

**A Tribute to Joe Walraven**  
**10/27/1939 ~ 06/08/2021**



It is with great heartache that we convey the news of Joe Lawrence Walraven's death on Tuesday, June 8, 2021.

Joe was 81 years old at the time of his death and led an amazing life. He impacted the lives of the people in his community and his companies for the better. Joe enjoyed a good story, a good laugh, a good hunt, and good company. Joe loved life and lived his to the fullest every day.

A little history on the great Joe Walraven. Joe was born in Texarkana, Arkansas on October 27, 1939. He grew up in Texarkana and graduated from St. Edward's Catholic High School in 1957. After graduating high school, Joe began working for Missouri Pacific Railroad (now Union Pacific Railroad). This was where his love for the railroad and railcars began. While working full time and raising a family, he attended Southern Methodist University. He earned a Bachelor's degree in Business from SMU in 1971.

After the completion of his degree, Joe moved to Ranger, Texas, to explore his entrepreneurial side. He started his first business adventure establishing Texas Rail Car Corporation as the first private railcar repair business in the nation. He sold this business in 1978 and once his management contract expired, founded his next business, JoeBob Oilfield Service. Joe was no stranger to taking risks in pursuit of success. Some of the companies he founded and/or co-founded include JM Texas Companies, LLC; Eagle Construction & Environmental Services, LP; Eagle Supply & Manufacturing, LP; Eagle Specialized Services, Inc; Fleet Equipment Leasing, LP; J&M Equipment Sales and Rentals, LLC; Texas Eagle Properties, LLC; Denali Services, LP; Eagle Remediation Services, Inc; JoeBob Oilfield Services, Inc.; Juneau Service Company; Eagle Railcar Services – Cairo, Ohio, LLC (Cairo shop); Eagle Railcar Services, LP (Elkhart shop); and Eagle Railcar Services – Roscoe, Inc. (Roscoe shop).

Joe was an extraordinary man. His work ethic was unparalleled. He worked hard and he believed in taking care of his people. He was diligent in teaching and training his employees. He willingly asked the tough questions and had the hard and often uncomfortable conversations needed to challenge a person to not only be better, but to be the best. He was always willing to help in absolutely any way he could. He expected the best of those he led but held them to the same standard he held himself. He could connect and conversate with every person, communicating their value in his eyes regardless of their history, background, education, wealth, or job position. He was described by one employee as "a man for every man".

During his lifetime, Joe was the president of multiple companies and currently, 13 of these companies are still active. The companies he was most known for are Eagle Construction and Environmental Services, LP., founded in 1993, and Eagle Railcar Services, cofounded in 2001 with his son, Marc Walraven. Eagle Railcar Services is now owned by Marc Walraven, who serves as the President of the company. When Joe founded Eagle Railcar Services, he owned two shops, one in Roscoe, Texas, and the second in Elkhart, Texas. Since that time, Eagle Railcar has now grown to ten locations across five states. Eagle Railcar Services employs over 1200 employees but has not lost the original goal or vision of its founder. Joe's original vision for each of his businesses was to provide excellence. The pursuit of excellence and quality is the mission of Eagle Railcar Services to this day. Joe used his shops to not only provide jobs for his employees, but also to impact the community around each shop. Several of the shops have provided opportunities for local students to tour the shops as a means to explore future careers in this industry.

Even after selling his interests in his businesses in 2016, his retirement was not what most people think of as retirement. His retirement included a series of development and construction projects which he continued to manage until his passing, as well as hunting and fishing all over the world. He loved to hunt some of the most sought-after exotic big game there was. His hunting and fishing trips took him all over the globe, to places like The Central African Republic, Tanzania, Cameroon, South Africa, Namibia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Botswana, Zambia, Mozambique, Mongolia, Panama, Argentina, Canada, Spain, Hungary, Turkey, the Arctic, and the Amazon.

