



James William Zilinski

January 25, 1944 - April 12, 2023

James W. Zilinski passed away peacefully, surrounded by family on April 12, 2023 in Fort Myers, Florida after years of dealing with a “bouquet of diseases”. He has been called a real gentleman with a special sense of humor, strength and grace.

Jim was born to Emma and Charles Zilinski on January 25, 1944 in Rochester, New York. He graduated from Newark (NY) High School. He was a Sigma Chi brother at Bowling Green State University, graduating with Omicron Delta Kappa honors. In 1965 he married his high school sweetheart, Janet Wrench, and together they built a beautiful life of 58 years.

Jim’s career started with 17 years at IBM. He changed careers to work at New England Life where he initiated their financial planning practice and developed the annuity business. Leaving as EVP, he rose to Berkshire Life Insurance Company as CEO. He merged the company with Guardian Life Insurance Company to solidify jobs for Berkshire County, to provide better benefits for employees and to ensure security for policy holders.

Jim was on the industry boards of ACLI, LOMA, MIB and LIMRA, a driving force to create the LLIF designation. But, he also gave to the community including leading as moderator for the Berkshire Compact. He was awarded an honorary doctorate from Mass College of Liberal Arts for his service. Two

other corporate boards which gave him pleasure were Bottom Line Technology (20+years) and CUNA Mutual (12 years). One board member said that after Jim left, he often found himself wondering “What would Jim have asked?”

Jim was not all work. He loved to play any game, especially golf. He also loved to hunt for lost golf balls and distribute his collections to friends everywhere. He was a member of White Cliffs Country Club in Plymouth, MA and Copperleaf Golf Club in Estero, FL. He was happiest in the company of family, friends and dogs at his homes on the water of Conesus Lake and Great Herring Pond.

It was great to be an “F-O-J”, a friend of Jim’s...and he had many lifelong friends from Rochester, NY and Sherborn, MA and he made new friends everywhere he went. He was predeceased by his brother, Art. He is survived by his sister, Joyce Jackson, his wife, Janet and his three children: Todd (with Melissa) Zilinski, Christina (with Craig) Bardenheuer and Daniel (with Jennifer) Zilinski; by his seven adoring grandchildren; Hans, Charlie, Will, Zoe, Tyler, Emma and James and his many loving nieces and nephews. They loved his playful, positive attitude and sound advice.

The family will receive guests Monday, April 17th at Shikany’s Bonita Funeral Home starting at 10AM followed by a memorial service on location at 11AM. There will be a luncheon to follow.

A celebration of life will also be held in Plymouth, MA this summer.

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to the Copperleaf Charitable Foundation or to the Parkinson's Disease research fund at Massachusetts General Hospital.

Arrangements are being handled by Shikany's Bonita Funeral Home, Family

Owned Since 1978.

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 17. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Shikany's Bonita Funeral Home
28300 Tamiami Trail So.
Bonita Springs, FL 34134
(239) 992-4982
bonitafhbill@comcast.net

Funeral Service

APR 17. 11:00 AM (ET)

Shikany's Bonita Funeral Home
28300 Tamiami Trail So.
Bonita Springs, FL 34134
(239) 992-4982
bonitafhbill@comcast.net

Tribute Wall



“ *James William Zilinski*

October 09, 2023 at 03:40 AM



“ *I had the pleasure of serving on the CUNA Mutual Board with Jim. He was a great asset to the Company with his wisdom and insightful questions, his sense of humor and his overall charm. He was also a great mentor to me and other new members when we first came on the board. I was fortunate to have Jim as a travel buddy since since we were often flying to and from Boston together. My husband, Dave and I also had the opportunity to spend time with Janet and Jim together at board functions. His love for his wife and his family was so evident. Jim was a true gentlemen with a quick wit and an infectious smile. I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to know him.*

Janet Whitehouse

Janet Whitehouse - April 17, 2023 at 06:39 PM

AD

“ I met Jim when we were 12 years old living in Newark, NY. We became good friends along with Ray VanHanegan, who passed away about 10 years ago. I got Jim a job at Freddie's Restaurant and was mad that he got \$1.15 an hour to my \$1! When we were 15 years old, he convinced me to let him pick me up in his brother's car since both our parents were out of town. We made it back to his house safely, but decided to make a short trip, which was a big mistake. We turned off onto a dirt road and hit a telephone pole. I hit the windshield (no seat belts back then). He told me not to tell anybody because it would make it worse for him. I always felt bad about it, but it didn't change our friendship. I was hoping to see him in May at his grandson's graduation at Wake Forest here in Winston-Salem, NC. I will miss him terribly.

Art Duncan - April 17, 2023 at 09:06 AM

JM

“ Jan and Family,

I am personally so grateful to have worked with Jim. Loving, caring, and smart. He was an outstanding mentor and director...guiding Bottomline Technologies through many years of tremendous growth and success. Marvelous person!

Joe Mullen, Past Director and Colleague - Bottomline Technologies Inc.

Joe Mullen - April 16, 2023 at 03:54 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of James William Zilinski.*



April 16, 2023 at 03:51 PM



“ *Janet, I am so sorry to hear of Jim's passing. I had no idea you two were so close to me. I live in Naples, due to appointments tomorrow, I cannot be at his service. I have fond memories of Jim and you both from High School. Prayers go out to you and your family. Linda Pulver*

Linda L Pulver - April 16, 2023 at 12:09 PM



“ *Eltiena and I send our sincere condolences to Jan and the entire Zilinski family.
We feel fortunate to have known Jim and shared in his magnetic, larger-than-life energy.
To this day, I remain thankful for the opportunity that Jim helped create early in my career.
May your family find comfort in his memory and positive influence on others -*

*Fondly,
Bill & Eltiena Campbell*

Bill Campbell - April 16, 2023 at 07:13 AM

JR

“ *Jimmy Z was beyond special
Great family man, superb leader, incredibly smart, and above a
great friend.
Our whole family, Murph, Maureen, Robin , and Karen all
appreciated Jim and his wonderful family.
He enhanced our lives
In Hoc Jim we truly loved and appreciated YOU.
Jim Ryan*

jim Ryan - April 15, 2023 at 07:01 PM



“ *Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of
James William Zilinski.*



April 14, 2023 at 07:47 PM

DH

“ *Janet & Family,*

*Please accept Mary Ellen and my sincerest sympathies on your
loss.*

*Prior commitments prevent us from driving to the West Coast on
Monday however you will remain in our thoughts and prayers.*

Peace be with you all!

Mary & Dermot Healey

Dermot T Healey - April 14, 2023 at 03:46 PM

BM

“ *Bob Trunzo, CEO, & Board of CUNA Mutual purchased the Joyful Memory for the family of James William Zilinski.*



Bob Trunzo, CEO, & Board of CUNA Mutual - April 14, 2023 at 03:26 PM

PJ

“ *My deepest sympathy to Janet and family. He was a wonderful Boss and Friend.*

peter Joyce - April 14, 2023 at 03:20 PM

JM

“ *Jim Kay Miles lit a candle in memory of James Zilinski*



Jim & Kay Miles - April 14, 2023 at 03:11 PM

JM

“ *Jim and Kay Miles purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of James William Zilinski.*



Jim and Kay Miles - April 14, 2023 at 03:07 PM



“ *Magnificent Life Spray was purchased for the family of James William Zilinski.*



April 14, 2023 at 02:54 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of James William Zilinski.*



April 14, 2023 at 01:58 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of James William Zilinski.*



April 14, 2023 at 01:41 PM