



Isaac Francis McCain

June 19, 1919 - June 4, 2020

Isaac Francis McCain of Widener, Arkansas was called peacefully to his heavenly home on June 4, 2020, just fifteen days short of his 101st birthday. His life was well lived and he was well loved. He believed passionately in the virtues of hard work, education, and dedication to his family, his faith, and his country.

Francis was born June 19, 1919, in Oxford, Mississippi to Isaac Lafayette McCain and Zelfhia Elizabeth (Joan) Crawford. He graduated from the University of Arkansas with a degree in Agriculture in 1943, and his name is etched on the front walk of Old Main. Upon graduation, he enlisted into the United States Army Air Corps, and he quickly became an instructor in Denver, Colorado. He was then deployed to fight in Europe in World War II, where he became a Captain with over 100 soldiers in his command. His platoon fought in the Battle of the Bulge which led to the end of World War II. Although he rarely spoke of his years at war, his experiences there had a profound impact on his life and on the freedoms we now share.

Returning to Arkansas a war hero, he married the love of his life, Syble Rice, in 1949. They recently celebrated their 71st wedding anniversary. They had one daughter, Joan Collier (Ed) of Forrest City and one son, Isaac Francis McCain, Jr. (Ike), who preceded him in death in 1969 at age 16.

Francis and his brother, Bill, purchased farms in Widener, Arkansas, where he and his bride made their home. He was a farmer, a ginner, and a John Deere dealer. He was also an innovator: he was among the first to bring soybeans to St. Francis County and among the first to precision level farmland. Francis believed he was God's steward of the land and was determined to care for it and leave it better than he found it.

He treasured his personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He worshiped at the Widener Methodist Church until it closed, then he joined the First United Methodist Church in Forrest City, where he attended services surrounded by his family well into his 100th year.

Francis frequently told his family that "education was the key to a good life," and he committed to providing continuing education to not only his own family, but to many local students through the scholarship he endowed in the name of his late son, Ike. He found fulfillment in following the educational journeys of students he supported in the Delta and watching their success.

Francis was honored with a Citation from the Arkansas House of Representatives in 2011 for his service to his country and the State of Arkansas, and he was recognized by the President of the United States in 2019 for his role in our Nation's story of freedom, among many other awards and recognitions throughout his impactful life. He was a past recipient of the St. Francis County Farm Bureau Senior Farmer of the Year award, and he was also a founding member of Ridgecrest County Club. In honor of his service on his 100th birthday, Mayor Cedric Williams of Forrest City declared June 19, 2019 as Captain Isaac Francis McCain Day.

Family was the central focus of his life, and he was proud to be the patriarch, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather of a loving family and to have a major presence in the lives of his great-grandchildren. He leaves his devoted

wife of 71 years, Syble, his daughter Joan Collier (Ed), two granddaughters, Kristen Wright (Marshall) and Lauren Brookman (Eric), and three great-grandchildren, Collier Wright, Syble Wright, and Sophie Grace Brookman, all of Forrest City.

A graveside service will be held at Forrest Park Cemetery on Saturday, June 6, 2020, at 11:00 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests that memorial gifts may be made to First United Methodist Church in Forrest City, or to continue his legacy of service through the Francis McCain Endowment for Charitable Giving at the St. Francis County Community Foundation, P.O. Box 3002, Forrest City, AR 72335.

Cemetery Details

Forrest Park

Hwy 1 South
Forrest City, AR

Previous Events

Graveside Service

JUN 6. 11:00 AM (CT)

Forrest Park
Hwy 1 South
2605 S. Washington Street
Forrest City, AR 72335
(870) 633-8790

Tribute Wall

ST

“ *Shirl.ey Thorn lit a candle in memory of Isaac Francis McCain*



Shirl.ey Thorn - June 09, 2020 at 08:58 PM

PG

“ *Patricia Graves lit a candle in memory of Isaac Francis McCain*



Patricia Graves - June 05, 2020 at 08:08 PM



“ *Sincerest Sorrow - Lavender and White was purchased for the family of Isaac Francis McCain.*



June 05, 2020 at 04:15 PM

RB

“ I have known Francis for 50 plus years as his wife Sybil's dad was my grandmothers cousin. I had not seen them in a long time but in recent years my wife and I stopped in Forest City to visit the family on several occasions. I can tell you that even at his age, his mind was as sharp as a tack. Since I worked for John Deere so many years we always found something to talk about. He was an interesting person talk to and he had a lot of history in his mind. God Bless Sybil, Joan and the entire family.

Robert A Bryant - June 05, 2020 at 04:04 PM



“ White Standing Spray was purchased for the family of Isaac Francis McCain.



June 05, 2020 at 02:48 PM