In addition to his successful career as an attorney, Joe worked hard to improve and develop the Jefferson County Public School system. He served on the Jefferson County Board of Education from 1990-2012 and was Chairman of the Board in 1997, 1998, and 2004-2008. The Kentucky School Boards Association named him Outstanding School Board Member of the Year in 2008. As a decades-long resident of southwest Jefferson County, Joe placed particular emphasis on improving the schools in southwest Louisville to ensure children in that area had access to high-quality education.

He remained dedicated to public service even after his time on the school board, and in 2013, Governor Steve Beshear appointed him to serve as Trustee on the Kentucky Retirement System Board of Trustees. He also served on a number of other boards during his career, including on the Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America, the Lincoln Heritage Council, and the Jefferson County Public Education Foundation.

Joe was devoted to and had great love for his family. He enjoyed spending time with them, their dogs, and extended family at their lake house where he would water-ski, boat, and serve as the designated firework-lighter each Fourth of July. Joe loved sitting on the dock fishing with his kids and dogs, and watching the sunset from the boat.

He strived to make every holiday memorable and would wear an enormous smile each Christmas morning as he sat around the Christmas tree with his family. He loved telling stories around the dinner table and took pride in teaching his children, nieces, and nephews how to water and snow ski.

Joe was full of life, love, and kindness, and he was never short on a joke or perfectly timed comic relief. As much as he was a comedian and storyteller, he was also a quiet yet stabilizing force.

He was an avid runner who ran marathons, including the Marine Corps Marathon. At the time of his passing, Joe was helping his daughter train to run the Kentucky Derby Mini Marathon. He was a dedicated Army Black Knights and Kentucky Wildcats fan.

Joe was also a fervent traveler and cherished the trips he took with his family throughout the United States and the world. Along with his passion for travel came his passion for history and in particular, American history. He loved historical novels, especially biographies, and was fascinated by the life stories of many of America's most influential figures.

He shared a long, happy marriage with Julie, who he adored. They enjoyed taking their dogs for walks in the evenings, discussing current events and politics, and attending their children's sporting events. In particular, he loved attending John's high school football games, Josh's swim meets, and Kathryn's field hockey games. He also loved traveling with Julie to Kathryn's Centre College field hockey games at colleges around the eastern and Midwestern United States, and was sure to sample the local craft beer in each new city.

Anyone who knew Joe would agree he was the voice of calm and comfort, humble, a true gentleman, and a class act. He left a real and lasting impact on his community and those he encountered which will persist long beyond his time. He was a genuinely good person, and he was the best husband and father in the world. All who knew him loved him and he will be deeply missed.

Preceding him in death were his parents, Leon Hardesty, Esq. and Elizabeth Craven Hardesty

Bricker, and stepfather, Herbert Bricker.

Survivors include his beloved wife of 33 years, Julie Lott Hardesty; children, John Hardesty (Jessica), Josh Hardesty, and Kathryn Hardesty, who were all by his side when he passed; sister, Priscilla Holder (Perry); Julie's sisters, Carmen Miller (Charles), Sue Holton (David), Rebecca Aldred (Bill), and Nancy Guida; and many nieces, nephews, and friends.

Funeral services will be 11 a.m. Saturday at St. Andrew Episcopal Church, 2233 Woodbourne Avenue with burial in Calvary Cemetery immediately following.

Visitation will be from 12 – 8 p.m. Friday at Owen Funeral Home, 5317 Dixie Highway 40216.

In lieu of flowers, expressions of sympathy may be made to the Legal Aid Society of Louisville or the Kentucky Humane Society.

Owen Funeral Home  
5317 Dixie Highway  
Louisville, KY 40216  
502-447-2600  
<http://www.owenfuneralhome.com/>