Joe and his wife Jennifer lived on their ranch in Ranger at the time of his death. Joe was also passionate in his personal life. He loved his ranch, the Rafter W, and was extremely proud of his Brangus herd. He was an avid international big game hunter, was a lifetime member of the Dallas Safari Club, and served on the Board of Regents for Ranger College for many years. He was featured in several hunting magazines including the Dallas Safari Magazine. Joe had a passion for business, hunting, fishing, and people. He never met a stranger and was authentically "Joe" everywhere he went. That might mean you'd get the blunt truth even if it were hard to hear, or it might mean you'd get a mischievous quote and/or joke that may or may not be a tad indecent. Joe was always genuine; he didn't put on a show for anyone. He enjoyed life and lived out the famous quote,

*"Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all."*

Some of the Eagle employees whose lives Joe impacted wanted to contribute to this tribute. Here are their remarks:

*\*Joe – AKA – "the old man" - It's hard to put what he taught me into words. One thing was not to be afraid to take a risk, he didn't mind taking some risk for some reward. A great thing about Joe was his ability to read through the BS and get down to what was really going on in his plants by asking the same question four different ways. Honestly, there is a lot, but what I most appreciate about Joe was his willingness to listen to the everyday man. He was firm but fair in many situations over the years with Eagle. He gave me opportunity to take risk of my own, so for that I will always be grateful.*

*~ Ronnie Graves, Operations Manager, Eagle Railcar Services*

*\*Joe and Marc hired me exactly seven years ago, on June 6, 2014, and I have enjoyed knowing Joe both professionally and personally ever since. He was always respectful, gracious, and kind to me, even if we didn't always see eye-to-eye on an issue. He was also "always right"!, which was fine with me since he was the boss... and he actually was usually right. After Marc took over the business a couple of years into my tenure, Joe would still call just to see how things were going, and of course I would always report that everything was running smoothly (which it usually was). He would also occasionally come for a look around and pick out salvaged items from my boneyard to have me refurbish for use on his ranch. He would always tell me not to tell Marc what we were up to, but of course I always did. Marc never let on to Joe that he was "in the loop". Being the "Great White Hunter" that he was, Joe also liked to tell me about his upcoming Hunting & Fishing Adventures, and I could always count on (and look forward to) photos of his trophies in "real time" while he was away, along with descriptions in the message line such as "#1 or #2 such-and-such animal in the World!", or whatever Country or Region he was in at the time. I don't believe he would have ever been satisfied to kill any animal that wasn't "the-biggest-and-the-best", as that's just who Joe was, and I believe that's pretty much who Joe was in every area of his life. So, here's to Joe: The Biggest And The Best - I will miss you, Sir.*

*~ Bill Jones, Plant Manager, Eagle Railcar Services, Elkhart, Tx*

*\*I've been in the railcar industry for 33 years and with Eagle Railcar for 15 years. I have been witness to the growth and development of Eagle Railcar that all began with one man – Joe Walraven. Joe instilled a hard work ethic and the value of family across each facility. He was a man of his word and made everyone feel like an asset. I remember him frequently visiting each location and checking in with each employee. His visits weren't just about work, Joe truly cared about each individual. He was a very generous man. My favorite times with Joe were at our annual dove hunts in which he invited both customers and vendors and accommodated each one without hesitation. His appreciation was evident through annual Christmas parties for employees and their families which included a huge dinner, door prizes, and a speech expressing his gratitude.*

*I've learned many lessons through Joe's leadership. For example, as a purchasing agent I would receive frequent calls from him. One call in particular I'll always remember. Joe lectured me on a purchase I made for an item that he also found at a lower rate. I remember him saying with a stern voice, "You can buy that same part all day long from this vendor for five cents less." Looking back, I've realized the value of money and savings. Every cent counts. Ironically, Eagle has grown from two to ten shops. Most importantly, when Joe had a question, you better have an answer. I will always be grateful for knowing Joe as a person and the opportunities he provided me through Eagle Railcar. I wouldn't be where I am today if it weren't for Joe believing in me. May his legacy continue for years to come.*

