



## Gerald "Jerry" Paul Birge

May 6, 1939 - December 2, 2022

Gerald "Jerry" Paul Birge, 83, of Jasper died Friday, December 2, 2022, at his home. He was born in Jasper on May 6, 1939, to Cyril and Antoinette Kunkel Birge. He was a 1957 graduate of Jasper High School and attended Indiana State Teachers College (now Indiana State University) on a basketball scholarship. He married Margaret "Maggie" Blueher in St. Patrick's Church in Terre Haute on August 30, 1958.

Jerry began his broadcasting career in the summer of 1956 when he was hired by WITZ as a part time disk jockey and knew he had discovered what he wanted to do with his life. He began his full-time career reporting sports and broadcasting play-by-play for WITZ Radio in Jasper in 1959. After a brief tenure reporting news and doing play-by-play for WJPS in Evansville, he was hired as sports anchor for WTVW Channel 7 in Evansville for over five years, anchoring the 6 and 10 o'clock sports and doing play-by-play for numerous sporting events, including coverage of the Evansville College (now U. of E.) basketball team for six seasons.

In 1967 Birge returned to his hometown and served as sports editor of The Herald for over 15 years. During that time, he continued to do freelance television work, which included a "Race of Day" thoroughbred racing series from Ellis Park on WEHT Channel 25, and work for the Farm Bureau network in Indianapolis. He earned multiple "Best Sports Section" awards from the

Hoosier State Press Association, media awards from the Indiana High School football and tennis coaches' associations and served a term as president of the Indiana Sportswriters and Sportscasters Association.

During his years at The Herald, Jerry, along with former JHS coach Leo "Cabby" O'Neil, was active in the early formation of the Indiana High School Basketball Hall of Fame and served on its associate board of directors for two years. He was the founder of the Dubois County Amateur Golf Tournament and served as tournament director for 25 years. He was also a founder and charter member of the J-Men Lettermen Club. Jerry continued freelance TV work while he worked as area manager for TCI Cable in Bloomington, and also covered Indianapolis Colts football for the Bloomington Herald-Times for one season.

Jerry left Indiana in 1987 to become news and sports director for WSTO, WVJS and cable TV-2 in Owensboro, Kentucky, a position he held for more than 10 years, earning the state's "Best Sports Play-by-Play" honors, and, in 2004 the "Lifetime Achievement Award" from the Owensboro Parks and Recreation Department for "outstanding contributions to sports."

After working for five years as the director of communications and marketing for the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph at Maple Mount, Kentucky, Birge retired from full time work in 2008 but continued to do freelance play-by-play for high school football and basketball broadcasts in Owensboro. He also hosted a daily television program, "Around Owensboro with Jerry Birge," on Time-Warner's Cable Channel 8 for 15 years. It ended its run in December 2013.

In April 2010 Jerry Birge was inducted into the Indiana Sportswriters and Sportscasters Association's Hall of Fame. This honor acknowledged the more than 25 years he covered Indiana sports and the many honors he received in

both broadcasting and print journalism.

Jerry was always a man of many interests. He had a lifelong love of baseball, particularly the St. Louis Cardinals, travel—making it to 47 of the 50 states as well as abroad—and theater. He was also keenly interested in the activities of his children and grandchildren.

Jerry was predeceased by his parents, his son Mick Birge, and his brother Bill. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Maggie Birge; one son, Joe Birge and wife Jill, Brentwood, Tennessee; five daughters, Joan Little and partner Dan Wilhite, Evansville, Marlene Cocchetto and husband Alan, Erie, Pennsylvania, Marilyn Scherer and husband Doug, Zionsville, Marcia Birge, Evansville, and Jennifer Birge, Jersey City, New Jersey, and daughter-in-law Starlene; 13 grandchildren, Adam Birge and wife Rachael, David and Antoinette Birge, Kathy Osborne and husband David, Amanda Green, Andy Kemp and wife Beth, Tyler Birge and wife Allie, Lauren Birge, Jessica Spanogle and husband Jesse, Nicholas Cocchetto, Julia Gargas and husband R.J., Allison Scherer, and Jordan Rhodes; 13 great-grandchildren, Ty and Felix Birge, Emily, Megan and Abigail Osborne, Layla Brown, Jayce and Jonas Green, Charlie Kemp, Sophie, Bella, Maddie, and Francis Spanogle, with a 14th great-grandchild due later this month. Also surviving are three brothers, Jim Birge and wife Donna, John Birge and wife Lisa, and Bob Birge and wife Barb; four sisters, Judy Calley and husband Bob, Jane Birge, Betty Anderson and husband Rick, and Kathy Eckerle and partner Curtis Shaw; and numerous nieces and great-nieces, nephews and great-nephews, and cousins.

