

Donald "Joe" Lewis

February 9, 1939 - March 3, 2026

Anyone who knew Joe knew that he was an early morning kind of guy. Dad woke up before the sparrows, before the sun and maybe even before God. His many years of morning radio meant he had to rise very early, get to the station, warm up the equipment, rip the news off the wire and be ready to 'sign-on' to wake the good folks of Pike County. It's a habit he could never shake. So, on March 3, in traditional Joe style, he arose one last time for his biggest sign-on yet...to wake his personal Lord and Savior! Good morning, Pearly Gates!

Joe made his first sign-on Feb. 9, 1939, to Clarence "Gabe" and Beatrice McCann Lewis. His humble beginnings came at the end of the Great Depression, when most had few possessions, land or money. But what the Lewises did have was...You thought I was going to say Love, didn't you? Nope! What the Lewises did have was children! Joe was the youngest of 10! Being the youngest, smallest, slowest meant he had to fight for every scrap of attention he could. That's when he realized that humor would be his superpower.

School was his first stage. In preparation for Dad's funeral, we ran across old grade cards, and it seems he chose to trade good grades for belly laughs. Although well liked, class clowns don't usually grow into valedictorians. So, he set his sights on employment where he could use his hands and cunning,

leading him to a multitude of jobs like gas station attendant, Pepsi and phone repairman, until he heard of a man hiring for a radio station. Paul Salois recognized his bull...talent and hired him right away. KPCR was born.

Somewhere between laughs, Joe caught the eye of a lovely girl from St. Clement. Funnily enough, she didn't think he was funny at all. It took a lot of convincing, like a year or two, but she finally saw he wasn't so bad and eventually succumbed to his charms. In 1961, Rosemary Deters became Rosemary Lewis. Before they settled in their cozy house in the country, he served his country in the army and 8 years of reserves. Soon they welcomed the first of their brood, little Joe, followed by their favorite, Lori and lastly, Christine. (Christine and Joe forced me to add this disclaimer: The author has been found to embellish the truth from time to time and takes after her father!)

With family and career underway Joe began to reflect inward to see what could be missing in his life. What was that emptiness inside? He knew exactly what would fill that hole! A fishing boat!! With rod, reel and stinky Bowker's catfish bait, he set out for the river! And what does every fisherman need? Fishing buddies! And there they were, in the johnboat, on the pontoon, or casting from shore. He and his pals were always ready for a good time and that meant mischief. I would tell you about all the mischief, but the best stories always involved Joe Long, Jack Haley, Arch Jennings, and Sonny Wright and many others who have asked to remain nameless.

Somewhere along the way Joe noticed another longing inside. This was familiar. It felt like when he was a very young lad and answered a call that led him to walk the seven miles to St. Clement to start going to church. The mass and Jesus called to him, so he continued to take that long walk every Sunday. And although Joe still attended church regularly he wanted more. That's when he heard about Cursillo and TEC (Teens Encounter Christ), retreat weekends sponsored by the Catholic Church. Joe and Rosie attended one, then another

and before you know it, they were leading the events. Their family of friends grew by leaps and bounds and helped Dad forge an even stronger relationship with Jesus. With Cursillo came Don and Jane Powell and Ansel Niemeyer. They did everything together but mostly laughed until their sides hurt.

Dad loved his kids and was proud of all their accomplishments, but he really loved the babies! He played with any baby he saw in public and always tried to make them laugh, but when he finally got his own grandkids, he turned on the fun! Olivia, Emily and Cassidi, (a special granddaughter by choice) loved their Papa Joe! When they were still small, they especially loved jumping on his belly like a trampoline, and he let them, for a while. And then came the great-grandkids Luella and Thea who he loved just as much, although he didn't let them jump on his belly. He was always surrounded by his numerous nieces and nephews, too.

KPCR was a big part of this life, and the Bowling Green community and its people meant the world to him. He enjoyed announcing tractor pulls, emceed many functions and entertained anyone who would listen. He started the Cowpasture Concerts that brought people by the thousands, was instrumental in fundraisers like "Goat Days" and lots of hair-brained schemes as Mom would say.

Joe was impatiently awaiting to be reunited in heaven with those who preceded in death, his parents, all his brothers and sisters, and numerous family and friends. We know there was a real barnburner of a reunion in heaven on Tuesday!

Please help us celebrate his life by joining us for visitation at Bibb-Veach Funeral Home, Bowling Green, Missouri on Monday, March 9 from 3-7:00 pm

and a funeral Mass at St. Clement Catholic Church on Tuesday, March 10 at 10:30 am. A luncheon will follow at the Knights of Columbus Hall following graveside services.

