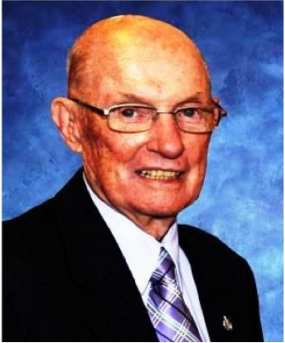


**James M. McCoy** lived an extraordinary life on multiple fronts. Born in Creston, IA, he enlisted in the Air Force in 1951. He rose through the ranks and in 1979 was selected as the sixth Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, the highest-ranking enlisted position in the service.



Upon his retirement from the Air Force in 1981, he joined Mutual of Omaha as vice president of military sales. He remained an active volunteer serving our country, mentoring countless

Airmen and veterans. He became the first former enlisted member to be president and chairman of the Air Force Association.

The Airman Leadership School at Offutt AFB is named after him. In 2021 he was awarded the Air Force Association Lifetime Achievement Award.

"CMSAF McCoy was a patriot of unparalleled honor and dignity," current **Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force JoAnne S. Bass** wrote in a letter to the Air Force community. She called him a "giant who elevated our Air Force and our Airmen. He will be deeply missed by all."

The Offutt AFB James M. McCoy Airman Leadership School mourned his passing but said his legacy will live on in the lives of Airmen past, present and future. In a Facebook post, the school said: "Chief McCoy, we will keep moving forward through the path you helped pave. Thank you for your leadership, we will take it from here."

Throughout his career he was blessed with the love of his life, his co-pilot and wife, Kathy.

Devout Catholics, they raised a family while serving on multiple bases across the world. No matter how busy the nomadic work life was in service to our country, Jim and Kathy made home life a priority.

As their eight children dispersed across the country and started their own lives as adults, a tradition began with regular family reunions. "Grandpa and Grandma" hosted these happy gatherings with food and fun. Jim and Kathy were front and center in the reunion photos wearing Nebraska red shirts.

Those reunions, guided by their love, kept the growing family close across the miles. The 2022 family reunion was scheduled to coincide with his 92nd birthday on July 30. He died 17 days short of his birthday in Papillion, NE.

In his memory, the family reunion was held as a Celebration of Life for a husband, father, airman and leader who will never be forgotten.

*(Edited from Omaha World Herald obituary  
24 September 2022.)*

\* \* \* \* \*