



## JAMES F. GIBSON

April 22, 1931 - November 16, 2020

James "Jim" Frederick Gibson, age 89, passed away at his home on November 16th, 2020. He is survived by Nancy, his devoted wife of sixty-four years; his children Kate Bourdon, James D. Gibson (Marzena Fryc-Gibson), David Gibson, Mary Powell and Annie Coyne (Robert F. Coyne, Jr.); his siblings Daniel Gibson, Benton Gibson, and Mary Jo Radawski; ten grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren; and many nieces, nephews and cousins. Jim was a 1949 graduate of Cadillac High School where he was an all-state athlete, senior class president and co-salutatorian. He graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1954 with a B.S. in Engineering and a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army. Jim was a member of the Army track team and a member of the Catholic Chapel Choir. The latter may come as a surprising fact to everyone but his children, who recall him breaking into a rousing, athletic rendition of a beloved team's fight song when the moment so moved him. While working for the Army Corps of Engineers in Ludington in 1954, he met Nancy Lynne Rohn. They were married at St. Simon's Catholic Church in Ludington on August 11, 1956. Jim and his growing family later relocated to Washington D.C. to work for the Atomic Energy Commission. A proud "Eisenhower/Romney" Republican, Jim and family moved back to West Michigan in 1967 to serve his community as the District Liaison on the staff of his childhood friend (and co-salutatorian), Congressman Guy Vander Jagt. He retired from Vander Jagt's congressional staff in 1986, and was proudest of the efforts Vander Jagt and team were able to move forward like the Muskegon Lake Remedial Action Plan among other Great Lakes environmental initiatives. In retirement, Jim remained connected to his life in public service as a volunteer member of West Point's admissions office and served on Congressman Bill Huizenga's Service Academy Advisory board well into his 80's. He was a life member of the Knights of Columbus, a proud member of the American Legion, Amvets, and the Catholic War Vets where he had been an adjutant for many years. A soldier by choice and a public servant at heart, he never sought higher elected office himself. Beyond his resume, Jim loved Notre Dame football (and any local Catholic team), did not like onions (despite the efforts of cunning family members to hide them in dishes brought to pass), and enjoyed sneaking away to Goobers Bakery for coffee and a sweet treat. Sharp as a tack until the very end, Jim's ability to recall dates, facts and figures never ceased to

amaze his family, and his doctors. His intellect came bundled with a strong-headedness, which in his last remaining weeks became his greatest strength—motivating himself through in-patient physical therapy with the words of his father, “You’re made of surer stuff than this, Jim.” Coupled with his values shaped by a lifetime of public service, he persevered through to see the outcome of “the most important election of my lifetime,” and returned home to pass from this life in comfort with the love of his family who stood by him for sixty-four years. You are “Safe and sound in Air Force Ground,” Grandpa Jim! A private Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at St. Francis de Sales Church in Norton Shores by his immediate family on Thursday, November 19th. The burial was held the following day at Mount Carmel cemetery in Cadillac. In lieu of flowers, according to Jim’s wishes, contributions may be made to any of the following organizations: Autism Support of West Shore ([asws.org](http://asws.org)), PO Box 39, Spring Lake, MI 49456 or Alliance for the Great Lakes ([donate.greatlakes.org](http://donate.greatlakes.org)), 150 N Michigan Ave Suite 700, Chicago, IL 60601 US. Arrangements handled by The Lee Chapel of Sytsema Funeral & Cremation Services, 6291 Harvey St, Norton Shores, MI 49444. Sign the guestbook online at [www.sytsemafhn.com](http://www.sytsemafhn.com)

# Comments

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“ Nancy & Family,  
My thoughts are with you at this time of Jim's passing. I always enjoyed speaking with him when he was DML church. Such a nice guy. I had no idea of his various talents and accomplishments. It is very touching to hear about his work to help the environment. We have both lost wonderful loved ones this year. I hope your memories and knowing how many people he touched helps you through this time.  
Nancy Hulka

**Nancy** - November 27, 2020 at 02:32 PM

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“ Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord and let the perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. The parish families at St Francis de Sales Church



**Kim Brush** - November 25, 2020 at 11:34 AM

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“ Met Jim and Nancy as neighbors. Wonderful neighbors and friends. I send my love and sympathy to the family.

**Eilene Nelson** - November 25, 2020 at 09:34 AM

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“ Sending thoughts and prayers at this difficult time.

**Linda and Mark Zagaroli** - November 24, 2020 at 11:40 AM

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“ I am so sorry to here of Jim's passing. He was a kind and friendly man, and I always enjoyed seeing him when I would come to tune their piano. Condolences to the family.

**Lyle Wood** - November 22, 2020 at 12:19 PM