



Joseph Roland Hudson

NOV 12, 1930 - APR 25, 2022



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Joseph Roland Hudson, businessman, philanthropist
Joseph Roland Hudson was born Nov. 12, 1930, in Harbeson to Myrtle Ellen (Veasey) and Richard Theodore Hudson. From humble dirt roads to watching a man walk the moon, Joe Hudson's story is a true American story.

He was one of 12 children growing up in rural Sussex County in the Great Depression, and his family struggled to put food on the table. He was given away twice to distant family members to help raise him, but then given back on both occasions because “he ate too much.” As soon as he was able, he started working to help provide for his family.

His first job was delivering Grit magazine to homes in the Harbeson area around age 10. He fashioned a cart and harnessed the family goat to help make deliveries before school. He seized upon every opportunity he could, and soon spied a used rabbit hutch for sale. He purchased the hutch and started selling rabbits for meat and delivering them along his magazine route.

Growing up in the shadow of World War II had a big impact on Joe. He was a youth volunteer for the Civil Air Patrol and took turns spotting planes and watching out for enemy aircraft. He memorized countless aircraft silhouettes and radioed in the air traffic he saw. One day at the age of 14, he saw a P-47 Thunderbolt crash near his home. He saw where it went down and ran to the crash site. The pilot had bailed out and parachuted to safety, but the plane's wreckage caught fire and ignited the ammunition and sent everyone scurrying for safety. After the danger was cleared, some local farmers gave the pilot a ride back to Georgetown on their wagon. Joe walked behind the wagon talking to the pilot most of the way. Joe's passion for flight was lit, and he knew immediately he was going to become a pilot.

Joe landed a job at the Rehoboth Airport as a mechanic, but no one in the family owned a car, so he hitchhiked back and forth from Harbeson to Rehoboth Beach every day. He worked there alongside his best friend Ted Freeman. Joe and Ted both had a passion for flying and eventually



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persuaded the pilots at the airport into teaching them how to fly. Both men were able to earn their pilot's license before their driver's license.

Their skill levels soon caught up with their passion for aviation, and it wasn't long before they were piloting charters and taking passengers from Rehoboth Beach to Washington, D.C., and Baltimore. Joe always loved talking to people, and he would strike up conversations with his passengers. John Rollins and Otis Smith quickly became two of Joe's favorites and helped fuel his passion for business.

After graduating from Lewes High School, the two best friends went down separate paths. Ted went to the Naval Academy and flew experimental aircraft as a test pilot, and eventually became an Apollo astronaut. Joe followed the entrepreneurial path, launched his own crop-dusting business, and spotted menhaden fish for Otis Smith's Fish Products Co.

Joe married his sweetheart Faye White after high school at the age of 18. They bought an old farmhouse next to his in-laws, and set about having three children together, Jody, Susie and Craig. He expanded the farm and opened his own airport in 1948. Joe's original airport, the Eagle Crest Aerodrome, is still in operation today. Both his crop-dusting and farming businesses were booming, and he continually expanded both until the late 1970s when he sold the crop-dusting business to his lifelong friend and protegee Allen Chorman, who still owns the company along with his son Jeff.

Joe transitioned into real estate with another lifelong friend of his, Stanley Thompson. Stan owned the Southern States and together they started the New Dimensions Real Estate office at Five Points where the replica lighthouse stands today. He met his wife Christine, who was working there, and Joe fell in love for the second time.

After founding the business, Joe read an ad for a spaceship-like home called the Futuro Home. He called the ad number and ended up purchasing the North American distribution rights and received several homes up front as model homes. He placed one at his office where it famously sat for a few years until it was moved to Eagle Crest Aerodrome.

Jody, Susie and Craig all had successful careers in the real estate business and started their careers in the family office. Together they created many beautiful communities and played a large part in



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shaping the future of eastern Sussex County with Overbrook Shores, Seatown, Cripple Creek, Covey Creek and The Villages of Five Points, to name a few.

In 1986, Joe was asked to join the Beebe Medical Center Board of Directors, and it was there that Joe found another passion in helping people. He served on the board of directors from 1986 until 2011 and was chairman from 1998-2005. He was one of the founding members of the Beebe Medical Foundation and served on its board from 1989-2012. His service and generosity led to the naming of the Hudson Emergency Wing in 2008, which doubled the size of the existing Emergency Department. An original oil portrait by his grandson and local artist Abraxas hangs on the wall to commemorate the dedication.

Joe received many awards and accolades during his lifetime for acts of service to his community, though he was always reluctant to be officially recognized. One he was proud of was being inducted into the Delaware Aviation Hall of Fame alongside his childhood friend Ted Freeman. When forced to publicly receive an award, he would always say that there were “lots of other people who were more deserving of recognition.” As a lifelong Rotarian, he truly believed in the principle of Service Above Self. His many acts of philanthropy were often done anonymously, helping the people and causes he valued with no desire for name recognition. He helped people because he could, once saying, "I think you're a good investment," not because he expected a financial return from his gift, but because he knew firsthand what makes America special – people determined to improve their condition and in so doing, elevating the health of their community.

