Janet Louise DeVaul Savage's Tombstone History

Born August 30, 1945 in Pittsburgh, PA, she grew up in West Mifflin, PA. Janet devoted much of her adult life to her husband, Woodson J. Savage; raising her son, Jay; supporting the causes of public education and serving in various patriotic organizations in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Tennessee.

Janet D. Savage, 58, of Memphis, homemaker, died August 29, 2004 at Germantown Methodist Hospital after an extended illness with pancreatic and liver cancer. Her one regret was not living long enough to see her grandchildren.

Her tombstone represents the various stages of her life. The base or foundation of her life was her home state of Pennsylvania…she was born and raised in the Pittsburgh, PA area.

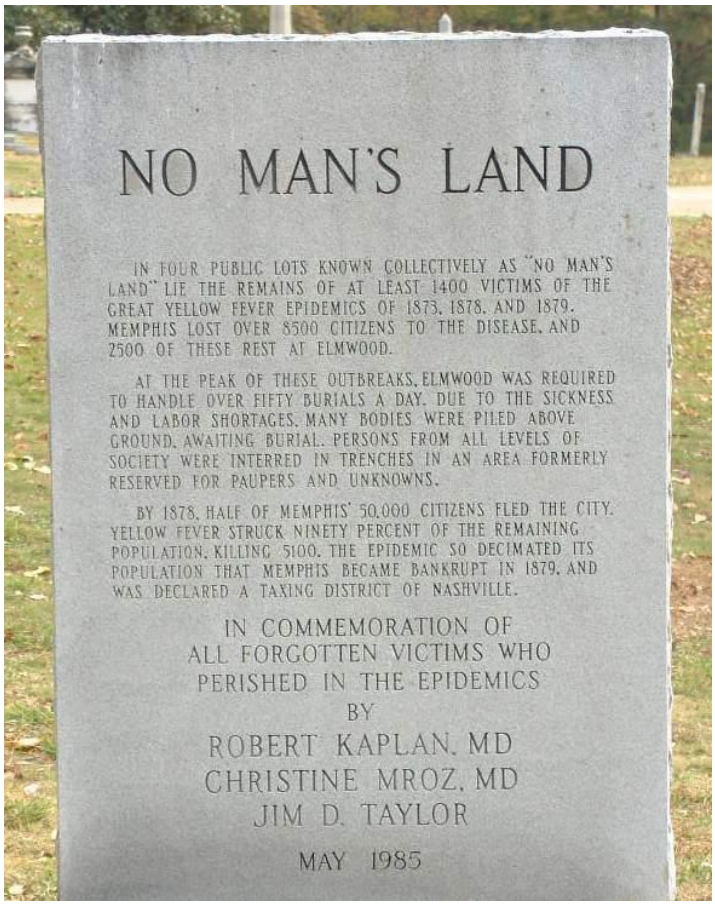
The tombstone is in the shape of a podium; it represents her leadership in public education and various patriotic and religious organizations that she served throughout her life.

The book represents her strong advocacy of public education. As Janet spent time with her son Jay in pre-school, kindergarten, and elementary school, her desire to serve and support the public school system grew. A product of the public school system herself in Pittsburgh and West Mifflin, PA, Janet knew the value of a public education and the opportunity it could afford every student regardless of race, religion, background, or income level. As a result, she ran a "write-in" campaign for the Jonathan Alder School Board where she won the election. Janet soon gained the respect of her

peers on the school board as well as the public who elected her. She went on to serve first on the local Jonathan Alder School Board followed by the Central Ohio Joint Vocation School Board. In time, she was elected to the Ohio State School Board as well. The turned over page in the upper right corner is symbolic of a life cut short.

The symbols on the podium represent some of the organizations that were especially important to her throughout her life. When her husband took a job in Memphis, TN, her public service career came to an end. Still searching for an opportunity to serve, Janet joined the Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.) and soon got involved with her son in the Children of the American Revolution (C.A.R.). She also belonged to the Dames of the Court of Honor and other patriotic organizations. Janet was a lifelong member of the Methodist Church and a member of Covenant United Methodist Church in Cordova, TN.

The URL www.pancan.org is an organization dedicated to finding a cure for pancreatic cancer. Pancreatic cancer is the number 4 cancer killer in the United States but has the number 1 fatality rate of all cancers. Her tombstone is believed to be one of the first if not the first tombstone to ever be inscribed with a web site address on it.



It is ironic how deadly diseases crossed her path. Today, few people remember the great polio plagues (otherwise known as infantile paralysis) of the 1940s and 1950's for a method of prevention was found in 1954. Jonas Salk was the first to develop a vaccine to prevent polio…it was first tested on school children in Pittsburgh, PA…Janet's class was among the first group to be given the vaccine.

Today her tombstone overlooks No Man's Land at Historic Elmwood Cemetery in Memphis, Tennessee where over 1,400 victims of the Yellow Fever epidemic almost wiped out Memphis in 1873, 1878-1879. While mankind has found cures or preventive measures for both Yellow Fever and Polio…there is NO cure for the deadly disease of pancreatic cancer that took her life on August 29, 2004…one day short of her 59th birthday. Perhaps…someday medical science will find a cure for this disease as well.

Memorial was designed by West Memorials at www.westmemorial.com

Historic Elmwood Cemetery can be reached at www.elmwoodcemetery.org

Pancreatic Action Cancer Network can be reached at www.pancan.org

Woodson J. Savage III
December 17, 2006

IN MEMORIAM