Memorials may be made to Baptist Homes Tri-County in Vandalia, Missouri, or St. Clement School in Bowling Green, Missouri.

Cemetery Details

St. Clement Cemetery

St. Clement, MO

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 9. 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Bibb-Veach Funeral Home's & Crematory LLC - Bowling Green
606 West Main Street
Bowling Green, MO 63334
(573) 324-2211
office@bibbveach.com
<https://www.bibbveach.com/>

Mass of Christian Burial

MAR 10. 10:30 AM (CT)

St. Clement Catholic Church
21509 Hwy 161
Bowling Green, MO 63334
<http://www.stclementmo.org>

Burial

MAR 10 (CT)

St. Clement Cemetery
St. Clement, MO

Tribute Wall

CR

“ I remember my dad played a prank on Earl Bridges and Joe picked up ball, ran for a touchdown and kept on going.

Joe would stop by C&B auto parts after his morning show and pick up dad's ad copy. This usually took a couple of hours (especially if there was V.O. next to the coffee pot). Earl would stop by most mornings, take Killer for a walk and tell dad how much rain we got last night according to the very scientific rain gauge he made from test tubes and magic markers.

Dad went by Earl's earley one morning after a heavy morning dew and filled the rain gauge up to almost 4 inches. Joe and dad were talking when Earl came flying in and blowing Gabriel's trumpet. Joe basically interviewed Earl, went back to the station and he and Chuck went on air talking about Earl's findings, expert opinions and the end of days.

Of course, they fessed up...snitched on dad...Earl (and everybody else) was listening. You'd think that would be the end of it but for days afterward when Joe did the weather forecast he gave a disclaimer that he hadn't verified it with Earl.

Joe was one of dad's pallbearers and was a very special man.

You will be missed.

Chuck

Charles J. Runser - March 13 at 04:22 PM

SL

“ So sorry for your loss, my grandchildren still have their oak riding horses that Joe made. They were absolutely beautiful and will last forever. My great grands are enjoying Drake’s. Heaven definitely gained a wonderful angel! Hugs and prayers to all of his family.



Stephen/Zenda Luebrecht - March 11 at 07:39 PM

JW

“ Rosie and kids. I have so many good memories as a kid playing at your house and ours. Joe was such a kind and funny person. As a kid it was always fun to hear his chicken clucking and funny rhymes. I still know punch and judy word for word. So sorry for your loss. I'm glad I got to visit with Joe a couple of times over the past year.

Jim Wright - March 09 at 07:18 PM



“ A Full Life was purchased for the family of Donald "Joe" Lewis.



March 09 at 11:28 AM



“ 208 files added to the album LifeTributes



Bibb-Veach Funeral Home's, LLC. - March 09 at 10:44 AM



“ My condolences to your family. I was blessed to meet you and get to know you during your time at Baptist Homes. It was my privelage to care for you and I will treasure our many stories and laughs together. RIP MY FRIEND. ❤️



Pati Ingram - March 09 at 01:51 AM



“ Mr. Lewis was a true ambassador for Pike County. KPCR was quite a station. He was an avid marketer of sales and community activities. You could always depend on the station for the local news and school closings in the winter. The saddest part is when it finally sold and became another station. Joe made you feel welcome and like family. I am sure he made it to heaven. I bet he is playing Home Grown Tomatoes up in heaven. God bless the Salois and KPCR. It will forever be a cherished memory of our beloved Pike County.



Billy Knock - March 08 at 08:54 PM

NM

“ I worked with Joe at KPCR in the 90s. He was definitely a joy to work with. I always enjoyed listening to him and that "Sporty Little Fellow" Jim Ford. My dad (who made his own trip into Heaven in January) was Charles Moore - Pastor of Noix Creek Baptist Church. Whenever the cold weather would hit you could be sure that Joe was going to announce that Charlie Moore was getting ready to host the annual swim party in Noix Creek. It was definitely an honor to know Joe and work with him. I still miss those days greatly. Praying God's comfort for the family.
Nathan Moore "More of the Moore Show"
KPCR 1993-1997

Nathan Moore - March 07 at 03:26 PM

SM

“ Shelley M. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Donald "Joe" Lewis.

