

NEWS OBITUARIES

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# J.A. Josefson made crops and legislation

• The state senator from Minnesota helped establish vocational schools in southwestern Minnesota.

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When farmer J.A. (Joe) Josefson exchanged his overalls for the going-to-town khakis and felt Stetson of state



**J.A. (Joe) Josefson**

Sen. Joe Josefson, daughter Lois knew she was in for a treat — a chance to tag along with her dad when he went into Minnesota on business.

Trouble was, everyone knew the strapping, blond, 6-foot-5-inch Josefson, and most wanted a moment of his time. "We were always stopping along the sidewalk," said Lois E. Josefson. It took so long to get anywhere."

J.A. Josefson, 92, died Monday at his home in Fergus

Falls. A memorial observance is scheduled during the 9:30 a.m. service next Sunday at Augustana Lutheran Church in Fergus Falls. The memorial service is scheduled for July 29 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Minnesota, the small town where he spent much of his life.

Josefson's parents emigrated in 1878 from Iceland to Westerheim Township in Lyon County. When he was confirmed at the Westerheim Lutheran Church, he was the only one of the seven in his class who chose to memorize passages in Icelandic.

Josefson graduated with honors from Minnesota High School in 1932 and was chosen by the faculty as the male graduate most likely to succeed.

But it was the heart of the Depression, and Josefson's father, 70, asked him to run the

farm instead of heading off to college. He complied and, with \$15 in operating cash, took over Hognastaoir Farm.

He married Gladys Coover in 1950. Daughter Lois was born the following year.

Lois Josefson remembers the tender side of her dad:

"He would sit in his rocking chair, and Mother and I would sit on the davenport, and he'd read aloud the story on the children's page of the Farmer magazine. The story was often about an animal, and as he'd get to the end of a [poignant] story, often tears would come to his eyes. He was an absolute softie, but I thought it was the coolest thing to have this big, strong father who people respected, who wasn't afraid to cry."

Josefson was elected to the state Senate in 1954. While he regretted not attending college, it was never with a "woe is me" attitude, Lois said. Instead, he worked to ensure for others the opportunity circumstanc-

es didn't allow him. He is credited with sponsoring laws that improved the public school trust fund's investment procedures and was involved in establishing higher-education vocational schools in Pipestone, Granite Falls and Canby. He also was a founder of Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall.

But most of all, he was his daughter's loudest cheerleader when she entered law school at the University of Minnesota.

"He always told me the world was my oyster," Lois said. "I should decide what I wanted to do and do it. That was a great gift to me, a girl of the '60s." Lois Josefson went on to practice trust law and is now senior vice president of the Minnesota Private College Council Fund and research Foundation.

Josefson also is survived by two granddaughters.

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