*~ Jr. Jimenez, Corporate Inventory Manager, Eagle Railcar Services, Roscoe, Tx*

*\*First, I should say anyone that knew Joe knows there are so, so many memorable moments, stories, conversations, and trips that it's impossible to put all of it in text. I knew Joe for almost twenty years, so there were many opportunities for those special memorable impressions that stay with you. I met Joe and Jennifer in early June in 2002. I remember Donna and I picking up Joe and Jennifer on a Saturday afternoon at the airport FBO in Beaumont, TX. Joe flew down to interview me for the Plant Manager position at Elkhart. They arrived in the twin engine turbo prop Commander. Joe showed me inside the plane and thought that was pretty cool. We had lunch at Ester's Seafood Restaurant in Bridge City under the Rainbow Bridge, BTW Ester's did not survive the coastal hurricanes. Joe interviewed me over a bowl of seafood gumbo. Joe offered the job and I accepted and that was the beginning of the incredible journey for me with Joe & Eagle Railcar.*

*A story I recall is an auction Joe and I went to whenever GE Railcar shut down their Texarkana repair shop. Everything, I mean everything was for sale and Joe went crazy, I think we all know Joe was like a kid in a candy store when it came to auctions. It wasn't long before the auctioneers knew Joe by name and kept a close eye on the rolled-up auction lot listings in his hand. We were working our way through the shop with the auctioneers, Joe bought "lot 88" that consisted of a few pallets of equipment. Joe poked my arm and said, "You see that pallet that has the bolt bin on it loaded with fasteners that is sitting next to our "lot 88" ....of course the bolt bin was in lot "87"! I told him, "yes I see it". Joe comes back and says "When the crowd gets down the aisle a little bit, get a magic marker, sneak back and change the 7 to an 8, of course I agreed. All seemed ok they rest of the day. Joe went back to Ranger that evening and I went back to Elkhart. I came back*

*the next day with a crew and Casey had a forklift delivered to load up our haul. OMG...when I got around to "lot 88" I was met with hostile auction mafia police and the very angry owners of lot 87 accusing someone of "doctoring" the auction number card.....I thought I did a good job! It was a very intense moment, and I wasn't sure what that outcome would be, but ended up working it out as a "mistake" and helped them load their pallet with the bolt bin. When the auction was over, Joe had bought two full 40' flatbed truck loads of shop equipment, minus 1 bolt bin. Needless to say, I was very apprehensive in joining Joe at anymore auctions as the previous plan didn't work out too well!*

*~Jamie Calfee, Account Manager, Eagle Railcar Services*

*\*His favorite saying was "I Want to Know". He was a very smart man, knew everything that was going on in his company, even where equipment was and if it needed to be serviced. He loved a good argument, never accepted defeat, even if he knew he was wrong (which wasn't often) LOL. He never held a grudge. You could talk to him about anything.*

*~ James Whalley, Accounts Receivable, Eagle Railcar Services (former employee, Eagle Construction & Environmental Services, LP)*

*\*I was one of the computer guys. Computers did not move dirt, so getting Joe to spend money on hardware and software that did not contain "Yellow Iron" was always a challenge. Those conversations have been remembered for years and still make me smile. Please know that he and his family are in my prayers.*

*~David Vaudrin, former Network Administrator for a lot of Eagle Companies*

*\*Joe was a really good man and impacted me professionally and personally, on a job site or on the ranch. "I want to know" was the start to many conversations with him and I knew dang well he already had the answer to what he was going to ask. His straightforward approach and big heart I will always remember. He told me once "If you wake up tomorrow with one penny more than you had yesterday, you did good". I might add he also said, "You needed to make more than that if we were going to keep this company going"! I started in 2004 and helped him and Marc build it back until they sold it. We all got along great. I told Joe I felt like a son until they sold us. I was happy being a stepson at that point. I have a lot of love for that family. Joe your friendship meant the world to me, I will never forget you. And by the way, I never told Jennifer we took her SUV in the pasture to put those fish in the stock ponds, or the Crown! Rest high on the mountain my friend, you were truly one of a kind and will be missed.*

