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Remembering the Corn Shucking King

(KAIR)--To tell the full tale of the man that was Bob Staley would take many hours; but to spin that yarn would only be befitting of the well known, and well loved Staley, who always had a story.

That story ended Friday when Staley died at the age of 94.

A master of corn shucking, an auctioneer, a bail bondsman, a strong supporter of Benedictine College athletics, and a friend to all.

Those are just a few of the ways the Atchison community is remembering Staley, who used his love, and skills, of old fashioned corn shucking to begin the annual Atchison County Corn Shucking competition to raise money for Atchison's Catholic high schools.

In his own words, Staley says the long running tradition began as a bet more than two decades ago. "[He] challenged me to a contest, 'I'll bet ya a hundred dollars I can beat you, the money goes to the winner's charity.' I said 'That's fine. Who's your charity?' He said 'Maur Hill-Mount Academy.' Mine was the same!"

Staley's mastery of the traditional technique earned him victories at national corn shucking competitions, and a 2011 trip to New York for an appearance on NBC's "Today Show" where he showed off his skills to Matt Lauer, Al Roker, and a national audience.

In early 2012, Staley was named by Ingram's Magazine as one of "50 Kansans You Should Know."

Staley, a native of Charter Oak, Iowa, located to Atchison in 1951, where he made numerous friends. Among them is Louise Regenstein. "He was such an integral part of this community, he only wanted wonderful things for this community," Regenstein tells MSC News. "He loved everybody, he was good and kind to everyone, and so enthusiastic. At his age, he could outdo people half his age on everything, intellectually, creatively, enthusiastically. Probably one of my heroes in life."

Among Staley's local survivors are his wife, Joan, daughter, Melanie Brungardt and son Robert Staley II.

Funeral services for Staley will be Wednesday morning at 11:00 at Saint Benedict's Abbey Church.

The Arensberg-Pruett Funeral Home in Atchison is in charge of the arrangements.

Many Signals Communications