Shelley M. - March 07 at 09:33 AM

SW

“ I cut my teeth at Cow Pasture radio when it was a trailer where the barn look alike studio came to be. Joe & Paul Salois & Bill White & Chuck Brandstetter & Ron Mcelfresh & me (Steve Whitmore). So sorry to hear of Joe's passing. As was mentioned earlier, bis education had some holes that were filled in by his lunatic imagination. Joe didn't understand how to say Russian names like Leonid Breznhev or Nikita Kruschev, so they became Bill Smith or John Brown. The names may not have been accurate, but the news was always entertaining! So was Joe...I'll miss you, old friend

Steve Whitmore - March 07 at 01:11 AM

TD

“ Tom-Jean Dempsey sent a virtual gift in memory of Donald "Joe" Lewis



Tom-Jean Dempsey - March 06 at 10:52 AM

JS

“ Joe Debbie Salois lit a candle in memory of Donald "Joe" Lewis



Joe Debbie Salois - March 06 at 02:41 AM

DS

“ Joe made us laugh. You knew it was going to be fun when he stopped in. He loved to show people a picture of his wife from his wallet. It was not Rosie, but, how does one say this nicely, an ugly old lady. Rosie knew this was Joe's sense of humor. Joe and Rosie, we could never forget either of you. As for Joe, this isn't goodbye, it's "see you later." ❤️🙏🌟

Debbie Salois - March 06 at 02:05 AM

AR

That explains the picture I found while I was scanning pictures for the visitation video! I opened his wallet to this horrible picture and thought, "Good Lord! Who is THAT?" He's still making us laugh!

Angi Ray-Korte - March 06 at 04:00 PM

CW

“ I was sorry to hear about Joe. He was the sunshine in anybody’s life young or old! I don’t think he knew a stranger. He will definitely be missed! My thoughts and prayers are with family & friends



Chrystal Walker - March 06 at 01:20 AM

DG

“ Darrell Gaw lit a candle in memory of Donald "Joe" Lewis



Darrell Gaw - March 05 at 10:19 PM

LP

Thank you Darrell! ❤️

Lori L. Pratt - March 05 at 10:38 PM

E(

“ Elenora (Traynor)Lobb lit a candle in memory of Donald "Joe" Lewis



Elenora (Traynor)Lobb - March 05 at 06:48 PM

LP

Thank you ❤️

Lori L. Pratt - March 05 at 10:38 PM

DT

“ *Much love and hugs to your family! Joe’s voice was a staple in our community for many years. I can still hear it today! If there was a nicer man I haven’t met him yet.* ”

Donnie Tepen - March 05 at 06:44 PM

LP

Thank you Donnie! Love ya ❤️

Lori L. Pratt - March 05 at 10:39 PM

MA

“ *I enjoyed going “on air” filling in doing sports for Jim Ford and trying to tell bigger stories than Joe. That was not possible! I will never forget Joe talking me into chasing goats around the square. Some of the most fun I have had in my time in Pike County. Joe I will continue to “skinny dip” in Noix Creek every year in your memory until we get to tell stories together again.* ”

Martin Anders - March 05 at 04:46 PM

LP

Thank you! 😂❤️

Lori L. Pratt - March 05 at 10:40 PM

SL

“ *To know Joe was to love him. The many memories and stories..so very special. My sympathies to all.* ”

Sherry Langley - March 05 at 04:41 PM

LP

Thank you ❤️

Lori L. Pratt - March 05 at 10:40 PM

SK

“ *My condolences to Rosie, Joe, Christy and Lori. Prayers for comfort. May Susan King*



Susan KING - March 05 at 03:52 PM

LP

Thank you Susan! ❤️

Lori L. Pratt - March 05 at 10:40 PM

WH

“ *WANDA HUNTER lit a candle in memory of Donald "Joe" Lewis*



WANDA HUNTER - March 05 at 09:37 AM

LP

Thank you ❤️

Lori L. Pratt - March 05 at 10:41 PM

DM

“ *Dorothy Mcdaniel lit a candle in memory of Donald "Joe" Lewis*

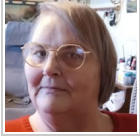


Dorothy Mcdaniel - March 04 at 06:51 PM

LP

Thank you❤️

Lori Lewis Pratt - March 05 at 10:41 PM



“ I spent several years helping out with mom, Wanda Willis, on the Jerry Lewis Telethon at the radio station. We also had a beautiful oak coffee table and end table made for us, that I still have, and will not partwith I have woman memories of the cowpasture concerts that we attended as well.



Lawanda Willis - March 04 at 06:03 PM

LP

Thank you❤️

Lori Lewis Pratt - March 05 at 10:41 PM

DE

“ So very sorry for your loss



Deanie Ebers - March 04 at 05:04 PM

SM

Joe was one of a kind my listened every morning sorry for your family's loss

Sammy meyers - March 06 at 12:17 AM

SM

My mom listened every morning

Sammy meyers - March 06 at 12:19 AM