



## James E. East

April 21, 1940 - June 8, 2019

James E. East, age 79 of Crown Point, died peacefully on June 8, 2019. Jim was born on April 21, 1940 to Noel and Regina East. From the time he was a young boy living in Selma, Indiana, Jim loved all sports but basketball and baseball were his favorites. It was during his elementary years, 6th grade to be exact, that Jim met the love of his life, Marlene. Jim's leadership was recognized at a young age when he was team captain for both sports at Selma High School and where he graduated from in 1958 with academic honors. While attending Ball State University on an academic scholarship, Jim also learned that he excelled in volleyball and played men's varsity volleyball earning the recognition and award of an All American player. During his collegiate years, he also married his high school sweetheart, Marlene, in 1960. Following graduation from Ball State, Jim began his lifelong passions of teaching and coaching high school basketball at Chester Center High School. His wife, Marlene, was never far from his side and team bench at each and every basketball game – being his biggest fan and supporter. Jim's career traversed through the years landing him in Connerville, Lawrenceburg and Merrillville when he retired after 42 years of coaching. His remarkable coaching career earned him a spot in the Indiana Coaches Hall of Fame where he is honored for being the 11th winningest coach in the State of Indiana. It was Jim's standards of excellence that caused many of his student athletes to continue with their education and play sports in college. Coach East's infamous purple sports coat remains on proud display at Merrillville

High School representing a lifetime of true service to Merrillville High School -- as well as representing the several hundred young men who were lucky enough to call him "Coach East." Coach East was well known by his players for his true care and dedication to them as people, students and players. His joyful drive to be his personal best as a coach brought out the personal best in his players. Throughout the years, Jim loved supporting his children and grandchildren in all of their endeavors from academic achievements to dancing to sporting activities. He was hard pressed to miss many activities when it came to his grandchildren – often times traveling hours or days in the car with his beautiful wife, Marlene, to enjoy these moments. When not enjoying family activities, he could be found rooting for the Cubbies, Bulls and Bears, scouting a basketball game with his fellow coaches or Marlene, enjoying a trip to Vegas with his wife or an afternoon at "Off Track Betting" watching his horses. Left to honor Jim's amazing life and legacy are: his wife of 59 years, Marlene; His daughters Kelly East and Kara Bonin and son-in-law, Leo Bonin. Grandchildren: Casady Zurek (Ryan Zurek and great-granddaughter Quinn); Katelyn Pruitt (Eric Morris) (and great-grandchildren Macy and Eloise); Kristopher Tremblay; Blake Bonin and Bryce Bonin, as well as the multitude of friends, players, and students. Visitation on Wednesday, June 12, 2019 from 2-8 pm with Time of Sharing at 7:30 pm at Burns Funeral Home, 10101 Broadway, Crown Point, IN. [www.burnsfuneral.com](http://www.burnsfuneral.com)

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUN 12. 2:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Burns Funeral Home & Crematory - Crown Point  
10101 Broadway  
Crown Point, IN 46307  
(219) 769-0044  
info@burnsfuneral.com  
<https://www.burnsfuneral.com/>

## Time of Sharing

JUN 12. 7:30 PM (CT)

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# Tribute Wall



“ To the East family, I am so sorry for your loss and saddened that I could not attend coach East’s services. He had a great influence on my life and I am thankful he was my coach. Please accept my condolences. John Wilczynski.

John Wilczynski - June 12, 2019 at 06:42 PM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of James E. East.



June 12, 2019 at 09:42 AM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of James E. East.



June 10, 2019 at 11:18 PM



“ The Layman Family purchased the Lavender Reflections Spray for the family of James E. East.



The Layman Family - June 10, 2019 at 08:04 PM

MF

“ *Melanie and Eric Morgan and Family purchased the Sweet Tranquility Basket for the family of James E. East.*



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**Melanie and Eric Morgan and Family** - June 10, 2019 at 07:08 PM

JM

“ *Coach Jim East was such a great man and even better basketball coach. Jim not only taught basketball, more importantly he taught the things that mattered in life to the kids who played for him. Anyone who had the opportunity to spend time with Jim was better for it.*

*I, on several occasions had long conversations with the coach, I know he loved his wife and family beyond anything else.*

*I feel blessed that I had the opportunity to know and learn from the coach.*

*Jerry and Carolyn McCory*

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**Jerry McCory** - June 10, 2019 at 05:50 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of James E. East.*



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June 10, 2019 at 03:34 PM

NJ

“ I was privileged to work with Jim for many years as his Athletic Secretary at Merrillville High School. Jim was a first class gentleman, teacher, coach and friend. Meticulously organized and thorough in every detail of his basketball program, he gave 110% of himself all the time. Jims first love and priority was always known to be his wife and family, yet he made time to invest in hundreds of young men from his community. Jim’s legacy lives on in his precious grandchildren and great grandchildren. As you celebrate this great man’s life, may you be comforted knowing today he is worshipping his Savior in Paradise.

*With heartfelt Sympathy, Nicki Jusko*

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**Nicki Jusko** - June 10, 2019 at 02:08 PM