



Class of 2023 Inductee Biography John Edward “Jack” McNeil, Jr. (1922-2007)

SUMMARY:

Professional Contributions and Recognitions in the Workplace & Industry:

- Opened McNeil Insurance Agency in the small town of Parkin; expanded into agencies in Earle and Wynne, Arkansas
- Twice-elected President of Independent Insurance Agents of Arkansas
- Independent Insurance Agents of Arkansas - served as a member and chairman of the personal lines, education, advertising and governmental affairs committees
- 1972 Independent Insurance Agents of Arkansas Mr. Chairman Award
- 1983 Independent Insurance Agents of Arkansas Allan Kennedy Memorial Award, the highest honor bestowed on a Big I member.
- 1985 to 1988 Arkansas's representative to the Southern Agents Conference and served as the Chairman of the Mid-American Conference Farm Committee
- Nationally recognized for his knowledge and expertise on farm and agri insurance issues
- 1987 to 1991 Chairman of the Independent Insurance Agents of America Small Town and Farm Agent Committee

Community Service & Recognitions:

- Established an endowed scholarship at the U of A Fort Smith to be awarded yearly to graduates of his high school alma mater
- Parkin City Council
- Parkin Housing Authority
- Cross County Library Board
- Wynne Rotary Club member and Paul Harris Fellow
- Crowley Ridge Country Club
- Former member of the Board of Trustees of the Cross County Hospital
- Former Justice of the Peace in Cross County
- First commissioner and P.A. announcer of the Parkin Little League Baseball
- Long-time member of the Parkin First State Bank Board of Directors

FULL BIOGRAPHY:

Born and raised in Fort Smith, following graduation from Fort Smith High School, Jack attended the University of Arkansas. Jack was a proud member of the Fabulous Xi chapter of Kappa Sigma and wore his 65-year pin proudly. Jack was a loyal and ardent supporter of the Hogs all of his life. He was a member of the U of A track team which he noted was way before the team was any good and was a spotter for the football game announcer.

While at the University he met the love of his life, Dot Baker, and they married in 1946 and eventually moved to Dot's home town of Parkin in East Arkansas. They were the parents of two daughters, Cindy and Marsha. Tragically Cindy died of a brain tumor at the age of eleven.

Jack was engaged in farming for eight years and discovered he wasn't any better at farming than he was at track. He then opened McNeil Insurance Agency in the small town of Parkin and soon expanded into agencies in Earle and Wynne, Arkansas.

Jack became involved in the Independent Insurance Agents of Arkansas and served as a member and chairman of the personal lines, education, advertising and governmental affairs committees receiving the Mr. Chairman Award in 1972. He was twice elected President of the IIAA and in 1983 was awarded the Allan Kennedy Memorial Award, the highest honor bestowed on a Big I member.

Jack was Arkansas's representative to the Southern Agents Conference and served as the Chairman of the Mid-American Conference Farm Committee from 1985 to 1988. The Mid-American Conference Committee was the committee that met with the Insurance Services Office (ISO) and representatives of national companies to discuss, set, and make changes to policies regarding farm and rural agencies and policy holders.

Jack was nationally recognized for his knowledge and expertise on farm and agri insurance issues and was the Chairman of the Independent Insurance Agents of America Small Town and Farm Agent Committee from 1987 to 1991.

His civic and community involvement was equally important to Jack as was his contributions to the insurance industry. Jack was a former member of the Parkin City Council, the Parkin Housing Authority, Cross County Library Board, Wynne Rotary Club (a Paul Harris Fellow), Crowley Ridge Country Club, a former member of the Board of Trustees of the Cross County Hospital, and a former Justice of the Peace in Cross County. He was most proud of serving and as the first commissioner and P.A. announcer of the Parkin Little League Baseball program. He was a long-time member of the Parkin First State Bank Board of Directors. Jack was a faithful member of Parkin First Baptist Church where he taught Adult Sunday School for many years. When he had to move to Little Rock for health reasons, he joined and worshipped at Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church.

Jack McNeil retired in 1986 to give his attention to his loving wife Dot who was battling cancer and passed away in 1990. Jack then devoted much of his time to genealogy. As a result of his genealogy research, he compiled two books on his and Dot's family history. He was proud of his Scottish heritage and visited Scotland many times. Once he stayed and worked at The Iona Abbey, one of Scotland's most historic and sacred sites, founded in AD 563. He regularly wore his McNeil tartan sport jacket and on occasion his kilt.

Since Jack grew up in Fort Smith he wanted to give back to his hometown. He established an endowed scholarship at the U of A Fort Smith to be awarded yearly to graduates of his high school alma mater. Until his health prevented it, he attended the annual UAFS Scholarship Appreciation Dinner and was able to meet several of the recipients of his scholarship.

Jack was devoted to his family. He was especially proud of his grandsons, John and Drew Allbritton.