



## JW Emerson

September 20, 1930 - January 23, 2022

John William "JW" Emerson was born in Checotah, Oklahoma on Saturday, September 20, 1930, to David Ervin and Della Elizabeth (Fennell) Emerson. JW passed from this life on January 23, 2022, at his home in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, at 91 years of age. JW was the third of six children born to the Emerson's, and their firstborn son. At an early age JW excelled at sports and music, playing on the football, baseball, and basketball teams as well as playing trombone in the high school marching band. During football season, he would play his trombone during halftime in his full football uniform. JW would leave home the day after he graduated high school, hopping a box car and leaving town. He worked odd jobs, including stints on the Alaska pipeline and the railroad. In the summers of 1949 and 1950 JW took a job along side his close friend Eustace Llewellyn in a steel mill for U.S Steel in Pittsburg, California. After graduating Checotah high school at age 17, JW headed west to Utah where he worked as a gandy dancer on the railroad driving spikes into the rails repairing train tracks. JW bunked in a box car alongside an ex-con who had done 16 years in prison for murder. JW said this ex-con mentored him and taught him how to, " visualize " to become who he wanted to be. This was advise JW said he followed throughout his whole life . He said , " I learned in order to make it happen I had to stay positive." JW said much later in life that this lesson he had learned went way back to the Bible , the word of God. At some point JW said the ex-con said," Now get out of here." Heeding this advice, JW began a life altering journey when he decided to

enrolled at Conner State College . A year later, he moved on to Independence Junior College. At the first football practice the coach told him he was too small to play football and refused to check him out a uniform. Displaying the never say never tenacity he used as his philosophy his entire life, JW showed up for the practice anyway and proceeded to practice without a uniform! At the end of that practice the coach finally gave in and told him to go get a uniform. By the first game that season he was the starting quarterback. He finished his college attending Pittsburg State University in Pittsburg, Ks, where along with football he Majored in Physical Education and Minored in Chemistry. JWs passion was to teach. He loved teaching and mentoring others on how to become the best person they could be. This passion led him to become a high school teacher and coach, and later in life an educator on health and wellbeing. He began his teaching journey as a graduate assistant at Pittsburg State in 1953. In 1954, with a vision to take losing programs and build them into winners, JW took the head coaching job at Ava High School in Ava, Missouri, where he compiled a won-loss record of 15-3-1 in 2 years. In 1954 , JWs rookie season as a high school head football coach in Ava, he led the Ava Bears to a 9-1 record the best in school history at that time. After JWs first successful coaching assignment at Ava, JWs college coach , the legendary Carnie Smith from Pittsburg State, wrote JW a letter of congratulations stating , “ You have great things ahead of you in this coaching profession and one of the finest tributes to your coaching this year was the implication that you taught so much more than just football. This will always be one of your strongest points . ” Carnie Smith was right. He then accomplished similar feats at stops at high schools in Lamar, Missouri; Columbus, Ottawa, Kansas; Kansas; Manhattan, Kansas; and Union High School in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He also had a short stint as a college coach at Kansas State University. JW was inducted into both the Pittsburg State University and Tulsa Union high school football Hall of Fames in 2010. Following his coaching career, using his Minor in Chemistry, he began learning about health and wellbeing. He held seminars teaching how the body works and the use of whole foods, herbs, and nutrition

to accomplish peak health. The products JW and his wife Lois felt were the most beneficial were products from Sunrider International, a company founded by Drs Tei-Fu and Oi-lin Chen. He built his Sunrider business into a successful tool used to help many people restore and regain their health. His teachings are still currently available today on YouTube by searching for JW Emerson Sunrider. In 1951 JW met the love of his life, Lois Mardene Viets, daughter of Henry and Martha Viets of Independence KS. Lois first set her eyes upon JW as he was walking across school grounds with his football buddy both having one arm in a sling from football injuries. Lois, an excellent student and a cheerleader at Independence high, had found her dark haired handsome quarterback and it wasn't long before they were spending much time getting to know one another at the Cozy Corner in Independence. After dating for 4 years JW and Lois were married at the Zion Lutheran church and became Mr. and Mrs. JW Emerson on June 6, 1954. Lois has faithfully been by his side for the last 71 years, cheering him on from the stands during games and standing by his side during health seminars. Together they had three children, Jeffrey Wynn, Dianna Kay, and John William, Jr. JW was a family man that loved and cared deeply for his family, often studying film in his basement for football or holding business seminars in his home to be close to them. In lieu of flowers contributions can be made to the JW Emerson Memorial fund set up at (<http://tulsalegendsfoundation.org>) or contact Lisa Norman at the Education Service Center at 918-746-6453 to make a tax deductible contribution. The Legends foundation supports and enhances the Tulsa Public Schools athletic programs through public relations, fundraising and special events. The foundation provides additional support to the student athletes 19 secondary school athletic teams as well as tutorial study hall for middle school students. JW leaves behind his wife, Lois, of their home in Broken Arrow, OK Son Jeff Emerson of Denver, Colorado Daughter Dianna Emerson of Tulsa, OK Son John Emerson, Jr, of Broken Arrow, OK Sister Cleo Thompson of Brentwood, California Brother David Emerson (Ermyne) of