*~ Todd Johnson, former Corporate Emergency Response Manager, Eagle Construction & Environmental Services, LP*

*\*Joe Walraven – the most unforgettable person I will ever know. A great friend for over 50 years and a successful businessman who was respected by all his industry peers. Joe took great pride in building successful businesses and he always acknowledged those who contributed to the success; however, Joe and Marc's foresight and business acumen enabled them to build successful businesses.*

*Years ago, Joe and I both worked for the same company. Joe had just received his pilot's license and purchased a single engine airplane. We scheduled a trip to visit Phillips Petroleum in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, and Joe stated he would pick me up at DFW airport. Little did I know that he was a new pilot, and I was going to be his first passenger! He picked me up at one of the terminals at DFW and we flew to Bartlesville. On the return trip that evening, DFW was busy with large jets arriving and departing, so the air traffic controller directed us to land at a very remote runway at DFW – it took 30 minutes to taxi to a gate, probably would have been a 10-minute flight. We laughed about this many times.*

*It is impossible to sum up more than fifty years of friendship, but my friend—I will miss you! Joe's interests were many—business executive, rancher, big game hunter; however, his family was the most important part of his life—wife, sons, daughters-in-law, and grandchildren. Joe's legacy will live through all the people his life touched – family, friends, and business associates. His goal was not to live forever, but to create something that would last through his kindness and generosity.*

*~ Jim Wetzel, Vice President of Sales & Marketing, Eagle Railcar Services*

*\*Joe Walraven was one of the greatest businessmen I've ever known. I began working for Joe at J&M Equipment in 2015. I couldn't have imagined the impact he would have had on my life. Just a short year later, he presented me with an opportunity to come work at the corporate office for Eagle Railcar. With an eager heart and a great big smile, I replied with "YES SIR". From that moment, my entire life would change for the better. Joe and I had several conversations about my desire to further my education and be a great role model for my children and grandchildren. He told me he would make a call. Little did I know a few days later he would come into my office to tell me that I was ready to start Ranger College. Because of this man I have been given many great opportunities, the greatest being the ability to better myself and my family by returning to school, even at my age. Joe was not a soft-spoken man; he made his presence known when he came into the office. I'm going to miss him walking through the halls "stirring up trouble" as I would so often tell him. When the time comes for me to walk across the stage and receive my degree it will be in honor of him. Without him this wouldn't have been possible. Although payment of my tuition was done anonymously, I have a pretty good idea it was Joe. I hope he will be looking down proud of how far I've come. I will forever be grateful for Joe and this company.*

***~Tanya Tinker, Corporate Accounting Clerk, Eagle Railcar Services, and former Office Manager, J&M Equipment***

*\*I Wanna Know.....!" were the words Joe typically used (and bellowed) to admonish one of his Managers or other employees in response to some infraction they had caused or been party to, and YES, he knew the answer and you had better not lie or try to deceive him. He once told me "It's time to twist some tails!". This was not an invitation to a crawfish boil but rather his response to reviewing the P&Ls after a particularly slow month. Joe expected a lot of his employees and demanded 110 percent. He led by example, himself giving 120 percent in everything he did, whether it was business or one of his many hobbies including hunting, fishing, or ranching. He typically only slept an average of 4 hours a night. He was a tough and hard man, but fair. To everyone who truly knew him, he was greatly admired and respected. In the words of Louis L'Amour, "He was a man to ride the river with". He did have crawfish boils, by the way, and his party at the TCEQ trade fair was attended and enjoyed by many for years.*

***~Damon Waresback, former Director of Technical Services, Eagle Construction & Environmental Services, LP***

*\*Joe Walraven was an amazing man. I met Joe in 2001 while working in Environmental, I was with The IT Group and Eagle was one of our contract Emergency Response contractors. In 2002, I started to work for Joe and Eagle Construction and Environmental. This was a change for me, but Joe made it work. Over the years, I then worked for Eagle Railcar in Cairo, Ohio till I retired in 2020.*

