



## Gene F. Hoots

August 28, 1927 - December 2, 2017

Gene F. Hoots, age 90, of Mattoon, IL, passed away at 2:04 A.M., Saturday, December 2, 2017, at Odd Fellow-Rebekah Home.

The funeral service in his honor will be held at 12:00 P.M., Tuesday, December 5, 2017, at Mitchell-Jerdan Funeral Home, located at 1200 Wabash Avenue, Mattoon, IL 61938, with Reverend Mike Smith officiating. Burial will follow at Humboldt Township Cemetery in Humboldt, IL. Visitation will be from 9:00 A.M. until the time of service begins at the funeral home.

Gene was born Aug 28, 1927, on a farm near Humboldt, IL, the son of Roy and Francis (Paullin) Hoots. Francis tragically passed away giving birth to a baby girl in the dead of winter at the start of the Great Depression. Roy remarried Edna "Ada" Kagay several years later. Gene married Betty Breningmeyer on March 1, 1953 in Mattoon, IL.

He is survived by the love of his life, Betty Hoots; two children, son Brent F. Hoots and wife Jackie Studer of Falmouth, ME, and daughter Debra L. McNeely of Mattoon, IL; five grandchildren, Jack Hoots, Katie Hoots, Kristi L. Lamana and husband Phil, Andy McNeely and wife Janet, Ryan McNeely and wife Kristen; and one brother, Dale Hoots and wife Marilyn of Mattoon, IL. He is preceded in death by his parents and one sister.

Gene grew up in Humboldt, IL, helping his parents work the farm and playing with his best friend and brother, Dale. Gene and Dale were outstanding athletes in basketball and softball. Gene was awarded an athletic scholarship to Eastern Illinois University. However, after one year, Gene left EIU to return

to the family farm and work. Eventually, he purchased and operated a small ice cream stand from his uncle Bill Paullin. During that time, he fell in love and married Betty. Gene and Betty worked side-by-side running the ice cream shop, and then expanded the operation to include hamburgers. Betty said that "Burger King" would be a great name for their restaurant and it became Mattoon's favorite restaurant, still to this day. The two worked hard, long hours to build a successful restaurant and eventually expanded their business and at one point operated four different successful restaurants in the Mattoon area.

Gene was a member and President of the Mattoon Chamber of Commerce, on the board and served as the Chairman of the Board of Okaw Savings & Loan, on the board and served as President of the Mattoon Golf & Country Club. He was also on the Mattoon Tourism Board and participated in many other community organizations.

Gene was actively involved in the Central Community Church of Mattoon for many years, and later a member of the First United Methodist Church of Mattoon.

Gene was also actively involved with music, starting at a very early age. As a teen, he started a band that played at dances and other social events.

Although music eventually took a back seat to spending most of his time focused on the restaurant business and helping his father with farming, music was always an important part of his life. Later in life, Gene returned to music, writing the music and lyrics for several CD's, with one of his songs making it to the Bill Board top 30 Country Music Charts.

Throughout his life, Gene was an active athlete, playing handball, racquetball, and golf. Gene was also an avid Contract Bridge player. Bridge and golf became important pursuits that allowed Gene and his wife, Betty, to be active members of the local golf community and also a golf community at Riverwood, FL, where they spent a great deal of their time in the winters later in life.

Gene also wrote a book about succeeding in business and a book about his growing up on the farm - entitled Dale and Me - and the close relationship he

had is entire life with his brother Dale.

Gene was a devoted husband, father and grandfather, actively involved with his family and the raising of his two children, Debbie and Brent, and in later life spending time with his grandchildren Kristi, Andy, Ryan, Jack and Katie.

Gene will be greatly missed by his family and always remembered.

Please visit [www.mitchell-jerdan.com](http://www.mitchell-jerdan.com) or [www.facebook.com/mitchelljerdanfuneralhome](http://www.facebook.com/mitchelljerdanfuneralhome) to light a virtual candle in his honor or share a memory with the family.

# Cemetery Details

## Humboldt Township Cemetery

Humboldt, IL 61931

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC 5. 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Mitchell-Jerdan Funeral Home Ltd.  
1200 Wabash Ave  
Mattoon, IL 61938  
(217) 234-8828  
contact@mitchelljerdan.com  
<https://www.mitchell-jerdan.com/>

## Service

DEC 5. 12:00 PM (CT)

Mitchell-Jerdan Funeral Home Ltd.  
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# Tribute Wall



“ *Gene F. Hoots*

October 08, 2023 at 07:40 PM



“ *The entire Singer family sends their condolences and sympathy for the loss of Gene. He was the ultimate gentlemen and set a great example, along with Dale, as the patriarchs of the entire Hoots family....A great group indeed.*

**T.J. Singer** - June 18, 2018 at 03:57 PM



“ *Betty, Debbie, , Brent, & Family, I was so sorry to learn of the loss of Gene. He was a wonderful person who contributed greatly to the community. He was a good friend to my parents who will miss him much. We are all thinking of you at this time.*

**Kim Kovack Craven** - December 09, 2017 at 03:49 PM



“ *Dale: Now we have lost another classmate from the class of '45. I remember having good times with you and Gene when I would visit Betty Jane. We also had a lot of fun doing class plays, and band. With sympathy. Jody (Rogers) Rescinito*

**Joan Rescinito** - December 04, 2017 at 06:46 PM

JM

“ Gene was one of my favorite people as well as my cousin - a great human being with a twinkle in his eyes and a song in his heart. An inspiration for staying interested in life and young at heart. He will be missed! Gone but not forgotten. Joyce (Paullin) Moore

Joyce Moore - December 04, 2017 at 06:44 PM

LK

“ So sorry to hear. I have great memories of when my mom worked for Gene at the Burger King. My prayers are with the family. Linda Kidwell Keown

linda keown - December 04, 2017 at 04:33 PM



“ 50 files added to the album Life Tributes



Mitchell-Jerdan Funeral Home - December 04, 2017 at 10:55 AM



“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Gene F. Hoots.



December 04, 2017 at 10:31 AM

FB

“ Hugs, prayers and heartfelt sympathy to the Hoots family from the Jeffers family. Long time neighbors and friends. Gene always said we had such great parents we should have been relatives. Gene and Dale brought me my first tricycle. So many great memories--hide and seek--andy andy over and lots more. We always stopped in to the Burger King to enjoy one of those famous burgers and to see Gene on our way to Michigan for the summer. He will be greatly missed by so many family and friends. (Frances)

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**Frances Jeffers Brower** - December 04, 2017 at 09:47 AM

LM

“ My mother, Glenie Mayhew, worked for Mr. Hoots for several years. She thought the world of Gene and Betty.

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**Linda Mayhew** - December 04, 2017 at 06:27 AM



Linda, I worked with your mother; she was the hostess. I always liked her.

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**Pater Edward Ohm** - December 04, 2017 at 10:31 AM

MP

“ So sorry for your loss. The world would be a better place if there had been more men like Gene. I worked for him and Betty in the early 60's. My first job and I have always been thankful to have been given the opportunity to have worked with such a great family. The best. He always had a smile, was kind, fair, never raised his voice and had more energy than all is us. Wonderful memories of Gene, Betty, Ms. Breningmeyer and Burger King.

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**Mary Utley Paden** - December 03, 2017 at 07:37 PM



“ *Eternal rest, grant unto his soul, O Lord,  
let the perpetual light shine upon him.  
May his soul and all the souls of the faithful  
departed through the mercy of God rest in  
peace. Amen. Requiescat in Pace*



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**Pater Edward Ohm** - December 03, 2017 at 05:54 PM