



## Joseph R. Hawthorne, Jr.

January 23, 2018

Joe was born in Fitchburg, November 25, 1948, a son of the late Joseph R. and Anne (Dunleavy) Hawthorne and has resided in Shirley for over 40 years.

He was a graduate of St. Bernard's Central Catholic High School in Fitchburg and later attended Fitchburg State College. He had been active in the Fitchburg Scouting program and had attained the level of Eagle Scout.

During the Vietnam era Joe served his country for over four years in the United States Navy.

Joe began his career of 36 years as a professional firefighter when, in 1977, he was appointed to the Shirley Fire Department. In 1984 he rose to the rank of Lieutenant and in 2003 became Captain of the Department and in 2012 was named of Deputy Chief of the Shirley Fire Department. He continued to remain active in the activities of the department after his retirement in 2013.

In December 2009, Joe was the first to respond to a house fire on Phoenix Street in Shirley where he was able to single handedly rescue an injured woman from the burning building.

As a result of his heroism he was honored by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as the Firefighter of the Year in 2010. Also, that year, Joe was

honored with the American Legion Silver Star Medal of Valor.

He was instrumental in the formation of the Shirley Legion Youth Baseball League and had coached in the youth sports programs. He was a member of St. Anthony's Church, Shirley.

He is survived by his wife of 39 years, Mary E. (Legere) Hawthorne; a son, Jonathan T. Hawthorne and wife, Lisa of Ayer; a daughter, Katie A. Hawthorne and boyfriend, Jason Strniste of West Brookfield; two stepsons, Alex Mechachonis and wife Alisha of Granville, Michael Mechachonis and wife Melissa of Suffield, CT; a brother, Mark Hawthorne of Fitchburg; three sisters, Brenda Santucci and Mary Foley both of Leominster, Anne "Honeybear" Smith of Texas; six grandchildren, Cameron Hawthorne, Emma Hawthorne, Holden Mechachonis, Anna Mechachonis, Ayla Mechachonis and Alex Mechachonis and nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his brother, Thomas Hawthorne.

# Tribute Wall

JO

“ Our condolences to Joe’s family. Joe was a great human being and The town of Shirley has lost a wonderful guy who was always there when Someone needed help. Joe will be missed by many. R.I.P. Joe.

*John & Marian*

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**John** - January 27, 2018 at 05:36 PM

BG

“ Dear Mary and family, I'm so sorry to hear about Joe's passing. He was a dedicated public servant, serving his country and his community admirably. He truly embodied what is great about the devoted and unselfish heroes among us. May he Rest In Peace.

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**Bobby Gardner** - January 27, 2018 at 02:11 PM

LC

“ Jon my deepest condolences to you and your family on the loss is your father. Linda

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**Linda Cadero** - January 27, 2018 at 12:21 PM

MF

“ Mary, & family. Joe was and will always be Shirley’s hero, as well as yours! Many all the memories you made together stay in you heart, and help heal your loss. So glad to have seen you both at St Anthony’s Bazar, smiling reminiscing about the AHS days. Joe, Rest In Peace.

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**Maribeth Dynice Finnerty** - January 27, 2018 at 07:52 AM

JQ

“ Mary, Katie & Hawk,  
So sorry for the loss of Joe. I would see him regularly at the Post Office and around town and will miss the contact and conversation. Honestly, I don't think in the entire time I've known him ever seen him do anything for himself. He was a gentle strong man that was only happy when he was doing something...anything for someone else. If I was prepping a ball field and he drove by he would stop and help every time. You might say it's the Eagle Scout in him or the firefighter in him, but I know it's who he was. May we all take the time to be a little more like Joe.  
"Q"

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**Jim Quinty** - January 27, 2018 at 05:29 AM

RD

“ Jon,  
  
My condolences to you and your family on your loss.

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**Ray Domaingue** - January 26, 2018 at 07:42 PM

AW

“ Dear Katie & family  
Please accept my sincerest sympathies. My heart aches for you. I was very saddened to hear of Joe's passing. He was someone I met many many years ago through work and truly liked. I got to know him better through you Katie; he was not just your dad, he was your hero and a true gentleman. A man to be admired. He will be sadly missed. RIP Joe

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**Ann Whiting** - January 26, 2018 at 10:35 AM

AW

“ Dear Katie & family  
Please accept my sincerest sympathies. My heart aches for you. I was very saddened to hear of Joe’s passing. He was someone I met many many years ago through work and truly liked. I got to know him better through you Katie; he was your not just your dad, he was your hero and a true gentleman. A man to be admired. He will be sadly missed. RIP Joe

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**Ann Whiting** - January 26, 2018 at 10:33 AM

SD

“ Mary, my condolences,so sorry to hear about Joe.I use to see him walking by the house all the time.