Visitation will be at Becher-Kluesner Funeral Home from 1-6 p.m. Sunday, December 11 and until services Monday morning. A mass of Christian burial will be held at St. Joseph's Church Monday, December 12 at 10:00 a.m. with burial to follow in Fairview Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to

the Mick Birge Scholarship Fund, c/o Dubois County Foundation, 600  
McCrillus St., Jasper, IN 47546, or Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph,  
8001 Cummings Road, Maple Mount, KY 42356.

# Cemetery Details

## Fairview Cemetery

1020 Kundek Street  
Jasper, IN 47546

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC 11. 1:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Becher & Kluesner Funeral Home - Downtown  
214 East 7th Street  
Jasper, IN 47546  
(812) 482-4141  
[email@becherkluesner.com](mailto:email@becherkluesner.com)

## Mass of Christian Burial

DEC 12. 10:00 AM (ET)

St Joseph Catholic Church  
1029 Kundek Street  
Jasper, IN 47546

# Tribute Wall



“ Gerald "Jerry" Paul Birge

January 01, 2023 at 10:54 AM



“ Our deepest condolences to the Birge family and Jerry's friends.



*Dear beloved Joe, Jill and Birge Family - your beloved Jerry will forever live through you from all the talented passion he demonstrated daily. The exuberance Jerry shared was positively inspiring. We've had the joy to meet Jerry a few times... his personality and his famous sport's voice, a dynamic force. It was always apparent of Joe's great love & respect for his Dad whilst listening to their "speaking sports" banter. It was always apparent of the tremendous connection they had far beyond being just Joe's Father... it was obvious Joe and Jerry were best friends; and their love and respect was simply off the charts. When listening or watching a sporting event with Joe... he would promptly FaceTime or call his Dad to discuss each play of the game. We would be mesmerized listening to Jerry's dynamic voice with Joe as they both called out the play by play action of whatever we were watching. What an amazing force of knowledge and passion of sports Jerry lived. Dear family Birge... I have zero doubt you will naturally offer a piece of Jerry's "live-life-to-the-fullest" teachings daily via your love & life actions with one another. I'll anticipate this as a fact with positive awe. Without a doubt, a great life lived which now continues on within all of his kids and grandchildren. Onward until we are all able to meet Jerry again on the other side of all of this... the bright and joyful side of this journey continues as your Dad paves our way.*

Brian and Cathy - December 11, 2022 at 09:16 AM

MW

“ Started out in the Cable business with Jerry in Jasper. We had so many laughs and good times. Then, Jerry offered me a promotion in Bloomington, IN. and we continued to work together for a few years. I will always remember Jerry fondly and wish to extend my most sincere sympathy's to Mag and the entire Birge family. He was one in a million.

*Max Woolsey*

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**Max Woolsey** - December 05, 2022 at 02:43 PM

BS

“ To Mag and the family, Linda and I offer our deepest sympathies and best wishes. We shared many special high school moments (football - especially our senior season, band - Washington DC trip, & other), which I will always remember. Bill Seng

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**Bill Seng** - December 05, 2022 at 12:42 PM

SH

*Bill, those were wonderful memories. I have many fond memories growing up on 5th st. with the wonderful Birge family. Prayers & Sympathy. R.I.P. Jerry you will be missed.  
Sarah Berger Humphrey, Muncie IN.*

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**Sarah Berger Humphrey** - December 05, 2022 at 02:29 PM

HN

*Jerry was a true Jasper icon--of the best kind. RIP, Jerry, and my heartfelt condolences to his family and all who knew him.*

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**Heidi Newman** - December 05, 2022 at 03:39 PM

ND

*So very sorry to learn of this. Prayers with you, Margaret Ann! Norma and Leo Dillon*

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**Norma Dillon** - December 06, 2022 at 07:03 AM

AB

*Dearest Jen and Family, My deepest condolences to you all, I am so sorry for your loss. I will keep you all in my prayers. - Andrea, NYU Gallatin*

**Andrea Buchanan** - December 07, 2022 at 12:22 PM

WB

*Bill Seng and I were football team members of Jerry. I grew up with Jerry and four other neighbor athletes on high school teams. Football, basketball ,baseball for several years. Jerry after graduation went to college with his classmates at various colleges.As adults we separated in different careers and remained friends. Jerry continued as a sportscaster in Indiana and Kentucky. I moved into a surgical career in Arizona. We all stayed together as friends the visiting in Jasper. Jerry will be missed in the future. God Bless Jerry and his family. Love to the family!*

*Bill & Joyce Bohnert*

**William Bohnert,MD** - December 08, 2022 at 08:10 PM

GY

*Dear Jen, I am so very sorry for the loss of your dear father! My heart goes out to you, your mom and your family. My deepest sympathy!  
Much love, Gisela*

**Gisela Humphreys, New York** - December 14, 2022 at 10:13 AM