

# Robert Earl Johnston, Sr



Robert Earl Johnston, Sr. passed away peacefully in his sleep at the Louisiana War Veterans Home in Jackson, Louisiana, during the early morning hours of Sunday, November 3, 2024. Affectionately known as “Papa Earl”, he was a grower of gardens, a keeper of bees, and a man with a kind heart, generous spirit, and boundless zest for living. His family and church were the mainstays of his life.

He is preceded in death by his wife, Margaret Ann Varnado Johnston, his constant love and the core of his existence for almost 70 years. When she died, the light in his life diminished. He is also preceded in death by his eldest son and namesake, Robert Earl Johnston, Jr.

He is survived by his children and their spouses: Kathryn J. Davis (Dan), Jeanne C. Johnston, James Edward “Jimmy” Johnston (Deyette “Dee”), and Lynn J. King, (Pike); his grandchildren and their spouses: Michelle Johnston Gonzalez (Michael), Matthew R. “Matt” DeVille (Rosie), Elizabeth Johnston Abbott (Joshua), Elise King Norris (Marshall), and Jill Lindsey King; and his great-grandchildren who brought so much joy to his heart: Payton Marie Abbott, Olivia Rose Abbott, and Evelyn James Gonzalez.

Papa Earl was a long-time member of the Denham Springs Church of Christ and helped nurture and sustain the church, serving as an elder of the church for more than 50 years. His contributions as a song leader, Sunday school teacher, mentor, and enthusiastic leader of youth activities will be long remembered by many generations, young and old. He also served on the board of directors for CYE, Christian Youth Encampment, in DeRidder, Louisiana. Papa Earl was generous with his time and talent to any and all, but he especially enjoyed working with young people. He was a scoutmaster with the Boy Scouts of America for many years, starting troops in Amite, Ponchatoula, and Denham Springs, and helped shape the character of many young boys and men. Earl was a proud veteran of

World War II, serving with demolition and heavy artillery units during the Allied occupation of Italy. He always downplayed his military service, but he stands tall as a member of the "Greatest Generation". The family would like to express appreciation to Dad's personal physician, Dr. E. David Sledge, caregiver, Chuck Ellis, Hospice of Baton Rouge, and the entire staff of the Louisiana War Veterans Home, especially the kind and caring people who work on Wing 5 who made Dad's final days as comfortable as humanly possible. These people surely do God's work.

Visitation will be held at Seale Funeral Home, Denham Springs, Thursday, November 7<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. Visitation will resume on Friday, November 8<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. until services begin at 11:00 a.m.