



John "JR" Robert Black

July 18, 1939 - February 2, 2018

JR Black, age 78, died February 2, 2018 in Kankakee, IL at Riverside Hospital. He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Deanna, three children Lon (Bobbi) of Eagan, MN, Mike (Barbara) of Fall River, WI, Carrie (David Graf) of Momence, IL and four grandchildren, Jordan, Lauren, Elise and Cade. His two sisters Rebecca Thoms of Clinton, IL and Linda Chockley of Lincoln, IL along with half sister Ruth Tannehill of Troy, MO also survive. Preceded in death by his parents, William and Dorothy (Lambert) Black, brother Frank and half sister Rose Marie Kelly.

Born July 18, 1939 in Clinton, IL, JR graduated from Clinton High School class of 1957 and Illinois State University class of 1961. Attending ISU on a football and state teacher's scholarship, he competed in football and track becoming captain, all conference, athletic hall member and IIAC recordholder. He began his teaching and coaching career at Herscher High School before moving to Kankakee High School, Eastridge High School and finally, to Westview High School as Athletic Director and Head Football Coach. He was proud to have the Westview football field named in his honor. During his educational career, JR went on to receive his Masters Degree and Advance Certificate from the University of Illinois. He was named to the Kankakee District 111 Hall of Fame, Outstanding Educator and three time District Athletic Director of the year. In 1979, JR left education for a business career and served on the Downtown Business Association and on the Kankakee Chamber of Commerce board. Before retiring in 2002, he returned to education as an administrator at the

Kankakee Area Career Center.

JR was a lifelong active conservationist and charter member of the Northern Illinois Anglers serving many years as President and Executive Director. He was dedicated to protecting, restoring and enhancing the Kankakee River and founded many key events including the Fishing Derby and the adopt-a-river program. He served as chair, founder and advisor of various Kankakee commissions, alliances and boards including the Kankakee River Valley Whitetails while holding memberships in numerous organization dedicated to preserving and benefiting the environment. JR was a statewide delegate in the Conservation Congress assemblies, Governor Edgar's appointment to the Land Use and Water Resource Task Force and inducted to the Illinois Outdoor Hall of Fame in 2004. JR received many other awards and designations honoring his lifelong passion, respect and commitment to the natural resources he so enjoyed.

Visitation will be Friday, February 9 from 4-8pm at the Schreffler Funeral Home of Kankakee. Funeral services will be Saturday, February 10 at 10am with visitation 1 hour prior at the Asbury United Methodist Church of Kankakee with the Reverend Scott Henley officiating. Graveside burial services will be 2:30pm the Texas Township Cemetery in Clinton, IL. Memorials to Asbury United Methodist Church and the American Cancer Society.

Cemetery Details

Texas Township Cemetery

Clinton, IL

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB **9**. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Schreffler Funeral Home - Kankakee Chapel
1900 W. Court St.
Kankakee, IL 60901
(815) 932-2421
<https://www.schrefflerfuneralhomes.com/>

Visitation

FEB **10**. 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM (CT)

Asbury United Methodist Church
196 S. Harrison
Kankakee, IL 60901
(815) 933-4408

Funeral Service

FEB **10**. 10:00 AM (CT)

Asbury United Methodist Church
196 S. Harrison
Kankakee, IL 60901
(815) 933-4408

Tribute Wall



“ *John "JR" Robert Black*

February 03, 2023 at 04:30 AM



“ *I was a sophomore in Westview High school when I met J.R. Black(football 1969). He was one heck of an athletic director and very tough IMO. All us kids respected J.R. Black and he made us practice hard. Great guy and someone I always looked up to.*
James D. Styck

James Styck - March 07, 2018 at 08:06 PM



“ *Sorry for your loss.*
Ron Ramsey

Ron Ramsey - February 16, 2018 at 08:15 PM



“ *I worked with him when he was at Salkelds. I was a sales person at WKAN. Great man to work with.*
Bev Benge.

