



## James "Jim" A. Churilla

July 18, 1943 - July 14, 2024

James A. Churilla, age 80, of Hebron, IN, passed away at home on July 14, 2024, after a courageous fight with cancer. He is survived by his wife, Laura (née Spanopoulos); son, Phil (wife, Rita); daughter, Jennifer (fiancé, Jim); sons, James and Scott; grandson, Jakob Barlow; sisters: Dawn Harretos and Marveline Bornholt; brother in-law, Jim Spanopoulos; sister in-law, Mary Affeld; brother in-law, Paul Spanopoulos (wife, Denise); sister in-law, Stephe Cox (husband, David) and many loving nieces, nephews, and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Louis and Mildred; his brother, Louis Jr.; brother-in-law, Dino Harretos; sister in-law, Donna Spanopoulos; sister in-law, Helen Spanopoulos, brother in-law, Ralph Affeld; his beloved boyhood dogs, Tiny and Fritz; and, recently, by an old cat named Garfield, who comforted him over the last couple of years.

Born in East Chicago, Jim attended Roosevelt High School for a few years before moving to Wheeler, where he transitioned from a Rough Rider to a Bearcat, graduating from Wheeler High School in 1961. He maintained lifelong friendships with kids from both schools and was fond of reminiscing and sharing stories about the good times he enjoyed. Surely, some of you reading this now were schoolmates who gave him memories to cherish in his final weeks.

Because of these lifelong connections, Jim always seemed to "know a guy" or "know a gal" who could solve a local problem or make life better for someone in need. His ability to build relationships allowed him to excel throughout the Region and beyond as a salesman with Area Sheet Metal (an organization to whom his family is forever grateful: Kevin, Crystal, Dave, and the whole crew there took such good care of Jim as he battled cancer).

Family and friends brought him joy--as did his Cubs and Bears, classic cars from the 1950s and '60s (especially the memory of his beloved '66 GTO), music from his younger days (from Buddy Holly and the Beatles, to Doo Wop and Motown), and revisiting treasured moments and places from a life lived in the area.

A visitation is scheduled for family and friends for Sunday, July 21, 2024, from noon to 5 p.m. at Burns Funeral Home & Crematory, 10101 Broadway, Crown Point, IN. Funeral service will be Monday, July 22, 2024, at 10 a.m. at Burns Funeral Home. Interment at Calumet Park Cemetery, 2305 W 73rd Avenue, Merrillville, IN.

In lieu of flowers, friends of Jim can support the mission of the Katherine House in East Chicago through a donation to the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Northwest Indiana: <https://www.bgcgreaternwi.org/give/> The Katherine House sent kids to the long-gone Camp Okalona, where Jim, his brother Louie, and boys and girls of every color and creed shared hot summer days swimming together and enjoying "bug juice" (Kool-Aid). Donations given to the Boys and Girls Club in Jim's honor will help today's children create the type of memories he cherished as an adult. Enjoy: <https://indianamemory.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16066coll76/search/searchterm/okalona>

[www.burnsfuneral.com](http://www.burnsfuneral.com)



# Cemetery Details

## Calumet Park Cemetery

2305 W. 73rd Ave.  
Merrillville, IN 46410

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUL **21**. 12:00 PM - 5:00 PM (cst)

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

## Funeral Service

JUL **22**. 10:00 AM (cst)

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

# Tribute Wall

SH

“ John and I will miss you Jimmy.....Memories Eternal.....The Hurubeans

Sandy and John Hurubean - August 19, 2024 at 03:09 PM

KP

“ I am so sorry to hear about James' passing. I had the privilege of getting to know him while doing his imaging during his cancer journey. I will miss him and his stories, chatting about the Bears, hearing updates about his family, and his kind smile. He was such a wonderful man.

Katy P - July 30, 2024 at 10:56 AM

EG

“ I didn't know Mr churlish but his wife and her family were a Godsend for Me and my immigrant family I'm sorry for their loss but from the comments I believe heaven has gained another angel along with Laura's family

emily gregoratos - July 25, 2024 at 08:36 PM

GB

“ Words can't express our sorrow for your family. His friend Gary will be welcoming him in heaven with many car memories  
With deepest sympathy  
Billings family

Gary & joan Billings - July 25, 2024 at 07:45 PM

MS

“ To the man our kids called "Uncle Jim". You will surely be missed. We thank you for all the love and memories you and your family have created with our family. Couldn't have asked for any better neighbors. Hugs and prayers to you and your family 🙏🙏  
The Schroeter family

Mary Schroeter - July 21, 2024 at 03:22 PM

SN

“ Hey cuz', last time we spoke, you shared so many memories of your dad and mine. Ones that I had no idea growing up as a young girl! You've always spread joy wherever you wandered. Rest in peace cousin! Xo Susan

Susan Nightingale - July 21, 2024 at 01:01 PM

FE

“ Our deepest sympathy goes out to Laura and the entire Churilla family in your time of grieving, may God comfort you and ease your sorrow. Fred & Lissa Evert.

