

## OBITUARY ANNOUNCEMENT

# Mr. Joseph Smith

Oct. 5, 1923 - Sept 21, 2018

URBANA — Joseph H. Smith died Friday, Sept. 21, 2018, in Urbana at the age of 94.

Joseph was born Oct. 5, 1923, in Maywood, to Charles Smith and Mabel Rice. He attended Thyne Institute, Chase City, Va., from 1937-1942. A veteran of World War II, Joseph joined the Marine Corps in 1943 and was assigned to base camp at Montford Point, Camp Lejeune, N.C. He was honorably discharged in 1946.



Joseph was a member of the Montford Point Marine Association. In 2012, he was proud to be among the 368 surviving Montford Point Marines who were recognized by Congress with the nation's highest civilian honor, the congressional gold medal. Joseph supported a number of local organizations including the Don Moyer Boys & Girls Club and Krannert Center.

He graduated from Howard University, Washington, D.C., in 1951 with a degree in English and received his master's degree in education from Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., in 1953.

Joseph is survived by his daughters, Pamela Smith of Indianapolis and Jocelyn Leatherwood of Annandale, Va., and grandson, Christopher Overstreet of Indianapolis.

Joseph married LaVerne Roberts, the daughter of his father's childhood friend, in 1951. Together they had three children, Pamela, Daniel and Jocelyn.

He was preceded in death by his wife, LaVerne; son, Daniel; and sister, Mary Constance.

From 1954-1964, Joseph taught at the elementary, junior and senior high schools and a junior college in Jackson. Joseph began his career at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1964, where he was one of the first African-American faculty members hired by the University. In 1978, he was named assistant vice chancellor for academic affairs, director of affirmative action and associate professor of English.

Renner-Wikoff Chapel, 1900 S. Philo Road, Urbana, is assisting the family with arrangements. A funeral is scheduled for 1 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 10, at Chapel of St. John the Divine, Champaign, with a reception to follow at the Canterbury House (next to the church).

He was a longtime member of Chapel of Saint John the Divine and served in his local parish, the Diocese of Springfield and the Episcopal Church in several roles: lay eucharistic minister, vestry member, diocesan synod delegate, Diocesan Standing Committee, board of trustees, Seminary of the Southwest; board of trustees, Seabury-Western Theological Seminary.

In lieu of other expressions of sympathy, please send donations to Chapel of Saint John the Divine, Carle Hospice or the University of Illinois Foundation for the Joseph H. Smith Award in the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. The family would like to thank the caregivers from Home Instead, the staff at Clark-Lindsey and Carle Hospice for their care and dedication. Condolences may be offered at [renner-wikoffchapel.com](http://renner-wikoffchapel.com).