



## James A. Nelson

January 25, 1940 - February 7, 2024

Dr. James A. Nelson

Age 84, of South Wilmington, IL, passed away February 7, 2024 in Joliet, IL. Jim was born on January 25, 1940 in East Chicago, IN to the late Albert and Hildegard Nelson, the oldest of two sons. He attended Washington High School and lettered in football as the starting center and also played on the golf team. While in high school, before graduating in 1958, he joined the Army Reserve's Medical Unit in Gary, IN. Upon graduating he served the required six months in basic training at Ft. Leonard Wood, MO and medical training at Ft. Sam Houston, TX. He then returned home to pursue his goal of becoming a dentist by attending Indiana University. While at IU he was a member of the Kappa Delta Rho fraternity. During his time at IU his Army Reserve Unit was called up in 1961 and sent to Ft. Bliss in El Paso, TX for a one year deployment. Returning he continued his pre dental studies before enrolling in the Loyola School of Dentistry in Chicago, IL in 1964. After graduating in 1968 he moved to Haines, AK to begin his dental career. While living in Alaska he worked as a dentist with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Teamsters Medical Facility in Anchorage, and a private practice in Juneau before returning to the lower forty eight. He then established a private practice in Coal City, IL in 1979. Jim began his teaching as a professor at the Loyola School of Dentistry in 1980 until it closed in 1993. Next he taught at the University of Pittsburg School of Dental Medicine for a few years before finishing his dental career at the Southern Illinois Dental School in Alton, IL in 2005 when he retired. In

Jim's retirement he played golf and fished for trout with his "Fishing Buddies" twice a year and he loved "Oldies But Goodies" music. Jim was an avid reader of two daily Chicago newspapers. He loved watching his grandchildren's sports, and especially college basketball and football. GO IU Hoosiers! Surviving are daughters, Nicole (John) Corneglio and Marti (David) Bafia, both of South Wilmington; three grandchildren, Joey Corneglio, and Gavin and Marissa Bafia; daughter, Erika Shaver Nelson of ID; brother, Richard (late Linda) of OR; niece, Amy (Jason) Whiteley of OR; and nephew, Caleb Nelson of CA. The Washington High School Class of 1958 gave Jim life long friends, Jerry Eskoff, Rich Bursua, John Connolly, Alan Johnson, Fred Andrews, Joe (Tim) Gray, Ron Divjak, and the late Noble Ladella and Tony Forest. Preceding him in death was his cherished wife, Leslee Ann (nee Pomatto) Nelson, whom were together for forty five years. Cremation rites will be accorded. Private inurnment will be in Mount Olivet Cemetery in Wilmington. In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be directed to the South Wilmington Fire Department.

# Cemetery Details

## **Mt Olivet Cemetery- Wilmington**

498 Kahler Road  
Wilmington, IL 60481

# Tribute Wall

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“ *Dr Nelson was one of the most kindest and understanding man and a teacher that I ever had. Thank you for all you teachings and being patient with me while studying at Loyola dental school in 1990. You are missed. dR BMM*

Bahman M Mehdizadeh DDs - October 22, 2025 at 01:47 AM

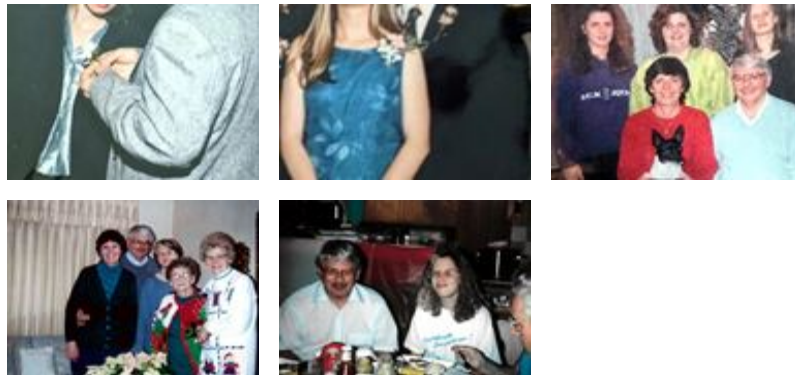
JE

“ *I was fortunate to know Jim from our high school football playing days to our fishing adventures at Montauk. We both shared driving down together for a number of seasons. Jim was a quiet, intelligent individual. He was very friendly and a hard worker who played a key role in our trips to Montauk. I loved the guy and will miss him dearly. May he rest in peace!*

Jerry Eskoff - February 22, 2024 at 11:35 AM



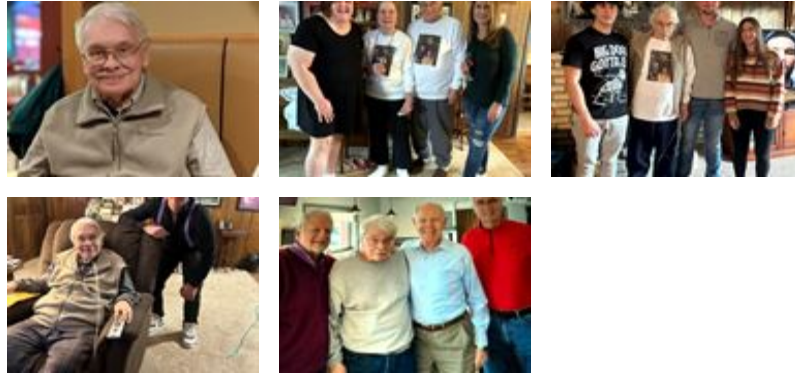
“ *14 files added to the album Life Tributes*



R W Patterson Funeral Homes, Ltd. - February 15, 2024 at 05:28 PM



“ 100 files added to the album *LifeTributes*



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R W Patterson Funeral Homes, Ltd. - February 14, 2024 at 05:12 PM



“ *Great Father-in-law and friend. He will be dearly missed by us all.  
Love you Jim.: 1:❤️❤️: 1:*

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john corneglio - February 13, 2024 at 05:20 PM