Bev Benge - February 14, 2018 at 02:43 PM



“ *Roger Schultz lit a candle in memory of John "JR" Robert Black*



roger schultz - February 10, 2018 at 03:13 PM

JW

“ Deanna and family - I am thankful there was a JR Black in my life. Fresh out of ISU, not much older than his players, he hit Herscher High like a whirlwind. I had the privilege of playing 3 years for him. His energy and enthusiasm for the game and life was infectious. As I spoke with him shortly before Christmas , he still had it , a fighter to the end. Our teams on the field were successful because of him, but he was just as good, if not better, off the field. He inspired self-worth , character and teamwork - always there if needed. He will be missed but never forgotten. Thanks for sharing him .

*Jim Warmbir
Herscher High Class of 1964*

Jim Warmbir - February 10, 2018 at 12:42 PM



“ To Deanna and the entire Black family, JR was a wonderful person and neighbor to myself and my family. Truly saddened to hear of his passing. Thinking of all of you during this difficult time. You all are in my prayers. The Kankakee community lost an icon. He will be sorely missed. Heaven gained a great man. God's lawn just got greener. RIP JR.
Michelle (Uribe) Mazurek



Michelle Uribe Mazurek - February 09, 2018 at 04:32 PM

JR

“ I had the pleasure of being part of JR's Tigers from 1962-1964. JR understood me better than any coach I had. I was physically small and not real disciplined but he turned me into a football player I could be proud of. I still remember his blond flat-top and his determination to put a winning team on the field. I am very saddened over his passing but had the happy experience of knowing him. May he rest in peace. I will say a prayer for him at Mass. John Redman

John Redman - February 08, 2018 at 03:28 PM

TM

I was a team mate on the ISNU football team, and like Don Clayberg I lost touch with JR, but I have a picture in my 76 year old brain of his feisty demeanor and sharp crew cut. Sad to see him go just as I was last Summer when I attended Wayne Meece's funeral. I've spent most of my life coaching here in Orange California so I've probably missed the passing of many of our Redbird buddies. May God bless his family and comfort them with Christ's promises. Tom Meiss (Gridley)

tom meiss - February 09, 2018 at 04:47 PM

DC

“ JR and I were teammates at ISU for two years. We lost touch as we both went on with our teaching and coaching careers. I have always considered JR as one of my dearest college buddies and thoughts go out to his family in this sad time. My thought will always be of that young blond fireball. Like ships in the night he will be remembered
Don Clayberg

Donald Clayberg - February 08, 2018 at 12:44 PM

GL

“ My name is Gary Lutterbie. I worked for the DNR in fisheries and had a close working relationship with JR. JR was the Guardian of the Kankakee River and for all of Northern Illinois. Together we restored the walleyes in the Kankakee and tried tirelessly to keep the sand out of the river. I know JR was the back bone of NIAA and I hope someone picks up the reins and keeps this worthwhile organization going. JR will be deeply missed. I considered him a good friend. Though the Kankakee River will continue to flow, it won't have that same sparkle that it did when JR was with us. Please rejoice in all of his wonderful memories. God Bless.

Gary Lutterbie - February 08, 2018 at 10:13 AM

JU

“ Dear Deanna, Lon, Mike, Carrie and families. Words can not express how sad we are for JR's illness and untimely passing. The Greenlawn neighborhood will not be the same. Tom and I enjoyed being your neighbors for 40 years. JR always knew the answer to everything. We are sure his lovely lawn is crying also. He took such wonderful care of it. He is now in heaven and running the show there to. You all have our deepest sympathy. Julie Uribe



Julie Uribe - February 07, 2018 at 08:47 PM

 Bev Jarrett

“ RIP Coach Black. You were such a great, nice man. I am saddened to hare this news but I know his family has to have many wonderful memories of this wonderful man.
Bev Jarrett - Eastridge Class of 1968