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**Stephen Doiron** - January 26, 2018 at 10:08 AM

WO

“ Rip Joe. One of Shirleys best firefighter.sorry for your loss Mary and family. Will miss talking about the good old days of the muster, Mutal aid calls.

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**Wolfman** - January 26, 2018 at 08:01 AM

CR

“ Jon sorry to hear about the loss of your father. he had an illustrious career and I am sure you are very proud of him. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.

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**Charlie Rice** - January 25, 2018 at 06:04 PM

LA

“ Mary, Katie, John.  
I am so sorry and also sad to hear of Joe's passing. He was one hell of a guy. My thoughts and prayers are will you.

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**Leon J. Avey** - January 25, 2018 at 05:04 PM

JO

“ *Mary and family.  
Very sorry for your loss. Joe was one of the good ones and he will  
be missed.*

*John*

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**John oelfke** - January 25, 2018 at 02:25 PM

BC

“ *Mary, Kate & Jon.  
I am so sorry for your loss. He was an awesome man.  
He will be greatly missed.*

*Love you all*

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**Barbara, Danny & Nick Colon** - January 25, 2018 at 09:41 AM

DP

“ *Mary, John, & Katie;*

*I'm so sorry to hear the passing of Joe, he was true to his family, his  
Town and to his Fire Department. A baseball Manager that I truly  
enjoyed working a game with, extremely professional. I will be  
praying for you all.*

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**Dale Prentiss** - January 25, 2018 at 07:50 AM

PA

“ *Although no words can ease your loss, may you find comfort in  
knowing that others care of your loss. With deepest sympathy &  
condolences in God's Blessing's.*

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**Peter Arnold** - January 25, 2018 at 05:41 AM

JC

“ Mary, I am so sorry for your loss. My sincere sympathies to you and your family.

Jane Croteau - January 25, 2018 at 03:45 AM

SR

“ Mary and family,

We are so sorry for your loss and our thoughts and prayers are with you at this very difficult time. Joe was a great man and will be greatly missed by everyone...RIP Joe

Sharon Mauro/Tiny's Restaurant - January 25, 2018 at 03:00 AM

VH

“ Mary, I was deeply saddened to read about your husbands passing. All my thoughts and prayers are with you and your family at this time. Ginny Misch Hammond

Virginia M Hammond - January 24, 2018 at 07:25 PM

CM

“ Mary please know you & your family are in our thoughts & prayers. Love Jason & Cathy

Cathy "Wark" McDaniel - January 24, 2018 at 07:05 PM

AB

“ Jon and Lisa,  
Please accept my heartfelt sympathy on the passing of your father.  
Alan

alan brown - January 24, 2018 at 05:28 PM

CH

“ Jon very sorry for the loss of your father. My thoughts and prayers are with you.

Cliff Hansen - January 24, 2018 at 04:49 PM

HC

“ My heart felt condolences to you and your family, Mary.

Heidi(West) Campbell - January 24, 2018 at 03:50 PM

BS

“ Our deepest sympathies and condolences. Joe will be missed. He was a wonderful man. We are better for having known him.

Bruce & Marie Stapel - January 24, 2018 at 03:42 PM

PB

“ Jon, my deepest sympathy to you and your entire family.

Peter Brown - January 24, 2018 at 02:38 PM

JN

“ Joe was a good man and a great firefighter he was a true hero and he will be truly missed by all that knew him.

Joe Nicosia - January 24, 2018 at 12:50 PM

TJ

“ So sorry for your loss wish I could be there I will continue To pray for you Mary Jon. And Katie joe taught me a lot About firefighting and every day life he taught me how To drive a fire truck he will be missed

Terry Jordan (Tj) Lora jordan - January 24, 2018 at 11:58 AM

SW

“ Mary, Jon and Katie, My heart is aching as I share your loss. Butch was a wonderful person but to me and my family he was a great "Cousin-in-Law". We have such wonderful memories of times spent together. We have so many laughs and stories that we can always look back on. Sending prayers, love and hugs to all..

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**Sharon Lanteigne Wark** - January 24, 2018 at 08:22 AM

LW

“ Mary We are so sorry to hear of the passing of Joe. My thoughts and prayers go out to you and the family. Joe will be truly missed. He always helped everyone that needed it. Rest in peace Joe you always said hi to me and you helped my daughter when she tipped her motorcycle over. God Bless You.

