

# **World War II Hero: Jack "Boot" Bertman Left Legacy As Family Man, Elementary Educator/Coach**

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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CARROLLTON - Every so often, there is a person who comes into people's lives as an educator/coach, who makes a difference in more futures than they ever imagined. One of those people was Jack "Boot" Bertman, also a part of the Greatest Generation, a

World War II hero in General George S. Patton's 3rd Army. Mr. Bertman, as he was always called by his students, died at age 95, on September 11, 2021.

Jack was a Purple Heart recipient in World War II, but it was something he mostly kept to himself like many of that generation. Jack was a devoted husband to his wife, Clara Belle Tanner for many years and the father of Chris, Phil, Craig, Donna, and Caryn Bertman. He also had several grandchildren and great-grandchildren, along with many nieces and nephews.

Jack was a Carrollton junior high school social studies and history teacher for more than 35 years. He left a legacy through generations. Most remember him as one of the most intelligent and best educators they ever had in a classroom. When Mr. Bertman walked into the classroom, he didn't have to command respect, it was already there. With the students who were not as strong in the classroom, he always devoted extra time. Mr. Bertman wanted each of his students to succeed, not only in the classroom but in life.

He was the manager of an American Legion baseball team in the 1950s and transcended that into establishing the Carrollton High School baseball program as the first manager. He labored diligently and helped build the first Carrollton High School baseball field at the high school. The baseball tradition continues today. He loved sports, baseball, golf, and music. He sometimes incorporated music into his classroom with a special touch.

Steve Dunn, a fellow teacher at Carrollton Elementary said he and Jack were close friends. Dunn described Jack as "Truly a great person and teacher. So glad I got to teach with him for so many years. RIP my good friend!"

One tribute written to Jack Bertman said something that stuck out to them was that he made a point to say hello to everyone by name and ask how they were doing.

Her quote was: "Such a simple gesture can truly make someone's day."

Jack's nickname was Bootstrap or "Boot" for short and that stuck throughout his life. He even tried out for Major League Baseball when he was younger, thus his forever love of America's favorite pastime and his reason for coaching.

Mary Camerer said on Facebook that she and her mother had Jack as a teacher.

"He was a great role model for all of us!" she said.

Michelle Caselton described Jack's legacy that spanned multiple decades: "He was fun, loved by so many generations, teacher to many and an amazing friend. God blessed us all with his knowledge and kindness."

Dave Hillis said Jack was a gentleman for sure.

“I had the opportunity to golf with him for many years after I graduated high school. He was very refined compared to the rest of us.”

Neal Gillingham said he was a classmate of Jack Bertman.

“My boys had him as a teacher and liked him,” he added. “We went in the service for World War II after we graduated in 1943.”

Tammy Purcell Fraley said: “What fond memories I have of eighth-grade homeroom.” Karen L. Carmody described him as “my favorite teacher.” “He was such a gentleman and he was always so dapper.”

Curt Thompson had Mr. Bertman both as a player and teacher. “He was a great teacher and coach,” Thompson said. “I really enjoyed playing on his teams.”

Craig Carmody described Mr. Bertman as a “great educator and a great man.”

“Oh to hear calypso music by Harry Belafonte during study time was magical,” he said.

Kelly Graham perhaps summed up Mr. Bertman the best for those who had him as a teacher and coach and his service to his country: “Mr. Bertman was not only a good man, a good teacher, a good coach, he was a World War II hero. He was a true American hero who fought to keep us safe.”

Graveside services for Jack Bertman will be held at 10 a.m. on Saturday, September 18, at the St. John’s Catholic Cemetery. The public is welcome to attend.