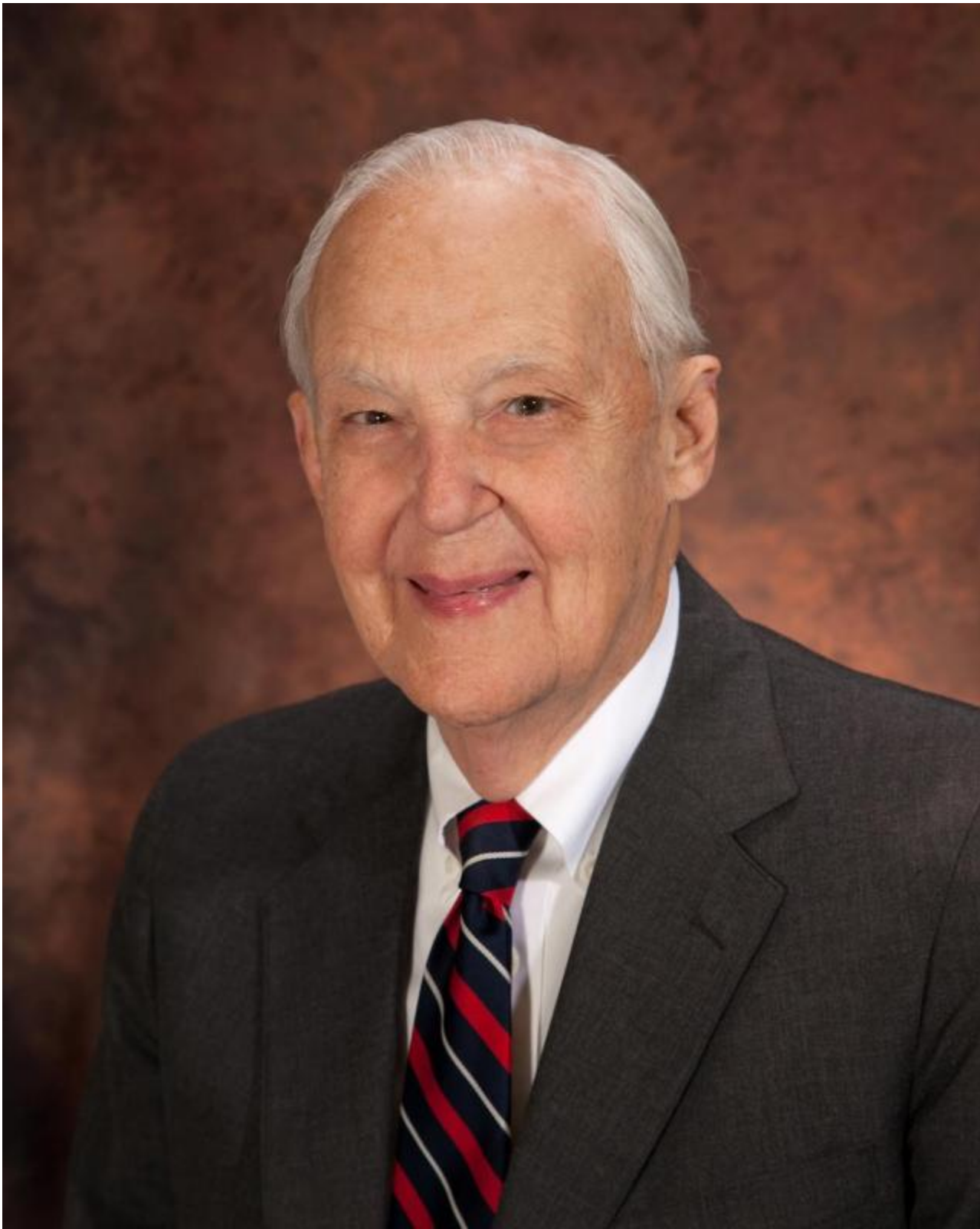




Alton's Casper John 'Jack' Jacoby III left lasting contributions to region

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
July 3 2017 11:31 AM



ALTON - Sometimes, there are people who leaving a lasting impact on their community that will be remembered well beyond their lifetimes.

One of those people in Alton was Casper John “Jack” Jacoby III, who died Wednesday, June 28, at age 91.

Someone entering Alton doesn't have to look far to see something Jacoby played a big part in - the Clark Bridge.

Jacoby is credited with being a driving force behind the transformation of the Alton Riverfront, the creation of Pride Incorporated, supporting local charities, and helping to run the family furniture business. He was also very involved in the development of Interstate-255 around Alton to Godfrey.

Former Telegraph publisher and RiverBend Growth Association Chair Don Miller said he could not say enough good stuff about Jack Jacoby.

Miller said he came to Alton in 1989 and took the top position at the Telegraph. He asked for a list of the most important business people in town, and found Jacoby's name at the top of the list. Over the course of the next decade, Miller and Jacoby worked together on "a number of civic projects."

"Jack was absolutely dedicated to Alton and the Riverbend," Miller said. "He never put his own interests ahead of the community. He was truly an astounding man. He was about the best and most community-minded man I have ever worked with."

One such civic project in which Miller and Jacoby were involved was convincing the voters of Alton to decrease the number of alder persons from 14 to seven. Miller said this change nearly cut city expenses in half.

Miller said Jacoby was also an integral, if not extremely visible, part of the Great Rivers Museum being established at the Melvin Price Lock and Dam as well as the construction of the new Clark Bridge.

"Anything that you really see around here that was worthwhile, Jack was a key person in it, but he was never in the picture," he said. "Jack stood behind politicians, not in front of them."

Jacoby was an Alton native true and true. He was a 1943 graduate of Alton High, served in World War II, graduated from MIT and Harvard, and gave up a career in business in New York City to return to Alton and help run Jacoby Furniture following the death of his cousin.

Upon his return, Jacoby got involved in many community and business groups like the Piasa Bird Boy Scout Council, Alton Memorial Health Services Foundation, the board of Alton Banking and Trust, he was a trustee for the First Presbyterian Church of Alton, and helped formed what is now the RiverBend Growth Association where he was named a Lifetime Emeritus member in 2004.

He was a member of the Alton Lakefront Advisory Committee that helped create the plan to redevelop what is now Riverfront Park and its many amenities. Jacoby Furniture closed in 1998, and in 2004 the family donated the building to the Madison County Arts Council, which renamed itself the Jacoby Arts Center.

He received many awards and honors throughout his career and was married to his late wife Betty for nearly 50 years. She died in 2004. Anyone who knew Jack and Betty knew without question, Betty was Jack's soul mate and the love of his life.

Monica Bristow, president of the RiverBend Growth Association, had only positive memories of the remarkable Jack Jacoby.

"He was very insightful and able to see into the future," Bristow said. "He was a true leader. Jack had a foresight and insight into seeing what things could be. Several things took many years. The riverfront plan took many years. It is not complete yet, but it has come a long way. The Jacoby Arts Center was something Jack was quite proud of."

Bristow closed with a line that likely sums up how nearly everyone in the Alton-Godfrey area feels about Casper John "Jack" Jacoby III and his lifetime contributions to the region:

"Jack Jacoby was a special man," Bristow said.

[Cory Davenport also contributed to this story.](#)