*As anyone that knows Joe, it was an experience that will never be forgotten. Sitting down typing this out, I can remember the phone calls. If you got a call from Joe and he started out with "Can you tell me", someone was in trouble and Joe was doing his investigations before chewing on some "Ass Pocket". But Joe was a man that would use those phone calls or in person "can you tell me's" to help you out and be darn sure you do not make that mistakes again, because then it was a lot more than "can you tell me".*

*Joe always had stories to tell, be it flying from shop to shop in his own plane, delivering railcar parts, Joe's hunting trips or examples of things that happened in other locations. I am going to share one fishing story of Joe. Ya know Joe never liked coming to Ohio in the wintertime because it was cold, but yet he can go to the great north to go hunting, I always found that funny but anyway, he made a trip to Ohio and wanted to go Ice fishing. The ice was not very good on any big water, so I took him to a small farm pond in hopes to catch some bass or bluegills. After I got the shanty set up and the holes drilled, Joe came out on the ice, got in the shanty, and started fishing. We did not do very good that day but listening to Joe explain that he was not doing that again was worth the walk out on the ice. He did catch a small bass and a bluegill before telling me that he had enough and wanted to go back to the fireplace. Joe Walraven has helped an unknown amount of people and families over the years and for that Joe was One Hell of a Man, A Great Mentor and will most certainly be missed. Thank you, Joe, for everything that you have done for me and my family.*

***~John Seifert, former Northern Region Manager, Eagle Construction & Environmental Services, LP, former Plant Manager, Eagle Railcar Services, Cairo, Ohio***

*\*I know he started a lot of conversations off with "I wanna know" ..... and if he (or Marc) asked you a question, you can be sure they already knew the answer, so you better fess up!! You know, there are so many stories, you could write a book about Joe and Marc both!! I remember the time Joe so graciously let me use his shower as our water was frozen at the house. Afterwards, he asked me if I saw the cameras!! He loved to joke!! He was ridiculously smart and knew things you wondered how in the world did he know that!!! One time we were on a conference call with a PA going over procedures. He asked the PA if he was following along with us. Of course, the PA said "yes". Joe asked what was the next item on the agenda. You could hear the PA shuffling papers and hem hawing around. It was hilarious!! Joe also had the biggest heart! When we had a huge wildfire that burned off around 35,000 acres, he donated bulldozer work to help out members of his community. Such a great family!! He was well loved and will be missed!*

*Finally, I remember Jennifer being such an animal lover, she would pick up strays, take them to the vet, get all their shots, spay, neuter, whatever, and place them in loving homes. She hid them in the barn so Joe wouldn't know. What a vet bill they must have had! (I'd be willing to bet Joe knew all along!!)*

*~ Debbie Vandergriff, Accounts Payable Specialist, Eagle Railcar Services (former employee, Eagle Construction & Environmental Services, LP, and J&M Equipment)*

*\*I went to work for Eagle in 1989 and at that time we were located in a small building on Seaman Street. We had about 30 employees and the company was just beginning to get into the environmental business. Oren Webb, Randy Boutwell, and I were in the small kitchen area. It was so small our desks were bumped up together. Every time it rained the ceiling leaked and unfortunately right on top of my head. It was raining and Joe walked into the office and handed me one of those ugly "old woman" plastic head scarfs. (You know the kind your Grandma wore). As I was the only female in the office at that time, all the guys had a good laugh. I had a great deal of respect and love for Joe as a boss and good friend. I have many more stories, both good and some not so good I could share, but I will treasure the memories of all the years I worked for Joe. He is missed.*

*~ Kay Murry, former employee, Eagle Construction & Environmental Services, LP*

*\*I started working for Joe on February 1, 1974, at Texas Railcar. Before my first day of work, Oren Webb had taken all of the accounting information for 1974 and spread it out on the conference table with notes on top of each stack as to what they were. I can remember Joe saying, "why don't you use a Big Chief tablet and a #2 pencil?" Down through the years and as we progressed from one accounting package to another, and with crashes along the way, I keep remembering Joe saying, "why don't you use a Big Chief tablet and a #2 pencil?"*