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**Linda Gendron & Stanley Westover** - January 24, 2018 at 07:37 AM

VD

“ Mary and family, We are so saddened to hear of the loss of Joseph. Prayers for happy memories to help comfort you at this difficult time. God Bless you.

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**Valeri & John Delcore** - January 24, 2018 at 07:25 AM

JS

“ Mary and family, sorry to hear of your loss. My deepest condolences to you & family. My thoughts & prayers are with you as you go through this difficult time

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**Jean E Staples** - January 24, 2018 at 06:15 AM

PK

“ Mary and family, you are in my prayers. Joe was a kind, gentle hero who will be missed by all. He served our town with honor and valor. Rest in peace Joe, you personified what a true hero is in service to our community and to many others.

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**Pat Krauchune** - January 24, 2018 at 05:47 AM

DL

“ God bless you Mary, we are so sorry for your loss. It's a sad day in Shirley, Joe will be sorely missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with you as you go through this difficult time.

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**Dave & Bonnie Lambert** - January 24, 2018 at 05:04 AM

DF

“ I was sorry to hear of Joe's sudden passing. I worked with him in many Legion Events and with the baseball team. He was passionate about the things and people he cared about. God comfort you in this difficult time.

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**Diane Fox** - January 24, 2018 at 04:50 AM

JC

“ Mary and family,  
We're so sorry to hear of Joe's passing. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

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**Jerrie & Paula Coates** - January 24, 2018 at 03:35 AM

CB

“ I am saddened for the loss of Joe, and for all of us he knew. He was a great man and helped so many. My deepest condolences to the family. He will be greatly missed. He was always pleasant. RIP Joe..

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**Connie Barber** - January 23, 2018 at 04:14 PM

CF

“ Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you at this time. We can only hope and pray that all the amazing memories that you have with Joe will help you through the days ahead and help to bring a smile to your face. We are all blessed to have known Joe. With lots of love and sincere condolences. We are here if you need anything

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**Cornwell/Filz Families** - January 23, 2018 at 04:04 PM

JR

“ So sorry for your loss. Joe was a great man,,sending our prayers to you all..

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**John and Debbie ranno** - January 23, 2018 at 04:01 PM

MD

“ Sorry for your loss Mary, Katie and John. My prayers are with you and your family.

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**Mike Detillion** - January 23, 2018 at 03:50 PM

RC

“ Katie, Mary and Jonathan. So very shocked to hear of your loss. Joe was a one of a kind and such a great mentor to me and so many others. May he Rest In Peace as his work is complete and may you all find comfort knowing he is no longer suffering. He is not replaceable as they broke the mold.....true dedication to public safety! God bless you all.

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**Rob & Colleen** - January 23, 2018 at 03:48 PM

JD

“ Mary I cannot believe this news.I am so sorry to hear of this. Joe was a big part in all our lives here in Shirley. His calm manner and patience when called into service no matter how minor the problem. He will remain in my memories and you and Katie and John in my prayers. Please call if you need anything.

Best,

Jennifer and James Doyle

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Jennifer Doyle - January 23, 2018 at 03:41 PM

JO

“ Dear Mary and family, I am so sorry for your loss. Joe was a wonderful man and will be missed by many.

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JOHNNA - January 23, 2018 at 03:08 PM

TD

“ I am very sorry for the Family's Loss and those that were close to him!

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Tracy DeWolf - January 23, 2018 at 03:06 PM

AM

“ Sorry for your loss.

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Annette [Wheeler] Munnis - January 23, 2018 at 02:29 PM

MC

“ It is a sad day for all who live in Shirley.....Anytime I had a crisis at my house over the years, Joe was almost always the first on the scene.....He and Mary live right around the corner....God Bless you Mary, Jonathan, and Katie.....Joe was a true, selfless hero in life.....

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**marianne coalter** - January 23, 2018 at 02:08 PM

CT

“ I am so sorry for your loss. My thoughts and prayers are with you all.

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**Carrie (Burns) Thibodeau** - January 23, 2018 at 01:48 PM

SL

“ I worked with Joe years ago when I dispatched for the town. Always a kind and generous soul. My thoughts are with the family during this very difficult time.

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**Shelley Lawless** - January 23, 2018 at 01:34 PM

LB

“ We are so sorry for your loss, Joe was a wonderful man and will be missed!!! Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you at this difficult time. John and Linda

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**Linda and John Brackett** - January 23, 2018 at 01:33 PM

GM

“ We are so sorry for your loss Mary, Katie and Jonathan. Butch was a wonderful man and loved by many. He will be truly missed. Love, George and Jeanie

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**George and Jeanie May** - January 23, 2018 at 01:31 PM