He was a friend of many, and a consummate storyteller. In his older years he “held court” at Surf Bagel and Arena’s in Five Points during the week, and at the Backyard in Milton on weekends. People would always gather, and he’d trade stories about his adventures growing up in old Sussex in between day trading the stock market on his iPad. Reflecting on how life was then versus life now, he commonly began with, "Oh gosh," before noting the stark contrasts he witnessed throughout his life, often from thousands of feet in the air. A viewpoint perfectly suited to observe the ebbs and flows of nature and humanity.

He never had an enemy, and always had a kindness and compassion for people. His big smile, genuine laugh and sense of humor could put even the tensest negotiation or boardroom completely at ease. He will truly be missed, and most importantly, remembered, for the great man he was.



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He is survived by his wife Christine; his brother Bob; his daughter Susie; his grandchildren: Joss (Diana), Brax (Kate), Christian (Julie), Jamin (Raven), and Jazz (Chris Hunt); his great-grandchildren: Savana, Kira, Christian, Lydia, Craig, Charlie, Henry, Leo, Alexander and Greyson; and his daughters-in-law: Liz Hudson, Pam Travis and Sue Moore.

A public memorial service commemorating Joe's life will be held at 1:00 PM on Tuesday, May 24, 2022, at Eagle Crest Airport, 29763 Eagle Crest Road, Milton, DE 19968. Immediately following services, from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM, the family invites everyone to stay and visit with them and help in celebrating Joe's life through the afternoon. All families and friends are welcome including children, as Joe would have wanted to enjoy everyone's company.

Please visit Joe's Celebration of Life Facebook Page to RSVP and stay up to date on event details.
<https://fb.me/e/1UazIb8zT>

In lieu of flowers, please consider a memorial donation in Joe Hudson's honor to the Beebe Medical Foundation, 902 Savannah Road, Lewes, DE 19958, beebemedicalfoundation.org.

Please sign Joe's virtual guestbook located on the tribute page.



Events


Joseph Roland Hudson

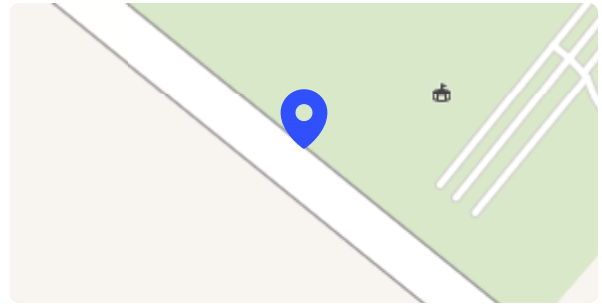
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Memorial Service

 **Tuesday**, May 24, 2022

 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM ET


 **Eagle Crest Airport**
29763 Eagle Crest Road, Milton DE 19968

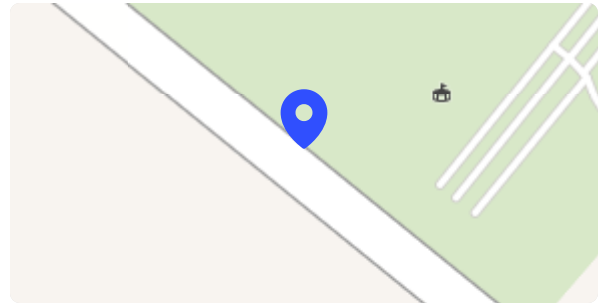


Celebration of life

 **Tuesday**, May 24, 2022

 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM ET

 **Eagle Crest Airport**
29763 Eagle Crest Road, Milton DE 19968





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Dawn lit a candle in honor of Joseph.

It's been over 40 years when I last saw Joe (he sold my family some property in cool springs area). He's a man you don't forget and may even desire to emulate. Our deepest condolences to all who loved and knew him 🙏

May 22 at 3:38 PM



Anonymous sent a Sentiments of Serenity Spray to the Hudson family.

May 20 at 11:13 AM



Nancy Cummings lit a candle in honor of Joseph.

I had the honor of meeting Mr. Hudson when I worked at Beebe. He was a very generous man with his smile and making you feel important. He asked me to call him Joe but I couldn't - he deserved the respect of Mr. Hudson to me. He was a gracious man with a kind heart. May he Rest in Peace and Perpetual Light Shine Upon Him - as his light will shine throughout Sussex County.

May 15 at 1:10 PM



Dale Dukes posted:

Joe was a friend to everyone and while serving on the Sussex County Council enjoyed working with him and had great respect for him. Was an awesome person to work with.

May 14 at 5:14 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Joseph by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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