Fred Evert - July 21, 2024 at 11:20 AM

FE

“ Jim was always the highlight of the day ! I've had the pleasure of being Jim's barber for many years, and he will be greatly missed. Rest in peace my friend. Frederick D. Evert .

frderick d. evert - July 21, 2024 at 10:30 AM

JH

“ John and Sandy Hurubean purchased the Large Basket Garden for the family of James "Jim" A. Churilla.



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**John and Sandy Hurubean** - July 20, 2024 at 03:19 PM

JB

“ My sincere condolences to all of the Churilla family on Jim's passing.  
Jim's Dad Lou and my Dad Sam proudly served our state together as members of the Indiana General Assembly.



Jim and I have been lifelong friends going back to our childhoods.  
He was a good man and a gentleman.

John Bushemi



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**John Bushemi** - July 20, 2024 at 03:14 PM

MB

“ Mr. Churilla came into Panera regularly and I got to know him a bit! He always had a joke, he'd sing Michelle my Belle to me everytime he came in! He'd get pastries for whomever he was going to visit that day. He made a big impact on me...one of my very favorite people! I've missed seeing him and now I know why. I'm so sorry for your loss.

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**Michelle Dale panera bread** - July 20, 2024 at 10:45 AM

JH

We will miss Jim very much...so sorry for your loss...God Bless his memory....

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**John & Sandy Hurubean** - July 20, 2024 at 03:03 PM



“ *Fiery Lily and Rose was purchased for the family of James "Jim" A. Churilla.*



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July 19, 2024 at 03:05 PM



“ *What I will remember the most about you, JimDad, is this cheeky smile you'd have on your face and you'd \*almost\* be doing a little shuffle in place as you whispered something funny! A Churilla Classic! Rest in peace JimDad.*



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**Rita Devassy** - July 19, 2024 at 01:01 PM



“ *Alex C. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James "Jim" A. Churilla.*

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**Alex C.** - July 19, 2024 at 01:14 AM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of James "Jim" A. Churilla.*



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July 19, 2024 at 01:14 AM

AC

“ To Mrs. Churilla and the Churilla family: Mr. Churilla played an important role in my life growing up. He was a kind and resourceful man who I will forever remember well. Rest in peace, Mr. Churilla.

Alex Copeland - July 19, 2024 at 01:07 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of James "Jim" A. Churilla.



July 18, 2024 at 09:19 PM

G(

“ Gail/Brad Banken (BFF/godfather) purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of James "Jim" A. Churilla.



Gail/Brad Banken (BFF/godfather) - July 18, 2024 at 04:26 PM

MG

“ HAPPY BIRTHDAY JIM!! Love you much. Soar with the angels.

melissa gilbert - July 18, 2024 at 02:53 PM

CC

“ So very sorry for you alls loss. I was so sad to hear of James passing. He was such a joy to me and had such wonderful stories of travels and food. He will be greatly missed.

Candice Clisby

Candice Clisby - July 17, 2024 at 08:35 PM

JK

“ John & Terri Kopack planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James "Jim" A. Churilla.

John & Terri Kopack - July 17, 2024 at 07:21 PM

JK

“ John & Terri Kopack purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of James "Jim" A. Churilla.



John & Terri Kopack - July 17, 2024 at 07:21 PM

NH

“ Nancy H. purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of James "Jim" A. Churilla.



Nancy H. - July 17, 2024 at 03:22 PM

DM

“ dan miller planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James "Jim" A. Churilla.

dan miller - July 17, 2024 at 10:05 AM

DM

“ dan miller purchased the Gracious Lavender Basket for the family of James "Jim" A. Churilla.



dan miller - July 17, 2024 at 10:05 AM

JF

“ He also did know a guy or gal! You fought the good fight, buddy. Rest Easy.

Jim Fritza - July 17, 2024 at 09:09 AM

SF

“ Spanopoulos Family purchased the Basket of Memories for the family of James "Jim" A. Churilla.



Spanopoulos Family - July 16, 2024 at 06:45 PM

TC

“ *The cnas purchased the Beautiful Dreams for the family of James "Jim" A. Churilla.*



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**The cnas** - July 16, 2024 at 05:03 PM

PC

“ *3 files added to the album Jim*



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**Phil Churilla** - July 16, 2024 at 04:59 PM