

MEMORIALS

**JOHN BLACKBURN SOUTHARD SR.**

May 30, 1915 - February 27, 1984



He was born in Luzerne, Kentucky to Belle Lee Lockett and Volna Blackburn Southard, all of Muhlenberg County. Volna died when his son John was just seven years old. Six years after Volna's death, the country fell into The Great Depression and John's

family fell on hard times. Work was scarce and the stock market plummeted. Parents stood in soup lines to get food for their children. As a boy, John worked any and every job he could find after school including hard farm labor to keep food on the table for his mother, sister, and himself. He hunted to bring in meat. He was elated if he earned \$1 a day. His Uncle Hub moved onto the farm to help with labor. His mother Belle signed the farm over to John and his sister to prevent creditors from taking it.

After high school, John attended the University of Kentucky at the end of the Great Depression. He earned his tuition by waiting tables. He bartered his room & board by helping a widow with odd jobs. He painted, built, and repaired anything she needed. To avoid the expense of purchasing textbooks, he checked needed books out of U of K's King Library. When his books were due back, a friend would return with him to the library and immediately recheck the textbooks out for John. They kept this rotation up his entire four years of college.

After graduating from U of K, John was an agriculture teacher in White Mills, Kentucky at the high school. He interviewed and won a position with the Department of Agriculture Farm Security Program approving federal loans for farmers. When Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, WWII began. With America stepping into the war, John gave up his federal job and enlisted in the U.S. Army. John served in the

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Following their marriage, Dorothy and John moved to Louisville. John secured jobs in sales and PR with both Ballard Feed Company and Pillsbury Feed. When both of these companies closed out their agriculture programs, he worked as a county agriculture agent. In later years, John returned to education. He temporarily taught in Jefferson County Public Schools. When a librarian position opened at the Luther Lockett Correction Center in LaGrange, John took it. He ran the prison library, counseled prisoners, and taught the GED program. John also was the landlord of a duplex on Willow Avenue and owner of a small laundry mat on Baxter Avenue.

John was a loving, caring father and a role model. Always thinking of his family, John was continually building, repairing, or assembling something for the house, his wife, or his children. He kept the dinner table supplied with vegetables from his garden. He worked diligently with the Eastern High School's Band Parents Association to raise money for the music program and served faithfully as a deacon at both Middletown Baptist and Woodlawn Baptist Churches. Holidays were extra special for John and he went all out to decorate the Christmas tree, dye and hide the Easter eggs, and carve the pumpkins. Johnny and Betty loved it when he put them to bed. There was always a story, possibly a quiet game, and always extra snuggles. John has been gone for 31 years and is still sorely missed by his surviving child, Betty Southard Stokes. She lovingly remembers him teaching her to fish, sled, ice skate, ride a bike, and drive a car. John organized numerous camping trips and fishing expeditions. As a victim of Alzheimer's, his loss, and that of his family, has been that he died so early in life's plan that he never really got to know his grandchildren Leslie and Amy Stokes, Will, Rob, and Joe Southard nor his great grandchildren Emma and Olivia Southard. Happy 100th Birthday Daddy!

Think of you most every day! Betty