



John W. Donaldson

October 13, 1926 - April 26, 2015

John W. Donaldson, 88, passed away peacefully, surrounded by family, after a yearlong battle with cancer on Sunday, April 26, 2015. John was born October 13, 1926 to Fred and Esther (Coombs) Donaldson. John graduated from Lebanon High School in 1944 where he was freshman class president, finished 2nd in his class, was the first recipient of the Neumann-Messick Award, and played with the 1943 State Championship Finalist Basketball team. He then enlisted in the Navy V-5 Flight Program just after turning 17. He was assigned to DePauw University for pre-flight training in 1944, then to Norman Field, OK and the U.S. Naval Academy of Annapolis. In the middle of his 3rd year his military career was cut short when he was diagnosed with tuberculosis. He went back to DePauw to finish his A.B. degree in 1951. John went on to attend the Indiana University School of Law at Bloomington. When he was visiting his father in the hospital, he met the beautiful young nurse, Sara Rudolph, his future wife of 61 years. They began dating in the summer of 1953 and were married shortly after in the fall. They built their life in Lebanon with three children and countless lifelong contributions to the community. John began his law career of 50 years with an office in the downtown square of Lebanon. He practiced with several attorneys, including Michael Andreoli and David Truitt.

He was first elected as a State Representative in 1956 and served 17 terms in the House of Representatives. At the time he voluntarily retired, he had served in more sessions of the general assembly than anyone in the history of

the state of Indiana and is the only State Representative to serve in 5 decades of the General Assembly. As a State Representative, he worked tirelessly as the sponsor of many pieces of Legislation including No Fault Divorce and the first No Smoking Bill. He was also 6 times a delegate to the Republican State Convention, a member of the Supreme Court Committee on Character and Fitness, a Senior Member of General Assembly and Dean of the House for 20 years, and served as president of the Boone United Fund For You (BUFFY). After retirement, John and Sara moved to Zionsville where he worked 10 years as a driver for Boone County Senior Service. He was a lifelong member of the First Presbyterian Church of Lebanon where he was an elder, deacon, and sang in the choir. John was a diehard IU basketball and football fan and was known for his IU red jacket. He held season tickets for years and was at every major playoff and championship game.

John is survived by his loving wife Sara, daughters Carmen Donaldson and Cathy Donaldson-Kelly (Dan) of Indianapolis and son Brad (Tina) of Seattle, WA. He is also survived by 9 grandchildren Bill, Kendra, and Sara Yanney, Maryanne Streer, Megan Skidmore (Jason), Josh Buckallew (Sara), Taylor Buckallew, Patrick Buckalew (Megan), and Michelle Buckallew, along with 5 great grandchildren, his brother George Donaldson and numerous nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents and brother, Frank Donaldson.

Visitation will be held from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m., on Friday, May 1, 2015, at Myers Mortuary, 1502 North Lebanon Street, in Lebanon, Indiana

Funeral Services are planned for Saturday, May 2, 2015, at 10:00 a.m., at the First Presbyterian Church, 128 East Main, in Lebanon, Indiana with, Rev. Terri Thorn, officiating.

Interment will follow services at Oak Hill Cemetery in Lebanon, Indiana.

Memorials may be made in his honor to the First Presbyterian Church, 128 East Main Street, Lebanon, Indiana 46052.

Cemetery Details

Oak Hill Cemetery

935 East Washington Street
Lebanon, IN 46052

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 1. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Myers Mortuary
1502 North Lebanon Street
Lebanon, IN 46052
(765) 482-0620
office@myersmortuary.com
<https://myersmortuary.com/>

Service

MAY 2. 10:00 AM (ET)

First Presbyterian Church
128 East Main Street
Lebanon, IN 46052

Tribute Wall



“ *Myers Mortuary created a Tribute Video in memory of John W. Donaldson*



Myers Mortuary - April 29, 2015 at 02:54 PM



“ *John W. Donaldson*

November 27, 2022 at 01:43 PM



“ *Mrs Donaldson & Family, John is the model for the Citizen Legislator in our Nation. It was my high honor to serve with him, a true reformer & Code Maker.
Sincerely, Phil Hayes, State Senator 1971-74; U.S. Rep. 1975-77
(Dem Evansville)*

Phil Hayes - May 01, 2015 at 04:57 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of John W. Donaldson.*



May 01, 2015 at 04:55 PM

JM

“ Sara and Family,
I was saddened to see that John Donaldson is no longer with us.
His spirit will live forever. He will not be forgotten.
He was one of the giants in the Legislature and was the epitome of
what a lawmaker should be like. We need him today. Plus he was a
very good tennis player and a fun competitor. A true gentleman. I
will miss him.
My thoughts are with you.
Jim Maguire, Indianapolis

Jim Maguire - April 30, 2015 at 10:00 AM

DD

“ Sorry to read of John's death. I have many short but good memories
with the Donaldson family in the 50's.