Amarillo, Texas Sister Ann Archer (Terry) of Tulsa, Oklahoma Four  
Grandchildren: Christopher Emerson (Amanda) of Naperville, Illinois Heather  
Emerson-Smith (Zach) of Aviano, Italy Emily Burton (Jamie) of Lone Tree,  
Colorado Kimberly Emerson of Oxnard, California Four Great Grandchildren:  
Keaton and Dylan Emerson (Christopher and Amanda) Naperville, Illinois  
Eiligh and Wynnston Smith (Heather and Zach) of Aviano, Italy He was  
preceeded in death by his parents, sister Frieda, Brother Don, and two  
grandchildren, Jacob and Austin

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

FEB 18. 12:00 PM (CT)

South Tulsa Baptist Church  
10310 S. Sheridan Rd.  
Tulsa, OK 74133

# Tribute Wall



“ JW Emerson

October 23, 2023 at 01:21 AM



“ JW Emerson was such a special human being and I will miss him dearly. He has been a huge inspiration to me and I learned alot from him. He is a passionate teacher, kind and generous to a fault with his time.

*Any time I had a question, I would call him and we spoke for hours always enjoying our exchanges.*

*The Houston Sunrider family had a very special place in his heart and vice versa. JW and Lois's visit to Houston twice/ year was the highlight of the year for us and it was always fun and memorable ! How can I ever forget the eveing following one of our meetings, we went to a Chinese restaurant, and my guest David , jumped up and did a Heimlich Maneuver on JW when he was chocking. Since then, when JW meets me he would always say to me " Faye, you saved my life" even though David was the one who did the heroic act but he was not around for JW to express his gratitude to him directly. Just another way of being thankful to our Heavenly Father.*

*Thank-you JW for the many hearts and lives you have touched. You will not be forgotten!*

*Our thoughts and prayers to Lois and family as everyday gets easier knowing our dear JW is at peace and continues to be well taken care of !*

*Faye DeSilva*

Faye DeSilva - February 17, 2022 at 12:28 AM

KG

“ *To the Emerson Family,*

*J.W. was such a blessing to our family. I will always remember him as a great person who touched many lives as a teacher, coach, and friend. He made a tremendous impact on my late husband's (Bill) career in education and coaching. J.W. greatly influenced me about eating healthy.*

*Please know that our family sends our thoughts and prayers to your family.*

*Kathy, Kelly, and Jeff Greene*

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**Kathy Greene** - February 13, 2022 at 07:55 PM

PK

“ JW AND LOIS ARE SUCH DEAR HEARTS IN OUR HEARTS. WE ALWAYS LOVED BEING WITH THEM AND MADE PLANS TO SHARE TIME WITH THEM AT THE SUNRIDER CONVENTIONS WE ATTENDED AND ANY OTHER CHANCE WE GOT. ONE OF OUR FAVORITE SAYINGS OF JW WAS " ITS BEEN AN INTERESTING JOURNEY" JW ALWAYS HAD SOMETHING POSITIVE TO SAY, EVEN WHEN WE CLOSED THE CAR DOOR ON HIS FINGERS ONE TIME AT A CONVENTION, HE SOMEHOW ESCAPED WITH NO INJURIES AND NEVER HAD A NEGATIVE WORD TO SAY ABOUT IT. JW'S DRY SENSE OF HUMOR COULD SAY MORE IN A FEW WORDS THEN MANY OTHER PEOPLES PARAGRAPHS. WE ALWAYS LOVED HIS STORIES THAT HE TOLD WITH WIT AND CHARM. JW HAD A TEACHING SPIRIT, WHICH HELPED PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD AND LIFTED THEM UP. WE WERE ALWAYS AMAZED AT HOW SUCH TEACHING JUST FLOWED OUT OF JW. WITH JW, YOU ALWAYS KNEW THAT HE HAD "WALKED THE WALK" IT WAS NOT JUST KNOWLEDGE FOR ITS OWN SAKE, OR TO IMPRESS OTHERS, YOU ALWAYS HAD THE SENSE THAT HE HAD LIVED WHAT HE WAS TEACHING. JW LEAVES AN EMPTY SPOT THAT IS RESERVED TO HIM, JW'S UNIQUENESS WILL BE GREATLY MISSED ALL OUR LOVE AND PRAYERS TO OUT TO LOIS AND THEIR FAMILY, YOU ARE IN OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