*In the late 80's and early 90's and after we had left the car shop and entered the water hauling business, I never knew when or if Joe would come into my office and say, "shut the doors, let's go home", because we had discussed it many times. Even though times were tough, Joe would always find enough money or CREDIT to buy a new piece of equipment. We always found a way we could go another month, and he was always insistent about paying the employees first. But somehow through all this, we would end up with a new water truck or another piece of equipment. I remember years later, I was talking to Mike Perry, our banker at the time, and I told him that Joe was the only person I knew that could spend his way to prosperity. We survived!!! Entering into the environmental business was a whole new ballgame, but a good decision on Joe's behalf, and opened many doors for Eagle.*

*One memory I'll always laugh about was the time Joe was in his office showing off a gun to an employee by the name of Larry Armstrong. The gun accidentally discharged and shot a hole in Joe's ceiling! The rest of the employees thought Joe shot Larry! Thankfully, that was not the case!*

*I worked for Joe for over 30 years, and I can still hear him hollering from the other end of the office "MURRY", and I knew this is how it was going to be (quoting Rob Clay), "I have never had my A-- chewed by any boss so bad and wanted to thank him when I walked out the door". I think that quote described the kind of boss Joe was. I will always miss him hollering "MURRY".*

*~Bob Murry, former CFO/Controller, Eagle Construction & Environmental Services, LP*

*\*One of the things that will stick with me forever is the Joe-ism, “ Girl you’re as handy as a pocket on a T-Shirt!” I worked for Eagle Construction back in 2006-2010, and I avoided the front hall at all costs, we could hear him in the back chewing on people and it scared me to death! He would come to the back hall, and I remember Linda Nelson smoothing him over with CANDY! If you had chocolate you were the king of kings. This go around with Eagle Railcar has been a whole new experience and working closely with him I learned he was just a big old bear and have grown to care deeply for Joe, as he will truly be missed.*

*~Shanda Hamilton, Corporate Legal Assistant/AR Manager, Eagle Railcar Services, (former employee, Eagle Construction & Environmental Services, LP)*

*\*Thank you Joe, for giving me an opportunity. I am forever grateful for everything you taught me and all the knowledge you shared. RIP “The highest tribute to the dead is not grief, but gratitude” –Thomas Wilder.*

*~Richard Nagy, former employee, J&M Equipment*

*\*Joe and Jennifer kindly took in my dog Daisy, a 4-year-old Golden Retriever, when I couldn’t keep her. It was only going to be temporary, about 6 months. I was so grateful. She was treated like royalty. She followed Joe everywhere, including the pool. He would load her up on the ranger and they would be gone for hours. He would come tell us about all the fun he had with Daisy. He said she is the best dog. Daisy’s only downfall was she loved her ball more than anything. Joe would spend hours throwing the ball and Daisy chasing it. The dog would never wear out. So, Joe started throwing the ball in the pool to wear her out. That actually worked. Anyone that has ever met Daisy knew that this was an impossible task. Joe would say “the dog will wort you to death”. We joked and laughed about that. Joe was worried I was going to come get Daisy from him. One day Joe and Jennifer asked if they could keep Daisy. He didn’t want me to come get her. He said we could visit whenever, but he didn’t think he would be able to part with her. He loved her. It was the best dog he ever had, he said. I knew how much joy she brought him and how much fun Daisy was having at the ranch. I couldn’t take her back now. Joe continued to bring her to the office, and I would babysit her when he was busy. Sadly, Daisy passed away unexpectantly. Joe was heartbroken. He came by my office in tears to let me know that Daisy passed. He gave me a big hug and was very sorry. I was sadder for him. A few months later Joe came by my office with another Golden Retriever. She looked almost identical to Daisy. Joe said he had to get another Daisy. He named her Daisy 2. He lit up in delight. He was so excited to get another one. Joe had new stories about Daisy 2 to share. A few weeks ago, Joe came by the office. We spoke about Daisy 2 and Daisy 1. He told me how Daisy 1 was the best dog he had ever had and how he missed her. Now he is with the best dog he has ever had. Prayers to the family.*

