



James J. Sullivan

October 16, 1925 - April 6, 2015

Albany-The angels finally called their little shamrock home. James J. Sullivan, 89, passed away at the VA Hospital on Monday, April 6, 2015. Born in Rensselaer, NY on October 16, 1925, Jim was the youngest of seven. He was the brother of Rob, Tim, Jack, Ang, Alice, and Jane. He was the son of Mary Duff Sullivan and Timothy Sullivan.

Jim liked to tell his family about his experiences growing up in the Great Depression like sleeping three to a bed to keep warm. The stories of his brothers and sisters growing up were like a James Cagney/Pat O'Brien movie. Although they were poor, he always remembers having a meal on the table and he was proud of that.

Jim was 22 when he met his soul mate for life, his wife Betty. He was a combat veteran of the Korean War. He served in the 2nd Cavalry Division and participated in the operation names Thunderbolt, Killer, and Ripper, better known as Heartbreak Ridge. When Jim returned from the war he continued his job as a brakeman for the New York Central Railroad. In 1967, Jim was involved in the largest freight train accident in New York at the time. He lost six of his friends that day and told a NY Times reporter that it was like reliving the war all over again. By paying his dues and working evenings he was promoted to head conductor for Amtrak. Jim was ranked 3rd in the nation for seniority working 47 years for the railroad.

In 1958, Jim moved his family uptown to Forest Avenue where he had his orange brick ranch with the giant backyard. Back in the day, all the neighborhood kids would gather there and their parents knew they could be found at the Sullivan's. One of Jim's passions was dressing up and looking sharp. He had a love for reading and was a frequent visitor to the Albany Public Libraries.

He had a strong faith in the church and was a communicant of St. Teresa of Avila until it closed. He volunteered for many years at the VA and would call it his second home. He participated in the Senior Olympics in Kansas and won one gold and two silver medals. Jim was a great, caring man and a wonderful provider for his family.

Jim is survived by his wife of 63 years, Elizabeth Sullivan and his children, Daniel (Sue) Sullivan and Jacqueline (Sean) Zeilman. He was predeceased by his son, James Sullivan. He had four grandchildren, Cody Sullivan and Haleigh, Hannah, and Hayden Zeilman whom he loved to spend time with.

The care Jim received over the years at the VA was a blessing right to the end. The family would like to send a special thank you to Nell and Marilee who showed great compassion for Jim. As Jim would say, "LaDeeDee LaDeeDa!"

Funeral services Friday, April 10, 2015 at 10:30 am in the McVeigh Funeral Home, 208 North Allen Street, Albany.

Relatives and friends are invited and may visit Thursday, April 9, 2015 4:00 to 7:00 pm in the funeral home.

Interment Calvary Cemetery, Glenmont.

To leave a message for the family, obtain directions, light a candle or view other helpful services please visit [www. McveighFuneralHome.com](http://www.McveighFuneralHome.com)

Cemetery Details

Calvary Cemetery

481 Route 9W
Glenmont, NY

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 9. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

McVeigh Funeral Home, Inc.
208 N Allen St
Albany, NY 12206
(518) 489-0188
info@mcveighfuneralhome.com
<http://www.McveighFuneralHome.com>

Service

APR 10. 10:30 AM (ET)

McVeigh Funeral Home, Inc.
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Albany, NY 12206
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Tribute Wall



“ *James J. Sullivan*

October 08, 2023 at 09:24 PM



“ *May the words at Isaiah 25:8 bring you comfort " He will swallow up death forever, And the Sovereign Lord Jehovah will wipe away the tears from all faces."*

M - August 29, 2015 at 01:34 PM



“ *To the Sullivans
My condolences and prayers on the passing of Mr. Sullivan--very fond memories of he and Mrs. Sullivan from Forest Avenue.
Tim Gaffney*

Timothy J. Gaffney - April 11, 2015 at 06:35 AM

JK

“ I worked with Jimmy for more than twenty years on Amtrak until he retired in 1991, and I can tell you, he was a good railroader. In the railroad world that we worked, being a "good railroader" was a high compliment.

My father "broke" Jimmy in on the railroad when Jimmy first hired out. In those days when you hired out they put you with a "senior" man, who showed you the "ropes" so to speak. My father must have been good, because all though the years Jimmy and I worked together (and after he retired), Jimmy always asked how my father was doing (and vice versa).

I was at the service this morning, and I could feel the the love and respect of his family, he was a lucky man to have this family around him.

Jimmy's son said he remembers walking behind Jimmy at work in Grand Central, and everyone saying hello to Jimmy ("JJ", Jimmy or Sully) and I can attest that is true. Jimmy was well liked by his fellow "rails" and the public that he was entrusted with for thier safety in getting to and from New York...the passengers put smiles on their faces upon seeing that Jimmy was their Conductor for the trip home to Rhinecliff, Hudson and Albany after a long day in New York. Many of these passengers were with Jimmy on the way to New York in the morning.

In my 40 years of railroading I never met another with the attitude and wit of Jimmy. Safe and courteous with his fellow workers and the public. It is said that the sun "never sets on the American Flag" anywhere in the world...somewhere the sun shines on it. The same can be said of Jimmy....the sun never set on him, with Jimmy it was always shinning on him!

I will miss him, but I know he is "up there" and talking, laughing with family and friends and he will be there, putting down the step stool, helping everyone aboard "The Heavenly Express" and giving out another....."Alllll Aboooooarddddd"!

I am very lucky to have known him, God Bless to the Family.

Jim Kaufman - April 10, 2015 at 08:27 PM



So beautiful! Thank you for sharing your memories of my father.

Jacqueline Zeilman - April 11, 2015 at 12:11 PM