PETER TOWER AND SARAH KLEIN-TOWER AND FAMILY

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PETER TOWER AND SARAH KLEIN-TOWER - February 02, 2022 at 04:38 PM



“ J. W. had the most impact in my life other than my own family. He was like the big brother I never had. He had the ability to impact everyone he met in a very short time. His memory, actions, and words will not be forgotten but carried on by many. We love and treasure Lois and family as well.

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**Nancy Donahue** - February 01, 2022 at 05:46 PM

NS

*JW was a genuine "lover of people's souls". I heard him say, "When I meet a new person, I think to myself, 'You are a beautiful person, and I love you.'" To me, he modeled what a Christian should be, better than most people I ever knew. He is already missed, and will continue to be. My prayers are with Lois and the family.*

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**Norell Sears** - February 01, 2022 at 09:44 PM

MA

“ JW touched my heart and the hearts of so many. He was one of my first SR mentors, a valued friend and a person who was always looking to spread his love and vision of what a happy, healthy future could look like. I can remember asking JW how he so easily connected with those he came in contact with, his answer, I approach everyone with an open heart. I was reminded today that losing a loved one only hurts when the love is strong. This one is going to hurt for a long time.

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**Mack** - January 31, 2022 at 05:08 PM

PN

“ JW was one of the finest men I have ever known. And the best coach I ever played for. He turned a bunch of kids who had never won a football game from the 7th grade through 10 grade into winners. He made us believe in him and ourselves. He got the last ounce of talent and effort out of all of us. He taught us we could do the impossible. My life was enriched by knowing him. Now he is in the greater glory of God no doubt preparing for the next season.

Perry Newman - January 29, 2022 at 08:30 PM

LA

“ J W touched more lives in a positive way than you can imagine so proud to call him my friend Rest In Peace .

Larry Arrowood - January 27, 2022 at 04:55 PM

DT

“ Coach was very special to me he had a very positive influence on me and many others I can't imagine how different things might have been if he has not come into our lives!  
God bless Coach and prayers for Gods peace for the family

Dion Tabor - January 26, 2022 at 06:07 PM

DH

“ It was an honor and a privilege to work and coach with JW's. I learned so much about strength and conditioning of young athletes while working summer condition camp with him for 7 summers! I will never forget the Thursday morning summer workouts of Push ups & Squat Thrust and 50 X 40's!! Oh and time 2 of those 40 yard sprints. He was a mentor and a friend! He built the Union Football tradition that is still dominant today.  
David Hudson  
Union Schools 1980-2013

David Hudson - January 26, 2022 at 02:15 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of JW Emerson.



January 26, 2022 at 01:47 PM



“ Manhattan High School Football sends condolences to the Emerson Family. Coach Emerson left an everlasting mark on this program. He started 5 decades of dominance with the discipline and work ethic he instilled in the program through the summer conditioning program and activities such as 50/40's. Many of the values we try to teach today originated with him and were passed on through his assistant Lew Lane and Lew to Butch Albright. We are grateful for Coach Emerson's influence on Manhattan High School. "Remember who you are and remember where you come from."

Joe Schartz  
Head Football Coach  
Manhattan High School



Joe Schartz - January 26, 2022 at 12:27 PM

HH

“ *It is our honor and privilege to serve the Emerson family and to provide this permanent tribute website in memory of John.* ”



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**Hayhurst Funeral Home** - January 24, 2022 at 01:35 AM