



James K. Smith

October 3, 1949 - March 25, 2020

James "Jim" K. Smith, 70, of Centralia, passed away at 2:45 AM, March 25, 2020, at Carlyle Healthcare Center following an extended illness.

Jim was born October 3, 1949 in Centralia, the son of Harry M. Smith and Betty J. (McDowell) Smith Wilder.

Jim is survived by his wife: Claudia (Held) Mearns Smith of Centralia; a sister: Judith (Smith) Sprehe and husband Gary of Plano, Texas; a daughter: Erin (Smith) Oellermann and husband Roy of Sandoval; a step-son: John Mearns of O'Fallon, IL; a step-daughter: Caroline Mearns of Centralia; a grandson: Aidan Mearns of Centralia; a granddaughter: Olivia Rose Oellermann of Sandoval; a niece: Gina Sprehe of North Hollywood, California; a nephew: Ryan Sprehe and wife Angelica (Olin) Sprehe and a great-nephew: Rylie Sprehe all of Coppell, Texas.

Jim was preceded in death by his mother and father.

Jim was a proud to be a telephone man serving various regions of Illinois, Missouri and Florida. He started a 35-year telecommunications career at Continental Phone Company/Contel as an installer/repair person, graduating to lineman, service center supervisor, outside plant engineer and emergency disaster recovery team member while being employed by GTE, Frontier and Bell South. Jim was a part-time instructor for Kaskaskia College extension centers teaching courses in Business Management. Jim also served as an over-the-road truck driver for Frey Mills Trucking in Orchardville and Brown Brothers of Nashville. He worked briefly for the Gilster Mary Lee Plant in

Centralia.

Jim was a graduate of Washington Grade School, Centralia High School, Cleveland Institute of Electronics, Kaskaskia College and SIU Carbondale. Jim always encouraged others to pursue higher education and took great pride in teaching at Kaskaskia College.

Jim had a smile that would light up the room. He never met a stranger. He greeted folks with, "Howdy!". Jim loved to dance, laugh, and be in the company of those he loved. Through the years, Jim's hobbies and interests included playing clarinet in the grade school and high school bands, flying airplanes, hunting, fishing, golfing and tinkering with antique tractors. Jim was an avid organic gardener and delighted in sharing his bountiful crops with friends and neighbors.

Per his wishes, cremation rites will be accorded, and a Celebration of Life Service will be held at a later date. In Lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Kaskaskia College Foundation for a scholarship in Teacher Education or to the Alzheimer's Association, both of which will be accepted at the Sutherland-Garnier Funeral Home and Cremation Services at 235 North Sycamore Street Centralia, Illinois 62801, (618)532-3523, who is honored to be of service to the Smith Family. Online condolences may be made to the family by visiting www.sutherlandfuneralhome.com and the Sutherland-Garnier Funeral Home Facebook Page.

Tribute Wall

MK

“ Claudia, so sorry to hear of Jim's death. He was "one of the good guys." I remember the day he changed my tire by Hoffman. My heart goes out to you. I will remember you in my prayers. Love,
Mary Evelyn

Mary Evelyn Kennedy - March 31, 2020 at 10:08 PM

CS

Hello Mary Evelyn,

Yes Jim was a prince among men. Thank you so much for the prayers. Please take care!

Claudia Smith - April 02, 2020 at 05:51 PM

PY

“ Deepest sympathy to you and your family, Claudia. May your strength help you through these times.

Patty Young - March 30, 2020 at 11:31 AM

CS

Thank you Patty. I appreciate the condolences. Please take care and stay well!

Claudia Smith - April 02, 2020 at 05:50 PM

JM

“ Claudia, I am so very sorry for your loss. Prayers of comfort and peace to you.
Jamie Moergen

Jamie Moergen - March 26, 2020 at 03:22 PM

CS

Thank you, Jamie

Claudia Smith - March 26, 2020 at 06:19 PM

BS

So sorry my sweet friend.. god has his loving arms wrapped around Jim.. prayers to you and your family 🙏🙏

Bonnie Stevens - March 27, 2020 at 01:35 AM

CS

Thank you, Bonnie

Claudia Smith - March 27, 2020 at 07:59 AM