



John Bjorklun

May 12, 1923 - February 25, 2013

John Bjorklun, 86 Shawnee, KS Resident John W. Bjorklun, 86, formerly of Kearney, NE, died February 25, 2013, at Garden Terrace of Overland Park, KS. Funeral services will be Saturday, March 9, at 9:30 a.m. at First Presbyterian Church in Kearney. The Reverend Dr. Stephen J. Price-Gibson will officiate. Interment will be in the Kearney Cemetery. Visitation will be 5-7 p.m., Friday, at O'Brien Straatmann Redinger Funeral Home. Online condolences may be submitted to osrfh.com. Memorials are suggested to the Kearney Public Schools Foundation to establish a Memorial Scholarship to benefit deserving Speech and Debate students. John Willis Bjorklun was born on the family farm near Haxtun, CO, on May 12, 1926. He was the first child of Herman Evald and Irene Violet Marie (Nelson) Bjorklun. John grew up in the Upland, Nebraska area. He attended the Zyba grade school in southern Kearney County and graduated from Minden High School in 1945. Drafted into the army in the middle of his senior year, he was able to graduate with his class by taking classes at Hasting College. He attended the Minden High graduation ceremony while on leave after basic training, and graduated wearing his army uniform, instead of a cap and gown. He entered the U.S. Army on January 17, 1945, and was honorably discharged on November 26, 1946. He served as a Staff Sergeant in the Philippines during World War II and later during the occupation of Japan. On January 26, 1951, he married Phyllis Ann Guider. Three children were born to this union. He graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1951, with a Bachelor of Science degree

in Speech and Theater. He later earned a Master of Arts degree in Speech and Theater from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. John taught for 39 years at Kearney Senior High School beginning in 1951. During his years at KHS he taught English, Drama and Speech and Debate. In addition, he sponsored the Drama Club and National Forensics League (NFL). He is remembered as a caring but demanding teacher and mentor by generations of KHS students, routinely working late into the evenings and on weekends to direct plays and coach the Speech and Debate team at tournaments throughout the state. He was a nationally recognized Speech and Debate coach, receiving numerous honors and awards, including the John Thurber Distinguished Teacher Award and the NFL Outstanding Distinction and Double Diamond awards. His Speech and Debate teams achieved great successes. A number of his students won State and NFL District Championships, qualifying them to participate in the NFL National Speech and Debate Tournament, where they ranked as high as 10th in the nation. He believed that every student could succeed, and was proud of all of his students, many of whom went on to distinguished careers in education, law, entertainment, business and politics. In addition to teaching, John farmed for a number of years in Kearney County and sold insurance and later real estate in the Kearney area. He was active in the community. For many years he directed the community theater. He was also active in Jaycees, the Elks Lodge, the Masons and the First United Presbyterian Church, where he served as a Deacon. His first joy in life was his family, whom he loved dearly. He enjoyed travelling, carpentry work, gardening and building and fixing just about anything. He loved literature, and was an avid follower of politics and current affairs. He is survived by his sons, Douglas John and his wife Lynda, of Overland Park, KS and Stephen Alan and his wife Lori, of Lenexa, KS; his daughter, Kathryn Bjorklun Inman and her husband Steven, of Stilwell, KS; two granddaughters, Madeline and Natalie Bjorklun, of Lenexa, KS; his brother and sister-in-law, Eugene and Mary Margaret Bjorklun, of St. Cloud, MN; his sister-in-law Margaret Guider of Laguna Niguel, CA; three nieces, a nephew and many step-grandchildren. He

was preceded in death by his parents, his children's spouses, Sandra Cavanaugh Bjorklun and Stephen Robinett, and by Phyllis, his beloved wife of 49 years, who died in 2000.

Tribute Wall



“ *John Bjorklun*

January 28, 2023 at 08:01 AM



“ *The Minden newspaper came across my desk this afternoon with John's obituary notice. I wanted to offer my sincerre condolences to all of you. I know how close your family is and I imagine the heartache is deep for a father who gave so much of himself to his family. You may not remember me Kathy, I was a friend of Sandy and Doug's and graduated from high school with Steve. All of you will be in my prayers. Marcia*

Marcia Trompke - August 21, 2013 at 05:58 AM



“ *Steve, Doug & Kathy: I am so sorry to hear about the death of your father. I so dearly loved the company of your Mom & Dad. "Phyl" and I worked at Task Lighting together. I spent time with your folks at their house. May God bring you comfort in this time of sorrow, Prayers for all of you, Karen Burnett*

Karen Burnett - August 21, 2013 at 05:58 AM



“ *I was sad to hear of the passing of John Bjorklun. I was a student of John's debate class and participated in debate tournaments under his direction. He was a stern but fair instructor who attempted to get the best out of everyone of his students no matter what their talents were. I looked up to his example for the course of my professional life. He was greatly respected and will be missed.*

James Wingert DVM - August 21, 2013 at 05:58 AM