



James Church

March 3, 2016

CHURCH, James W., "Jim", 78 yrs. old, of Saint Helen, Michigan, passed away Thursday, March 3, 2016 in Foley, Alabama.

Jim was born in Chicago, Illinois on September 12, 1937 to Marion (Spietz) and James Church. When he was a boy, his parents relocated to Muskegon, MI and became permanent residents. Jim graduated from Muskegon High School in 1956 and later married his wife, Rita, in December of 1958. He spent several years in the Naval Reserves. Jim earned his Bachelor's Degree in 1960 from the University of Michigan and accepted a position teaching History in Battle Creek, Michigan, at Southeastern Junior High School from 1960 to 1967, during which time he completed and received his Master's Degree from Western Michigan University. Jim accepted another position as a Government teacher with Battle Creek Central High School in 1967 where he taught until his retirement in 1992, at which time he and Rita relocated permanently to Saint Helen, Michigan.

Although he was a private man, Jim had many interests. He was well read, well traveled and well loved.

In their early years, he and Rita often enjoyed fishing in the Muskegon Channel, playing card games with their family and friends, as well as going on an occasional hunting trip.

Jim thoroughly enjoyed being a floor hockey coach for the town of Battle Creek where he coached some of his children and many of their childhood friends. He was an active member of the Usher's Club at the high school. He

taught Driver's Education during the summer months for many years, in addition to being an Adult Education teacher for night school classes. Over nearly six decades, Jim and Rita were a dynamic team, raising six children and traveling the United States extensively at every opportunity. Jim was dedicated to providing wonderful experiences for his wife and children, sacrificing some time initially, to allow for the quality time he and Rita strived in giving their family. He knew the importance of life experience outside of the classroom.

Camping in the great outdoors was a family highlight during many summer vacations. Favorite trips include, traveling out west through Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks, and in the east to Acadia National Park in Maine and The Freedom Tour in Philadelphia. Jim and Rita traveled to Alaska, Europe, and many other wondrous places here and abroad. They made a lifetime of cherished memories. Jim and Rita were grateful to have traveled with their children, and on occasion, some dear close friends.

Jim left a legacy of love which will be carried forward by his devoted wife Rita, six children, fourteen grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. His ad-lib stories at Christmas time will be particularly missed, as Jim was a charming, witty storyteller who continued to tell new tales each year with his grandchildren.

Jim is survived by his cherished spouse of 58 years, Rita L. (Eddy) Church; six loving children: Regan (Church) Kirk and family, of Lawton, OK; Renee' Church and family, of Battle Creek, MI; Matthew Church and family, of Grosse Ile, MI; Rebecca (Church) Hope and family, of Osceola, IN; Christopher Church and family, of Westland, MI; Jeremy Church and family, of Belleville, MI.; as well as fourteen adored grandchildren and four dear great-grandchildren.

Jim was predeceased by his parents, Marion (Spietz) and James Church, and his sister, Judith (Church) Reiss.

Jim will forever be remembered as a humble teacher, loyal friend and loving family man, but mostly fondly as: an adored and loving spouse; a

compassionate father; a devoted grandfather and great-grandfather. His jovial disposition, handsome smile and hearty laughter will be often thought of and greatly missed.

Rest in peace, until we meet again, your loving family.

A Memorial Service will be held Friday, April 15, 2016 at 2:00pm - Saint Helen Catholic Church in Saint Helen, Michigan.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations to a charity of your choice in Jim's honor.

Tribute Wall



“ *As a first year teacher, he was a great example of a teacher who taught but loved his students*

Stephen Ohs - August 30, 2016 at 07:42 PM



“ *I went to Battle Creek Central and had the good fortune of taking History from Mr. Church in my senior year-Class of 1972. He was a great history teacher and I always enjoyed his class and his lectures. I appreciated his demeanor in the classroom. I went to Central during some pretty rough times and he was one of the best memories I have of BC Central. My sympathy to his entire family. He was a fellow Michigan fan. Go Blue! Arlen Perry*



Arlen Perry - April 01, 2016 at 02:49 PM

CR

“ *Mr. Church was one of my favorite teachers at Southeastern Jr. High School – Go Hilltoppers! I have fond memories of Mr. Church as a teacher.*

It was not always work and no play in Mr. Church’s class. He would sometimes pick a couple of students to help him plot and play a fun joke on a student. I happened to be one of the students that were on the other end of the joke. It was fun and he made you laugh and feel special.

