

Leon Kilbreth

Alton | Thursday, September 2 2010

Leon R. Kilbreth, 95, died at 1:45 p.m. on Thursday, September 2, 2010 at Eunice Smith Nursing home in Alton.

He was born March 28, 1915 in Energy, Illinois the son of the late James L. and Essie E. (Worsham) Kilbreth. On October 5, 1935 in Vienna, IL he married Dorothy Akin and she preceded him in death on December 10, 1980. In May 2000 he married the former Florence Davis. Leon loved sports, dreamed of playing third base with the St. Louis Cardinals, and officiated high school athletics all across southern Illinois. As a young man, he served his community as school board president, and mayor of Energy, IL. He became known as “the singing bread man” for the cheerful songs he sang while making his bread delivery route for Lewis Brothers and Sunbeam. At age 21, Leon had a life-changing experience during a revival meeting at First Baptist Church of Energy. His new enthusiasm for serving the Lord prompted his church to ordain him as a deacon and ask him to become the Sunday School Superintendent. Desiring to learn all he could about Sunday school, he became a protégé of men like J.N. Barnette and Arthur Flake. It was during this time that God called him into full-time ministry. He became the Minister of Education at First Baptist Church in Herrin, IL and went on to serve five different Southern Baptist churches in four states. His passion for Sunday school along with his gift for humorous and highly motivational speaking brought increasing invitations from around the country. He originated Sunday school Revivals-a preaching ministry which took him into every state except Hawaii. For over 40 years he was know and loved across the nation as Mr. Sunday School. In 1996, he was honored at the Southern Baptist Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, for Lifetime Achievement by Dr. James T. Draper, President of lifeWay (formerly the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention). Leon was the author of one book, How to Win Souls. He loved the Lord and wanted other people to know and love Him too.



He is survived by a daughter, Eva Joyce (Donald) Jones of Godfrey, IL, and three sons, Terry of Taylors, South Carolina, Barry (Angela) of Mascoutah, IL, and Reverend Kevin (Shandi) of Fort Smith, Arkansas; nine grandchildren, six great-grandchildren and five great-great-grandchildren.

In addition to his parents and his wife Dorothy, Leon was preceded in death by one sister, Gladys and two brothers, Lural and J.M. Kilbreth.

Visitation will be Monday, September 6, 2010 from 9:00 a.m. until time of funeral service at 11:00 a.m. at Calvary Baptist Church in Alton with the Reverend Andre Dobson to officiate.

Graveside services will be Tuesday at 11:00 a.m. at the Herrin City Cemetery in Herrin, IL.

Memorials may be made to Eunice C. Smith Nursing Home at 1251 College Ave., Alton, IL 62002 or to BJC Hospice.

Additional information and online guest book may be found at www.gentfuneralhome.com