



James "Jim" E. Whittaker

July 6, 1947 - June 23, 2020

James Edward Whittaker, age 72, of Norton Shores passed away on Tuesday, June 23, 2020 at St. Mary's Hospital in Grand Rapids. He was born in Jackson, MI to Ralph and Catherine Whittaker. He met his wife, Dee (Zarimba), at Western Michigan University when they were assigned to work together on a class project. They continued working together on many projects for over 51 years of Marriage. Jim will be remembered by many as a hardworking, easy going, loving, and caring individual who gave generously of his time, talents, and assets. He served as a BSA Scout Master for 12 years and loved camping out each month with his scouts, taking several back packing trips in the Rocky Mountains at Philmont Scout Ranch, canoeing the Everglades, sailing in the Caribbean and rafting the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. He hiked much of the Appalachian Trail and climbed Mt. Washington in New Hampshire. He was a PADI Certified Scuba Diving Instructor and loved sky diving. He was able to travel to many parts of the world as a chemical salesman for Thor Specialties, Inc. and loved to explore new countries and meet people of different cultures. He served in the United States Marine Corp including time in Vietnam during the War. He valued his membership in his faith, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and served in many leadership callings. Jim is survived by his wife, Dee; brother, John and his wife Jung of Lawrenceville, GA; his sister-in-law, Sherry (deceased brother David's wife) of Jackson, MI; siblings-in-law, Arlene and Paul Garton of Muskegon, Frank and Marilyn Zarimba of Atlanta, GA. He is also survived by his nieces, Dawn Zarimba of Atlanta, Staci Rei (Tim) of Ipswich, MA and Gina Garton-Sciba (Matt) of Muskegon, MI and nephews, Paul Garton (Jasmine) of Mountain Home, ID and Michael Whittaker (Gabby) of Jackson, MI; great-nieces and nephews, Gillian, Zachary, Joey, Ellery, Alex, Tyler, Maddison, Aidin, Luna, Christian, Brooklyn, Mackenzie and Cayleigh. Services for Jim will take place at a future date when health restrictions lift. Entombment will take place in St. Mary's Cemetery in Muskegon, MI. For a more lasting memory, donations in Jim's name can be made to either Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation (235 Wealthy St. S.E. Grand Rapids, MI 49503) or Faith Hospice (210 Raybrook St. S.E. – Suite 300 Grand Rapids, MI 49546). Arrangements entrusted to The Lee Chapel of The Sytsema Funeral & Cremation Services, 6291 S. Harvey St. Norton Shores, MI 49444.

Cemetery

St. Mary's Cemetery

1915 Park St.

Muskegon, MI, 49441

Comments



“ I worked with Jim in a calling in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and found Jim a dedicated church member and friend. I will miss him.

Shelby Carter - June 26 at 12:20 AM



“ I remember as a 12 year old the day Jim was introduce to our Deacons Quorum at as a new member of our Church and a new assistant scout leader. Little did we know how much of an influence he would have on all of our lives. We were a pretty wild bunch and more than once I had to wonder if we would ever see poor Jim again. He never gave up on us and was always a great example of love, endurance, and humility to each of us.

I will always remember fantastic trips to New Mexico, river canoeing, Klondike derby, and basketball games. I wish I did a better job of letting him know how much he meant to our family and that his efforts continue on in my own Eagle Scouts.

When I met with my own Eagle Scout review board I was asked who beyond my own family has had the most influence in my life. Jim was a little taken aback when I stated that that it was an easy answer as Jim had helped me over many years develop and reach many goals. He had been with me from the beginning of Scouts to congratulating me at my wedding reception.

It is true that he always gave up his personal vacation time to spend time with us with the loving support of his sweet wife. He changed the standard of how I view young men leadership and he will be terribly missed. Thank You Dee for giving so freely of this amazing mans time and abilities.

Cam Lichfield - June 25 at 03:44 PM



“ Peter and I, along with our family, will never forget Jim's wonderful love and support he showed to our family when we were living in Connecticut. Especially in those first years.

Rhonda Feuz - June 25 at 12:41 AM



“ I remember the year we had all kids home for Christmas and Jim was Santa Claus. One of my favorite memories. Many Many Eagles made during his Scout Master time. Rodgeron family.

June Rodgerson - June 24 at 09:45 PM



“ Jim was a great man and scout master, he took most if not all of his vacation time to take the scouts on their camping trips and weeks long adventures. Jim had patience with us rowdy boys and at times he would set us straight in no uncertain Marine style terms, He will be greatly missed and we will tell story's of him for years to come.

David Brown - June 24 at 06:31 PM