

Joseph Brown



RANTOUL – Joseph T. Brown, 74, of Rantoul, former Champaign County sheriff, passed away at 7:01 a.m. Monday (Dec. 5, 2011) at Provena Covenant Medical Center, Urbana.

Funeral services will be at 10 a.m. Friday, Dec. 9, at St. Malachy Catholic Church. Father Steven Bird will officiate. Burial will follow at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

Visitation will be from 4 to 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 8, at Lux Memorial Chapel, 1551 E. Grove Ave., Rantoul.

He was born March 20, 1937, in Urbana, son of James and Alta (Head) Brown. He married Sara Mae Hettinger on Jan. 28, 1967, at Holy Cross Catholic Church, Champaign. She survives.

Also surviving are four sons, John (Margaret) Brown of Savoy, Anthony (Beth) Brown of Rantoul, Michael Brown of Gifford and Patrick (Toni) Brown of Mahomet; three brothers, James Brown of Grand Ridge, Gene (Mary Al) Brown of Wauwatosa, Wis., and Phil (Doris) of Henry; two sisters, Ann (Cal) Miller of Sugar Grove and Judy (Max) Franks of Philo; a sister-in-law, Shirley Brown of St. Petersburg, Fla.; and seven grandchildren, Tyler, Ashley, Andrew, Sydney, Justin, Evan and Elena. He was preceded in death by his parents; a brother, Gerald Brown; and a sister, Mary (Brown) McCormick.

Joe was raised on a farm near Penfield and was a 1955 graduate of Rantoul

Township High School. He began his law enforcement career in Rantoul in 1959 as a patrolman. He served in the U.S. Army for two years, before returning to the Rantoul Police Department. In 1965, he started his service with the Champaign County Sheriff's Office as deputy sheriff and later as chief investigator and chief deputy. In 1978, he was elected sheriff of Champaign County. He retired in 1990, after three terms in office. After retiring, he worked for the Illinois Secretary of State for nine years. Since 2003, he served as Champaign County public administrator/guardian.

Interested in his community, he was a village trustee for four years and later mayor of Rantoul from 1997 to 2001. He also served on the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board, the Illinois Lottery Board, and as past president of the Illinois Sheriffs' Association.

Joe was a member of St. Malachy Catholic Church and a fourth-degree knight with the Rantoul Knights of Columbus. He was also a member of the Sons of the American Revolution.

Memorials may be made to St. Malachy School Development Fund, Rantoul, or Catholic Charities, Champaign.



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