

Obituary

A GREAT CATCH: Joe Robert Irwin passed away on February 14, 2021, at Providence Point in Pittsburgh PA, two weeks after his 85th birthday. He received over 85 birthday cards. Affectionately known as “Big Ir”, “Big Joe”, “King of Recreation”, “Joe Air”, Dad, and PopPop, Joe is remembered for his dedication to and love for his family, his zest for life, and for following his passions. A loving husband, father, and friend, his devotion, generosity, and kindness touched all he met. He remained optimistic and willing to put in hard work until his final days.

Joe was born on Feb 2, 1936 to Drs. Malcolm Robert and Margaret House Irwin of Madison, WI. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a BS in 1958 and earned his MBA in 1963. During his undergraduate years he met and married Mary Lee Richardson of Cincinnati OH. They raised 4 children in the south hills of Pittsburgh, PA.

He served as a Lieutenant in the U.S. Navy from 1958-1961. Joe joined Pittsburgh National Bank in 1963 and retired after a 33-year career achieving the role of President of Pittsburgh National Bank and then, with the consolidation of PNC, Executive Vice President, Chief Investment officer of PNC Bank Corporation. His civic contributions included the PA Economy League, Civic Light Opera, Treasurer of Girls Hope, Director of the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, Board of Directors of the Ruffed Grouse Society, Director of Blue Cross of Western PA, and active member of Westminster Presbyterian Church.

Joe lived his values, vigorously pursued his passions and always put family first. His many passions included fishing, snow skiing, bird hunting, boating and water skiing, Westminster Church and all things involving his alma mater the Wisconsin Badgers. He earned a “W” as a member of 8 varsity rowing, culminating with the honor of Captain in 1958. He instilled to his family, a love and appreciation for nature and Colorado regardless of the season. He skied with unbridled enthusiasm, a sport his wife, Mary Lee, encouraged him and their 4 children to learn. They enjoyed a second home in Breckenridge, CO for

over 30 years. During that time, he involved himself in the mountain community participating in the Summit County Foundation, Breckenridge Music Festival, Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center, and Colorado Community College. He fished rivers all over the world, always catch and release, with a special fondness and appreciation for trout and the rivers and streams of Colorado.

Joe is survived by his wife of 62 years, Mary Lee, his children, Julie (Graham) Nelson, Tom (Sawapark) Irwin, Molly (Josh Fogg) Irwin, Laurie (Joe) Kolwyck. He is also survived by seven grandchildren, Andrew (Nicole), Margaret, and Kerry Nelson, Ryan and Kevin Irwin, Annie and Sydney Kolwyck and one great granddaughter, Caroline Rose Nelson. Additionally, he is survived by his sister Harriet A. Irwin of Blue Mounds WI.

A Celebration of Life will be held virtually at Westminster Church on Friday, February 19, 2021 at 11:00am. The service will be live streamed and available at the following link:

<https://youtu.be/8u9wuZy4lIM>

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that any charitable donations be made to Westminster Presbyterian Church, 2040 Washington Rd, Pittsburgh PA 15241 or University of Wisconsin Foundation, Joe and Mary Lee Irwin Fund, Laboratory of Genetics, School of Medicine and Public Health Stem Cell & Regenerative Medicine Center, 1848 University Ave, Madison WI 53726.

Arrangements by BEINHAUERS. 724 941-3211. Please view or add tributes at www.beinhauer.com

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To send flowers to the family or plant a tree in memory of Joe Robert Irwin, please visit our **Heartfelt Sympathies Store**.

When

Friday, February 19th, 2021 11:00am

Location

Westminster Presbyterian Church

Address

2040 Washington Road
PITTSBURGH, PA 15241

Get Directions: [View Map](#) | [Text](#) | [Email](#)

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