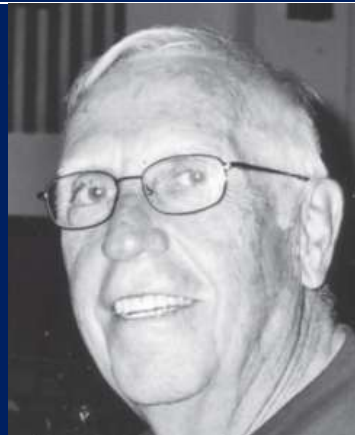




**WEST CATHOLIC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION  
PRO DEO ET PATRIA  
FOR GOD AND COUNTRY**



**Return to Obits**



**Joseph J McFadden '50**

Joe McFadden couldn't walk along a street without being hailed by passers-by, young and old. "Hey, Coach," "Yo, Old Man," "West Philly Joe," "Pops."

Then he would hear, "Mr. McFadden," and he would straighten. "Must be MBS people," he would say. Most Blessed Sacrament parish in Southwest Philadelphia was not only his parish, but one of the schools where Joe McFadden coached boys not only in the fundamentals of basketball, baseball and football, but the basic principles of living a life of fair play and good sportsmanship.

Joseph John McFadden, a coach who wasn't as concerned about winning a game as teaching the kids to play it hard and well, a supervisor for shipping and receiving companies, an Army paratrooper in the Korean War and a loving family man who presided over a home in Southwest Philadelphia that resonated day and night with the shouts of happy kids, died Thursday. He was 76 and in later years lived in Essington. Joe was an excellent athlete himself and didn't know when to quit. He played for tavern leagues and as late as last summer, was playing in an over-60 softball league in Essington. In Essington, he coached a girls' softball team, the first time he crossed the gender line. The girls called him "Pops" and called themselves "Pop's Posse."

"They loved him dearly," said Mark "Froggy" Carfagno, longtime family friend who was one of the youngsters making a racket in the McFadden home in Southwest Philadelphia. Joe coached at Most Blessed Sacrament, St. Barnabas and West Catholic High School, his alma mater. He also coached Catholic Youth Organization, Little League and playground teams, among others. "It was all about the kids," Carfagno said. "Everything was for the kids." "He had such an impact on them," said his son, Joe Jr. "He touched generations, literally - fathers and their sons - consistently preaching the fundamentals."

To his grandkids and great-grandkids he had simple advice, "Do the right thing," "Do your homework." "Catch with both hands." "Joe was the kind of guy that if you didn't know him and sat down beside him, in five minutes you knew his whole life," said Mike Fitzpatrick, longtime friend and fellow coach at Catholic schools. "To know Joe was to love Joe." Joe's brother, Bernard, said he has been talking with people whom Joe coached. "A lot of them said, 'He taught me a lot, and now I'm coaching.' He taught the kids to do the best they could, and never quit, never quit."

After graduating from West Catholic, Joe became an Army paratrooper. As a member of the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team, he made more than 20 combat jumps in Korea. Once when his unit put down a riot at the Kojedo prisoner of war camp, he received some minor wounds. He was told he qualified for a Purple Heart, but he rejected the idea, said Joe's Army buddy Dave Deatherage, of Independence, Mo., who kept in touch with him over the years. "He didn't want to be singled out," Deatherage said. "We were like brothers. He was a super guy." Paratroopers of the 187th were called "Rakkasans," Deatherage said. He said it was a Japanese word that translated as "falling down umbrella man."

Joe was born in West Philadelphia to Joseph and Anna McFadden, and was raised in Southwest Philadelphia. He married Maryann Loretta Phillips in 1952. They had a son and three daughters and their home was a meeting place for Joe's team members, neighborhood kids and such orphans of the storm as Froggy Carfagno and his sister, Angela. They lost their father when Froggy was 10 and their mother when he was 17, and they found love and shelter with the McFaddens. "I can't say enough about what they did for me and my sister," Carfagno said. "We ate there, we slept there. It was a great household, but I don't know how they ever got any privacy." It was a serious blow to Joe and the family when his wife died of congestive heart failure on Feb. 12, 2007.

Joe worked in shipping and receiving for Western Freight, in Philadelphia. Besides his son and brother, he is survived by three daughters, Susan Bennett, Lisa Primavera and Jeanne Wallace; three other brothers, Thomas, Paul and James; two sisters, Doll and Terri; seven grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by another brother, John.

Services: Funeral Mass 1 p.m. Saturday at St. Margaret Mary of Alacoque Church, Wanamaker Avenue and Gov. Printz Boulevard., Essington. A memorial service will begin at 11 a.m. at the church. A military service will be held after the Mass at Gov. Printz Park in Essington. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Kilbride Dougherty Campbell Post 959, American Legion, Box 33365, Philadelphia PA. 19142.