



## Joe S Epley

April 20, 1938 - November 5, 2023

Joe Sidney Epley, 85, of Traveler's Rest died suddenly and unexpectedly on Sunday, November 5, 2023. He was born April 20, 1938, in Forest City, N.C. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Dorcas Starnes Epley; two children, Meredith Epley McGinnis of Travelers Rest and Stewart Taylor Epley, of Charlotte N.C., his sister, Katherine Tischler, of Winston-Salem, N.C., five grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren; and many beloved nieces and nephews and their children. He is preceded in death by his parents, Sidney Charlie Epley and Margaret Vassey Epley, his brother, Jesse Wayne Epley, and granddaughter Olivia Jean Epley.

Joe worked as a television editor and news reporter with WLOS in Asheville and WBTV in Charlotte.

In 1968, he launched Epley Associates Public Relations, which would become one of the most successful public relations firms in the Southeast. During his career he served as president of the Public Relations Society of America, and chair of the PRSA College of Fellows and Counselors Academy. He was a founding member of Worldcom Group, an international network of independent public relations firms. Among Epley's honors are the Gold Anvil, for lifetime achievement, the highest award in the public relations profession, election to the University of North Carolina's Journalism School Public Relations Hall of Fame and the Defense Information School Hall of Fame, and the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, North Carolina's highest award for

noteworthy citizens.

Epley, who joined the U.S. Army in 1958, proudly served as a member of the Army National Guard for over 20 years. The deep friendships he formed with the 11th Special Forces Unit in Charlotte N.C. were lifelong. In recent years he has been a valued member of Special Forces Association Chapter 363 in Upstate South Carolina.

After selling his firm in 2005, Joe and Dorcas retired to Columbus, N.C. where they both became active in the community, volunteering their time and expertise in organizations such as Thermal Belt Outreach Ministry and Polk County Historical Society. He channeled his interest in military history into two fact-based novels about the Carolinas' involvement in the American Revolutionary War. In 2019, he and Dorcas moved to the Woodlands at Furman in Greenville, S.C., where he joined OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) at Furman University.

In his personal life he was Dorcas's husband Joe, and Meredith and Stewart's dad. He was a voracious reader and the unofficial family photographer for family reunions and get togethers.

Epley was a visionary and is remembered for his warmth, compassion, integrity, wit, and wisdom. He will be missed.

Visitation will take place Thursday, November 16, at The Howze Mortuary from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. with the memorial service immediately afterward in the Howze Mortuary Chapel.

Memorials may be made to Thermal Belt Outreach Ministry, 134 White Dr., Columbus, N.C., 28722 or to the charity of one's choice.



# Previous Events

## Visitation

NOV **16**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

The Howze Mortuary  
6714 State Park Rd./P.O. Box 369  
Travelers Rest, SC

## Memorial Service

NOV **16**. 11:00 AM (ET)

The Howze Mortuary Chapel  
6714 State Park Rd.  
Travelers Rest  
Travelers Rest, SC 29690  
[thehowzemortuary@yahoo.com](mailto:thehowzemortuary@yahoo.com)

# Tribute Wall

BL

“ We always enjoyed being in the company of Joe. He was a bright, talented, thoughtful man who gave much of himself to others. His contributions to the work of the OVTA were too numerous to mention and his contribution of books about the Southern Campaign of the American Revolution are an important part of his legacy. He will be deeply missed. Bryant and Linda Lindsey

Bryant and Linda Lindsey - November 17, 2023 at 07:50 PM



“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Joe S Epley.



November 17, 2023 at 10:59 AM

JA

“ Jane planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joe S Epley.

Jane - November 17, 2023 at 10:59 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Joe S Epley.

November 16, 2023 at 02:29 PM

TF

“ *The Worldcom PR Group Family purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of Joe S Epley.*



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**The Worldcom PR Group Family** - November 15, 2023 at 12:19 PM

TF

“ *The Worldcom PR Group Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joe S Epley.*

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**The Worldcom PR Group Family** - November 15, 2023 at 12:19 PM



“ *Sacred Duty Spray was purchased for the family of Joe S Epley.*



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November 14, 2023 at 09:57 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Joe S Epley.*



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November 13, 2023 at 01:34 PM



“ *Ocean Breeze Spray was purchased for the family of Joe S Epley.*



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November 13, 2023 at 10:30 AM



“ *Paavo and Ritva Vasala & family, Finland planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joe S Epley.*

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**Paavo and Ritva Vasala & family, Finland** - November 13, 2023 at 10:30 AM



“ *Dear Dorcas,  
We have learnt only now of Joe passing away and Galena, Katya and myself feel deep sorrow for our friend of long standing. He was a Man of great standing, talent and personal charm. Please, dear Dorcas, accept our condolences.  
Galena, Katya, Alexander.*

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**alexander borisov** - November 13, 2023 at 03:44 AM

MM

“ Joe shared his talents and his points of view with a writing class I led at OLLI. A journalist and a writer myself, I called him the day I discovered he would be among my students. I had thought his overwhelming credentials would make him someone who could teach the class rather than taking it!

*Joe clearly believed in collaboration, however, evidenced by his humble and helpful participation every week..*

*I offer his family my deepest condolences. And I thank God I had the opportunity to enjoy his contributions as one of our Experienced Writers..*

*Mary C. McCarthy  
Taylors SC*

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**Mary McCarthy** - November 12, 2023 at 11:21 PM

MB

“ *Dear Dorcas and Family ~  
With Joe as our noble PR Society leader throughout the 70's, 80's and 90's  
the business of Public Relations took on a stronger and more significant place within the business community. He was a master strategist and married that with a quick wit ... a fabulous combination.*

*Mark Ethridge shared with me the sad news of Joe's passing the day after Joe left for Heaven and Mark and I both used a long list of superlatives in describing the incredible man that he was. No doubt Heaven will be getting many more positive publicity reviews now that Joe's up there to lead the cause.*

*With deepest sympathy,  
Marilynn Bowler*

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**Marilynn Bowler** - November 12, 2023 at 11:23 AM

JZ

“ My heartfelt sympathy Dorcas and family. Joe, as you know better than all of us, was an amazing man . An American hero, and friend to so many. I remember his Ground Hog Day parties, the fun he shared, his commitment to family, friends, country. What a gift to this world. We will miss you Joe. Dorcas, thank you for sharing yours and Joe's lives with so many. You have made a difference.

Joan Zimmerman - November 11, 2023 at 04:15 PM

CN

“ Dorcas,  
Joe was a gift to Thermal Belt Outreach Ministry. You both were for the wonderful gifts you shared with the organization.  
I always knew Joe stood for what was right and good. He was a mentor to me and a guiding light for the organization. Odd how I had been thinking of him lately, wondering how he was doing.  
My prayers are with you and your family in these days ahead. God's grace will lead you. Blessings,  
Carol Newton

Carol V Newton - November 10, 2023 at 07:39 PM

NE

“ Dear Kathy and family:

I'm saddened to hear about Joe. Such an icon in the PR world in Charlotte. May his memory help you in the days ahead.

Nancy (Ehrenberg) Eaton

Nancy Forman Eaton - November 10, 2023 at 08:06 AM



SW

*Dorcas and family,*

*I will miss co-teaching with Joe and our yearly meetings to discuss the latest research on the American Revolution. I remember especially a hike with other Rev. War enthusiasts to Yellow Mountain Gap. My condolences to the entire family.*

*Scott Withrow*

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**Scott Withrow** - November 15, 2023 at 07:11 PM