

# *A Tribute to Jim*



November 11, 1932 – September 9, 2006

On Veteran's Day in 1932, a new baby boy was introduced to the world at Bellevue Hospital in New York City. Frances and Ernest Ferris baptized their first son at St. Brigid's Church on the lower east side near Avenue B - a son who would soon become completely spoiled by his four older sisters, according to niece Barbara. Every morning was "a party", not breakfast for James Richard Ferris. Niece Karen mentioned how these morning "party's" consisted of the four basic food groups - as long as one group included candy bars. Yes, "Sunny Boy", as he was nicknamed, had a dream childhood - courtesy of big sisters Marion, Eileen, AnnaMae and Fran.

As a child, he loved Clear Pool Lake Camp in Carmel, New York. Attendance there was 5 dollars per week! Niece Regina took Jim, Margie and Grandson TJ there in the summer of 2004 for a trip down memory lane. Jim loved having the opportunity to revisit his childhood, and recalled vividly how he would have to go "under the bear head" when he wasn't allowed to talk. Jim loved upstate New York and Pennsylvania, especially in later years when he realized that they were in close proximity to the ponies. The Fehling trailer in Equinunk Pennsylvania was the perfect combination of family fun and direct link to Monticello Raceway's trotters.

After attending High School and becoming Secretary of the Spanish class, Jim joined the Steamfitters as an apprentice in October of 1950, for a weekly wage of 55 dollars at "The John Dierks Heating Company". Jim was the craftsman's craftsman - and strived for excellence in every job. His reputation for hard work, accuracy and great skill with figures made him a well-known legend of Steamfitters Local 638. Jim was a strict union man, who shunned the notion of "do it yourself" - unless it was helping one of his neighbors like John Major install a sprinkler system. Leave it to the experts, he believed. That could explain why he told nephew John on more than one occasion that he'd "rather get beat up than paint".

This drive for excellence brought him the very next year into the United States Navy, where he served aboard the USS Oriskany during the Korean War until his honorable discharge near Thanksgiving in 1955. Everyone will remember Jim for his ever-present "Oriskany" cap he proudly wore, and the license plate frame on his car. He told a story of how on the ship he stood up to William Holden and came out on top, after the actor wrongfully questioned his presence in the Officers mess. The Navy was a natural fit for Jim's natural sense of order and honor, but he was clearly not beyond the reach of a good practical joke, and he saw to it that he provided his fair share.

Jim loved all sports, and favored New York Giants baseball in his youth. Grandson TJ heard stories from Grandpa about how he attended what is referred to as "the best game of all time" between the Giants and the Bears. His Granddaughter Brooke loved to show Grandpa her commanding swing, tapping home plate before each pitch like a pro. Grandpa loved to tell the story of his boyhood meeting with wrestling superstar Dusty Roads, and he could name all of TJ's favorite modern-day wrestlers.

Nephew John said his Uncle Jimmy always bought him the best toys when he was a child, a tradition he continued throughout his life. Jim's generosity was unequalled, and if anyone needed anything (including his time), you could count on his support.

Jim was a true son of Deer Park, and he led the All-American life in suburbia: Chevy in the driveway; coaching his son's teams; running errands and shopping on Deer Park Avenue that he said reminded him of Coney Island. Having OTB and Nathan's nearby was the icing on the cake.

Jim was fond of great entertainment as well. To him, there was no better television show on earth than "The Honeymooners", and he knew Frank Sinatra like a book. He had a quiet but deep appreciation for jazz, and he thrilled niece Karen with her first 45 record – Elvis Presley's "Don't Be Cruel".

The marriage of Jim and his beloved Margie (whom he always affectionately called Margaret) was just shy of fifty years. He was a caring and extremely devoted husband that was supportive like no other. He enjoyed that he and his wife could always see the humor in a situation and make each other laugh, and they made a great team. Blessed with 5 beautiful children - Eileen, Jimmy, Tommy, Michael and Peggy, and 2 adored grandchildren – Thomas James and Brooke Mychala - Jim ensured that each and every one of them had the best life had to offer – be it sneakers, dolls, baseball gloves or new furniture. Jim had enormous pride in his children, and they in turn saw their father as a role model they all aspire to be, and loved him immensely. His warm, quiet, gentle manner and patient and understanding ways left an indelible impression on them, and it commanded respect from everyone. We can all learn by his example. No matter what the situation, he could still break out that ear to ear smile that would light up the room and everyone in it.

His daughter's Eileen and Peggy and niece Regina recall some fun moments. Like when was with his brother-in-law Frank was driving his car, and he asked what side the gas tank was on. Jim replied "I don't know, I have never been to this gas station before!". And the time he was having a tough time scooping some hard ice cream, and Margie told him to run it under hot water. He insisted that he would not put the ice cream in hot water!

His son Jimmy said that he will sorely miss speaking to his Dad, as will we. The stories Jim told, the help he provided, and the calm, reassuring manner in which he conducted himself is etched in our memory, and shall never be forgotten.

James Richard Ferris Sr. was a class act,  
and earned a well-deserved place in Heaven alongside his beloved Michael and Tommy.