Donnagene Neal Dougherty Fresno, CA

Donnagene Neal Dougherty - April 30, 2015 at 03:05 AM

MR

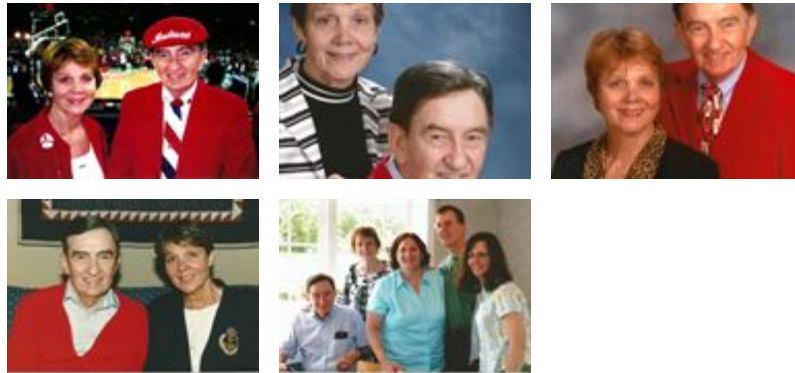
“ John will be missed in this community! He has done so much for
Lebanon AND Indiana that he will be remembered for years to
come.

Molly Riggs

Molly Riggs - April 29, 2015 at 03:10 PM



“ 30 files added to the album Life Tributes



Myers Mortuary - April 29, 2015 at 01:27 PM

EZ

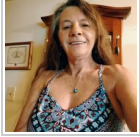
“ Catherine, I did not know your dad but as sweet as you are, your dad and mom must have been awesome role models. So sad you have lost his presence for now. But you will be joined with him again and we can Praise the Lord for that!!! Hugs to all your family.

Elen (Rork) Zook - April 29, 2015 at 10:19 AM

BD

“ Dear Aunt Sara and cousins Carmen, Kathy and Brad: I am so sorry for the loss of Uncle John. I owe part of my legal career to him because he helped me get into law school through his relationship with then IU president John Ryan, and I will always be grateful for how he helped me. My colleagues at Barnes & Thornburg who worked with John in the State legislature have been paying great tribute to him in notes they have sent to me. I pray for your comfort and peace during this time. With love, Bruce

Bruce Donaldson - April 29, 2015 at 09:02 AM



“ *Kathy~~~ So sorry you lost your father! He was an extraordinary gentleman!*

Karrin Spencer - April 29, 2015 at 03:32 AM



Howard
Booth

“ *Sara and Family,*

Please accept our sincere condolences. My grandfather, Howard Batman, considered John a dear friend, and I remember John's red jacket, charming demeanor, and wry humor at numerous social events. May your heart be filled with fond memories of John.

With sincere condolences,

Howard, Carla, Sarah, and Leah Booth

Howard Booth - April 28, 2015 at 10:36 PM

MC

“ *My Dear Sara:
My deepest sympathy on your loss. John was a wonderful individual and I feel privileged to have known him.
I will pray for you and your family,
Your classmate,
Marcia Carpenter*

Marcia Carpenter - April 28, 2015 at 05:11 PM

NL

“ Sara:

I was so sad to see that John has passed. He was a great fraternity brother, mentor, friend and fellow struggler for the good of our constituents. The state is a better place because of his service. Please accept my sincerest condolences

Ned Lamkin

Ned Lamkin - April 28, 2015 at 01:03 PM

JM

“ *IT IS HARD TO SAY GOOD BY TO SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN YOUR LIFELONG BEST FRIEND & YOUR SECOND LEGAL CLIENT. BUT, I KNOW YOU WILL BE THERE TO GREET ME WHEN I ARRIVE GO HOOSIERS!!!!*

JIM McCONNAHA

Jim McConnaha - April 28, 2015 at 12:56 PM