It was nice to see him again when I walked the halls of Battle Creek Central High School. Fortunately, I had him again as a teacher at BCC. He always gave me that “Mr. Church” smile and asked how things were going in my life.

Now that his life has ended may his family find peace in their hearts when they think of the wonderful memories that they have of Jim Church.

*Cheryl Dickerson-Roberts – BCCHS Class of 1971
Battle Creek, MI*

Cheryl Roberts - March 28, 2016 at 12:52 PM

JB

“ *Jim was one of my favorite teachers in junior high school. He taught Civics with an interesting flair. Later he became my neighbor and his daughter Becky baby-sat our children.*

Jonn Brandimore

John Brandimore - March 20, 2016 at 12:52 PM

AC

Mr. Church was one of my favorite teachers at Central. He also taught me to drive and was one of the leaders of Usher Club. One of the best! I'm so grateful for all I learned from him, and have deepest sympathy for his family. Prayers.

Ann Moore Climer - March 27, 2016 at 12:09 PM

JC

“ 31 files added to the album *Jeremy's favs*



Jeremy Church - March 19, 2016 at 06:13 PM

PR

“ *We lived next door to the Church family for a few early years in Battle Creek. We have many fond memories of their family. Their children and ours went to school and played together, as families, we shared meals and fun times. Our prayers and sympathy will be with Rita and the children as they face the lonely days and weeks ahead.*

Pat and Homer Root

Pat Root - March 15, 2016 at 10:00 AM

LM

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



LEROY MJOVIG - March 14, 2016 at 10:48 AM

BT

“ *Jim, I remember that you had your picture in the BC Enquirer for helping shovel out Latta St. after an especially bad blizzard. You had such a great sense of humor so I knew you would enjoy a parody cartoon of that event. Well, it had the Starship Enterprise actually doing all of the work!*

You were a gentleman and a true role model for students and any young teacher, like myself. Your family is in my thought and prayers.

Barry E. Thorne Port Charlotte, FL

B. Thorne - March 13, 2016 at 01:38 PM

RH

“ *My fathers's kind, thoughtful, supportive presence continues to represent the incredible family he leaves behind. He shared his patient listening, intelligence, caring and thoughtful advice so that we all could become the representatives of him that we are today. When I see my resilient beautiful sisters and strong handsome brothers with their talented children and grandchildren I am thankful to my father for his guiding ways. Although my mom will be without the physical presence of dad I know he stands near her and she can see him in is our loving family. Every day in my classroom I knew that it was his humor and guidance that I was influenced by, that lifted the classroom. Dad was sincerely invested in the education of children and I will truly miss our " how it going " chats but I know he is with me. To be one of my fathers children is a great gift and I am thankful to have known him.*

rebecca hope - March 13, 2016 at 01:02 PM

JN

“ *On behalf of Jim's Muskegon High School classmates, Class of 1955, we wish to extend our deepest sympathies to the family.*
Jeanne Nelson-Maycroft

Jeanne Nelson-Maycroft - March 13, 2016 at 11:06 AM

CH

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Cecillia Hope - March 13, 2016 at 07:20 AM



“ 1 file added to the album *New Album Name*



Mae Kratzer - March 12, 2016 at 07:23 PM



“ 12 files added to the album *New Album Name*



Mae Kratzer - March 12, 2016 at 07:12 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



LEROY MJOVIG - March 12, 2016 at 04:56 PM

CH

“ *Twining with grandpa!*



Cecilia Hope - March 12, 2016 at 03:41 PM

LM

“ *I remember the first time I saw "Jimmy", it was in the wintertime and we exchanged a few snowballs on the way to Nelson School. We became friends after that. Jim lived just a few houses down the street from us and I later remember he was devastated when his dog Inky was killed by a car. I also seem to remember he helped Rita on her paper route. He was a good kid with good parents.*

LEROY MJOVIG, OCALA, FL.

LEROY MJOVIG - March 12, 2016 at 06:49 AM

LM

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



LEROY MJOVIG - March 12, 2016 at 06:39 AM