



James H Decker

March 8, 1937 - January 7, 2023

James Decker, loving husband of Karen (McCurry), a friend to many, and long-time and very active member of St. Joseph Catholic Church, passed away at 85 on Saturday, January 7, 2023.

Jim is survived by his wife Karen. He was the twin brother of Jack (Celia), Joe (Geri) and Jean and uncle to many nieces and nephews.

Many know Jim as a man of faith, a masterful storyteller, a talented wood carver and wood turner, but all who met him were impacted by his infectious, positive attitude. Jim once reflected that the older he got, the more he realized the impact of attitude on life. He was convinced life is 10% of what happened to him and 90% how he reacts to it, which is why he always made the best of things.

Jim was born on March 8, 1937 in Hebron, Nebraska, the son of the late Lyndon and Myrtle Decker. Growing up poor on a farm during the depression and in the dust bowl, his family had little. He recounted that at Christmastime, they would drag a tumbleweed in from the pasture. His mother would paint it with starch, making it glitter and the family would string popcorn then hang decorations -- it would look beautiful. They made the best of things.

Throughout his life, Jim battled many sicknesses, including polio as a child.

He wore braces on his legs and could barely walk when school started but he and his siblings hiked the two miles to school each day. He tried to make the best of it.

Jim also struggled with his speech throughout life. Stuttering as a child, he seldom talked except at home - into his teens, he wouldn't even use the phone. However, through his time at Church, with the Boy Scouts and as a counselor and waterfront director with the YMCA, he found his voice and the Jim we all know slowly emerged. He was making the best of it.

After college, Jim taught middle-school gym classes but soon moved to Chicago to work with inner-city gangs. Out on the streets alone working to counsel Chicago's youth, he was held-up, car-jacked and shot at but made the best of it by getting many young men and women back into school or jobs.

It was in Chicago in 1970 Jim met his soon-to-be wife and future storytelling partner, Karen, with whom he carved out the next chapter of his life. The two soon married and in 1973, moved to Libertyville. Then, in 1989, formed the celebrated storytelling duo, "The Double Deckers", weaving tales across the Midwest, captivating audiences, and mentoring others along the way.

Though life wasn't always easy, Jim led with his positive attitude and made the best of it. In turn, he became an inspiration and made the best of things for those around him, too.

As the years passed, Jim began telling his own story. He once wrote he believes in forgiving others because God forgave him. He believes in being generous because God was generous to him. He believed the more you gave away, the more you have. Not only money but also love and time. When asked to write his own epitaph, Jim wrote, "By the Grace of God, and a good partner, I made the best of it."

Services celebrating Jim's life will be held at St. Joseph's Catholic Church 121 E. Maple Ave., Libertyville, IL 60048 on Tuesday, January 17th, 2023. A Memorial Visitation will begin at 9:30, followed by a Funeral Mass at 10:30 in the Church. A livestream of the service will be available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=03J5-1iZS1s>

Previous Events

Memorial Visitation

JAN 17. 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM (CT)

St Joseph Catholic Church
121 E Maple Ave
Libertyville, IL 60048

Live Cast

JAN 17. 10:30 AM.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=03J5-1iZS1s>

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Mass

JAN 17. 10:30 AM (CT)

St Joseph Catholic Church
121 E Maple Ave
Libertyville, IL 60048

Tribute Wall



“ *James H Decker*

October 04, 2023 at 02:13 PM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of James H Decker.*



January 16, 2023 at 11:09 AM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of James H Decker.*



January 13, 2023 at 07:32 AM



“ *Magnificent Life Spray was purchased for the family of James H Decker.*



January 12, 2023 at 04:48 PM