*~Susan Thompson, Corporate Controller, Eagle Railcar Services*

*\*My favorite memory of Joe is ripping his rear end for shooting giraffes in Africa. So, while at the BOE conference in Dallas, I sent him photos of me and several very large stuffed animals - giraffes, elephants, lions, etc. he called and instructed John Seifert to buy those animals for me to make it up to me, sadly, John had already left for the airport :(*

*Another was working on bid submittals together until 1 am and our arguing back and forth regarding why we should or shouldn’t add a rate or a service. He was so respectful of other’s thoughts and ideas, as long as you had a valid and solid reason why!!*

*I had 10 years in the waste industry and when I jumped to Eagle, Joe always treated me like a daughter and watched me grow in the hazmat industry as well. I will miss him, and ironically sent him a message just a few days ago saying hello. This is terrible news, but anyone that knows the song “GIVE HEAVEN SOME HELL”, listen to it. He gave me a hard time for my large trucks. And I pray he finds a large field in the sky to go tear up some mud in!!*

*We will all see you again! My daughter, Chelsea, who he watched grew up, sends her love too. She was shocked and wanted to add her love! We love you.*

*~Sandy Prendergast, former Senior Account Manager, Eagle Construction & Environmental Services, LP*



*\*I started working for Eagle Construction and Environmental in 2000. I met Joe Walraven that year and I remember every time he was coming to La Porte, Tx, everything better be greased. It wouldn't matter if it was broke down falling apart, as long as it had grease, he was happy. One time, he even crawled under a trailer to check in regular clothes, he didn't care. He was a good owner and very smart businessman, never had a problem with him, he would always make it right for us. I want to thank him for that and glad I came to work here. ~ Trinidad Garcia, former employee, Eagle Construction & Environment Services, LP*

*\*I have been very fortunate to work for extremely intelligent and strong leaders who made their presence known throughout my life. I would rank Joe Walraven as the one of the very best. Joe was extremely intense, yet compassionate, he was intelligent, but connected with anyone, he was a strong businessman and very strong teacher. I have a lot of memories of Joe from the time I've known him, I could probably write a small book on some of his Joe-isms. He loved a good challenge or argument, and I can't remember a time he was wrong when we had those discussions, and he loved to make sure you stayed humble.*

*One humbling time I remember was on a scheduled visit by him to our shop. A few months after becoming a plant manager, Joe came in to inspect some exterior paint jobs with me. Obviously, I knew he was coming, so I'd went all out to impress him. I had the cars set up in a proper area, they were shining like new pennies! Our housekeeping was extraordinary. I made everything look pristine because I was not going to be embarrassed on this visit. As we walked out into the shop, Joe walked alongside one of the railcars. I was so proud; you could see yourself in the paint job. I even remember having my hand on the car touching it as we walked, I was so extremely proud of the quality of work we'd produced. When we got to the end of the car, Joe, who was not a young man at the time, took off his hard hat, hit his knees, and crawled under the car! He crawled into the hardest to reach areas for inspection! He then bellowed, "Bull, get in here with me!" I crawled under and we then leaned over the side frame. He began to pick apart the paint job underneath that car in the hardest to reach areas. Less than 10 minutes into this inspection, I was now praying this would end quickly. After chewing the pockets off my jeans, we crawled out. He said, "if you don't get it right in the hard-to-reach areas, you don't get it right anywhere." He was basically teaching me you can't look at the obvious, it's about digging into the details. I learned the lesson then and there of how important it is for us all to dig into the details and don't settle for the obvious surface answers. Continue to ask the why questions.*

*Another thing Joe did was call me every Friday without fail. You could set your clock by his timing. Joe would always start the conversation with "well, how's your sales looking?" We would then get into conversations about shop performance or projects, everyday topics, but every Friday, what he was also doing was teaching me a lesson. One Friday in particular, he called, and his first question was "I want to know (his famous first words) why my wife can buy diesel for our ranch cheaper than you can for your shop?" This led into a long conversation about doing the proper homework to get the best price. Joe was famous for saying, "a penny and a penny will make a million." I learned that lesson from him that day and I never had to receive another phone call about my purchase price for diesel.*