Bev Jarrett - February 07, 2018 at 04:43 PM

PL

“ Mrs Black and family “Coach Black” inspired and motivated me during my high school days to play at the highest level, I accomplished many goals and achievements throughout my career as a player college: (all- American) (hall of fame) and championship teams as a coach all done from the impact and influence coach Black was on my life, “ rest in peace coach “ Phil Link

Phil Link - February 07, 2018 at 11:43 AM

BT

“ JR was my big brother and I loved him very dearly. I will miss our messages back and forth every day. I'll miss him mostly because I used his shoulder for a lot of comfort myself. I will always remember his ball playing and jumping up and down screaming in the stadium when he made a touchdown both in high school and college. I always admired him and I'm sure going to miss him. While in heaven give Mom and Pop kiss for me and g my kids a kiss too. I love you Becky Jane

Becky Thoms - February 07, 2018 at 10:03 AM

KS

“ JR was probably one of the reasons I went into coaching. I always loved his intensity and enthusiasm he brought to the table. My parents had the utmost respect for the Black family when you lived in Herscher. The fish stories told from Wishbone Resort will never be forgotten. Glad to have known and taught by JR. Rest In Peace! My deepest sympathy to Deanna and Family.

Kurt Schlaich-Cherokee Village, AR

Kurt Schlaich - February 06, 2018 at 08:38 PM

BF

“ *Incredible mentor, leader, Coach, Athletic Director, organizer, decision maker, friend ! I worked under JR from 75 to 77 - he had unbelievable energy and leadership skills - well worthy of every honor he ever received... my deepest sympathy to family on the loss of this iconic man* ☆🙏
Bill Farley
Norman, Oklahoma



Bill Farley - February 06, 2018 at 07:41 PM

MF

“ *Mrs. Deanna Black and family...I do not need to tell you how much your family has meant to the Buck family. You already know that. Coach Black and our father spent a lifetime together building that wonderful Sports Complex and that family bond continued on.*

He was a wonderful man who did so much for the community and will be greatly missed!!!!

Mark Buck and the Leo Buck Family - February 06, 2018 at 02:11 PM

HJ

“ *Hugh Janda lit a candle in memory of John "JR" Robert Black*



Hugh Janda - February 06, 2018 at 09:32 AM

MC

“ Mike Conlin lit a candle in memory of John "JR" Robert Black



Mike Conlin - February 06, 2018 at 06:43 AM

RU

“ Ray Underwood lit a candle in memory of John "JR" Robert Black



Ray Underwood - February 05, 2018 at 05:12 PM

GR

“ My deepest sympathies to the family. He always will be Coach Black to me, and truly a person I admired during my Herscher High School years, and beyond. From the seasons of football and wrestling to hunting pheasants on our farm, all the best of experiences forever in my memory. Was so glad to see and talk to him at our 50th Class Reunion in 2014; a special guest indeed.... and a special person always.



George Rivard/Class of 1964

George B Rivard - February 05, 2018 at 04:32 PM

PO

“ Deanna and family,

Paul, Dana, and I want to extend our sympathies to all of you. We have so many wonderful memories of JR going back many years and includes a multitude of activities. It began with Herscher and continued to the Kankakee/Westview days. But perhaps our favorite times were those spent in the same cabin at Wishbone in Minnesota. Paul especially remembers the day he caught the Muskie. He and JR tried valiantly to land the big fish. They didn't have a net and eventually lost the fish. As years went by, the fish got bigger in the stories and the struggles to land it more exciting!! We will miss him and cherish the memories.

Fondly,

The O'Connor's

Paul O'Connor - February 05, 2018 at 02:48 PM

JB

So sorry to hear of your lose. I have many good memories when Bob and J.R. Worked together at Westview. I know he will be missed by many. My prayers are with you and your family. Joan Busteded

Joan Busteded - February 07, 2018 at 10:59 AM