

John Kenneth Blasi, age 89, died on Saturday, September 21, 2013 at his home in Hemet, California. He was born March 6, 1924 in Cunningham, Kansas, the son of August Charles (A.C.) and Grace Blasi. He grew up on farms and attended schools near Pratt, Kansas and graduated from Pratt High School, where he was the captain of the football team. Each of his 5 brothers (Bob, Charles, Bill, Gene and Norman) would follow him in that position. In addition to his brothers, he had two sisters, Velda and Marjorie. John joined the Navy not long after the attack on Pearl Harbor and served in the Armed Guard, protecting merchant marine vessels throughout the South Pacific. He was awarded the Purple Heart for injuries received during an attack at sea. While on leave in 1943, he married the love of his life, Gladys Lambert, of Kismet, Kansas.

On returning from the service, John worked briefly at the Columbia Carbon Company plant near Ulysses, Kansas, before joining the Barbour Drilling Company. He began as a "roughneck," but by age 33 had worked his way up to become Drilling Superintendent, overseeing as many as 16 active drilling rigs in Kansas, Oklahoma and Colorado. After his employer went out of business in 1963, John and his family moved to Liberal, Kansas, where he oversaw manufacturing operations at Tradewind Industries. In Liberal, he was a great fan of the Liberal BeeJays and of the Liberal High School Football team, which was coached for many years by his brother, Bill Blasi.

After his retirement, John, his wife Gladys and son Ricky "Coach" travelled the Western United States for two years before settling in Hemet, California, to be close to their older son Gary, of Los Angeles, and his family. Coach passed away in 1999 in Hemet.

John Blasi leaves to mourn his loss: his wife of 70 years, Gladys, of the home in Hemet; son, Gary Blasi and wife Kit, of Los Angeles; grandson Michael, wife Beth and great-granddaughter Myla, of Los Angeles; grandson Jeremy and wife Nancy, of Los Angeles; brother Bill Blasi, of Liberal; brother Bob Blasi and wife Ann, of Conifer, Colorado; and an extended family of nephews and nieces and dear friends both in Kansas and California.

• Memorial services will be conducted on Saturday, October 5, 2013 at 2 pm at the Chapel at Brenneman Funeral Home with Pastor David Randall presiding. Burial will be at the Liberal Cemetery. There will be no visitation and cremation has taken place.

In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of John Blasi can be made to the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research (www.michaeljfox.org).

Condolences may be sent to the family at www.brennemanfuneralhome.com.