*Joe meant so much to me professionally and personally and I can never thank him enough for the opportunities he gave me. Professionally, Joe allowed me and expected me to make decisions in my shop. If I got it wrong, he had no problem having the hard conversation. But I knew I never had to wait on Joe to get approval to make a decision.*

*Part of Joe's legacy was to empower those around him. He expected excellence and his teaching and training has impacted who I am today. He was also great at reminding me to laugh. One of the many Joe-isms I think of to this day is how he'd always say, "James, you're crazier than a runned over dog!" He said a lot more that might not be good to put in print, but every word spoken made you laugh, made you think, or made you better.*

*~ James Bullard, General Manager, Eagle Railcar Services*

*\*Where do I begin....the man meant the world to me! Joe was not a soft-spoken person! You always knew where you stood with him because he would tell you. I started working for Joe and Marc in 2008 as Controller for Eagle Railcar. I also assisted Joe with his personal finances. If he ever came into my office and uttered the words "I want to pick your brain", I knew we were about to have a lengthy conversation that would probably end with me telling him that "you cannot do that" or "do it and I will be visiting you behind bars"! He*



would always leave my office with a sheepish grin if I told him “no” and reply as he was leaving “to keep thinking about it” knowing that I wasn’t going to change my mind. I’m pretty sure that my opposition to some of his creative accounting ideas went on deaf ears.

Joe loved to discuss farming with me knowing that I was raised on a peanut farm and married to a dairyman. I would be trying to meet the month end close deadline (that he set) and he would call me to come in his office to discuss how much fertilizer to put on his triticale crop. If I didn’t know the answer to his farming questions, he would say “let’s call Yme” (my husband)! He loved free advice!

Joe had an incredible memory. I would argue with him about something that happened in the past. He would tell me, “let’s bet on it”. I learned over the years to never bet against him on anything. I still owe him a bottle of Crown!

I truly believe the Lord puts people in your life for a reason. Joe showed us all how to live life to the fullest! Sometimes we forget that our tomorrows are not guaranteed. He didn’t waste a day that God gave him but made the most of it. I will greatly miss the man, the rebel....the legend! His memory will remain a part of all our future conversations that we will have with each other. Rest now, great warrior for the hunt is over!

*~Regina Bosma, Chief Financial Officer, Eagle Railcar Services*

Joe was preceded in death by his parents, Lawrence and Johanna Walraven, and his brothers Frances “Bo” and Mike Walraven.

He is survived by his wife Jennifer, sons Ronnie and Marc Walraven, Marc’s wife Beth, sister Rosemary King and her husband Mike, grandchildren Krystal Bahlburg, and Haley, Jack, Scott, and Alex Walraven, as well as many cousins, nieces, and nephews.

According to Joe’s wishes, he will be cremated. There will only be a small family memorial gathering at a later date. The family requests that in lieu of flowers or food, any memorial donations be sent to the Ranger Volunteer Fire Department, 500 East Loop 254, Ranger, Tx, 76470.

## Some Pictures of the “Great White Hunter”







## He captioned this one “Still soaring with Eagle”



### *Your legacy lives on....*

*Your smile was bright, your voice was loud,  
You made everyone feel important even in a big crowd.*

*You weren't shy by any means,  
Yet you were really a superhero behind the scenes.*

*You'd distract them all with you banter and wit,  
While secretly teaching them bit by bit.*

*You worked hard and gave well,  
Giving secretly so no one could tell.*

*You loved to hunt big exotic game,  
You were smart and kind, treating everyone the same.*

*You were called a rebel, who blazed his own trail,  
But still a regular guy with a story to tell.*

*Some say you're a legend, bigger than life,*

*You loved your family and especially your wife.*

*You'll always be remembered though you could not stay,*

*Your legacy lives on each and every day.*