



## James "Jim" E. Gajda

July 14, 1947 - November 11, 2023

James Edward Gajda, "Jim," age 76, of Dyer, IN, passed away on Saturday, November 11, 2023.

Jim was born on July 14, 1947, in East Chicago, Indiana, to the late Edward & Stephany (Pogorzelski) Gajda.

Jim attended Bishop Noll Institute, and went on to Purdue University in Lafayette, where he graduated in 1969 with a Bachelor of Science with Honors in Economics. During that time, he was a member of Pi Delta Phi. Jim was also a Mensa member and believed in the value of higher education. As such, he continued his own higher education pursuits for many years and accumulated many diverse degrees.

Jim later attended the University of Chicago, where he graduated with a master's in business administration in 1972 and a Master of Science degree in Physical Sciences in 1973. Jim loved exercising and staying in shape, so the physical sciences degree was perfect for him – it allowed him to teach step-aerobics and other physical exercise classes at the local health club that he regularly attended. In 1978, Jim graduated from the Chicago Kent College of Law with a Juris Doctor degree of Honors. Jim then attended the University of Illinois and took the CPA exam to become a licensed Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in 1980. Finally, in 1981, Jim graduated from DePaul

University with a Master of Law in Taxation. These various degrees allowed Jim to pursue what ended up being his dream jobs later in life – working as a professor and having his own CPA / tax business out of his home.

Jim met his wife, Chris (Czapla), in 1973. The couple were set up on a blind date by their mothers, who went to the same beauty shop. It was apparently a match made in heaven – the couple played tennis throughout their courtship and were married in 1974. Jim and Chris enjoyed going to “craft shows” and adding to Jim’s extensive collectable collection over their years together. They attended St. Thomas More Catholic Church in Munster, IN. Jim and Chris spent 49 wonderful years together, during which they took two trips to Europe, countless trips to Cancun, and a variety of smaller domestic trips as well. They also built three houses in their time together, including finally building their “dream house” in the St. John / Dyer area in 2022 (unfortunately, Jim did not live to see it fully completed).

Jim loved keeping busy and wore a lot of hats over his lifetime. He held a variety of jobs over the years -- from Comptroller to Aerobics Instructor to Chief Financial Officer to Professor -- but his passion was in teaching others about these great subjects. When Jim finally landed his full-time professorship at DeVry University / Keller Graduate School, he was ecstatic. He taught Accounting and Finance classes there, both in-person and online, until Covid hit. Post-Covid, he continued to teach online, and enjoyed not having to commute and being able to save money on gas!

Throughout much of his adult life, Jim also worked as a CPA. Every year, he looked forward to “tax season,” where, from December through April, he would prepare tax returns for almost 300 clients out of his home.

Jim loved talking about anything accounting- or finance-related, and between doing taxes and his professorship, he was able to do this quite a bit in the

later years of his life. He loved to tell stories as real-life examples of concepts he was teaching, which made his classes much more relatable to his students, who loved him as a professor. He unfortunately left this world much too soon, while mentioning that he “needed to get out of the hospital so that he could teach!” as late as a day before his passing.

Jim also had a lifelong passion for reading “bestselling” books and novels, and his home library was always filled to the brim with books that he had gotten lost in. He loved discussing his favorite authors and his favorite books with anyone who shared his passion for reading.

Another of Jim’s passions was, as he would put it, “finding a way to save a buck.” His most recent “life hack” was putting an item in an online shopping cart and leaving it there for a couple days, to wait for the company to send him a discount code. Even on his one day in hospice, the nurses recall him telling them about how he would use coupons and gift cards to save money.

Jim was a loving husband and father and a dear friend to many. He will be deeply missed. He will often be remembered for his generosity and his kind, sweet smile. He was always happy and never complained, even at the end when his illness was taking its toll on him.

Jim is survived by his wife, Chris, his daughter, Ashley (Mike), his brothers Richard (Eileen) and Edward (Nancy) and their families, and many nieces and nephews and other extended family members.

Jim is preceded in death by his parents, Edward Gajda and Stephany (Pogorzelski) Gajda, his niece Karen Kukulski, and his favorite beloved grand-dog, Kailey.

Family and friends may gather at Burns Funeral Home & Crematory, 10101 Broadway, Crown Point, IN on Friday, December 8, 2023, from 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. A memorial service will take place immediately following at 6:00 p.m. Rev. Mike Yadron officiating. In lieu of flowers, the family asks for live plants to be sent. [www.burnsfuneral.com](http://www.burnsfuneral.com)

# Previous Events

## Memorial Visitation

DEC 8. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (cst)

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

## Memorial Service

DEC 8. 6:00 PM (cst)

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

# Tribute Wall

JH

“ I am so saddened to just hear of his passing. We worked closely together at DeVry. He was an awesome co worker and very knowledgeable !  
Janell Harvey

---

**Janell Harvey** - February 04, 2024 at 12:17 AM

AM

“ Our deepest condolences to the family. Jim has been doing our taxes for 15 years. Wonderful and kind man. We loved our conversation when dropping off our taxes. He always had a smile on his face no matter how busy he was. We will cherish our time knowing him. He will be deeply missed by us and my whole family. Majstoric and Saban family.

---

**Ann Majstoric** - December 08, 2023 at 09:41 PM

LM

“ I'm sure you don't know myself or husband. We are Daniel and Linda McGrew from Crown Point. Jim has been doing are taxes for the past 10 years. We were shocked to hear of his passing. Our deepest sympathy to you and family. We truly enjoyed talking to him while dropping of our taxes. He had such a great personality. He will be deeply missed.

---

**Linda and Daniel McGrew** - December 08, 2023 at 09:10 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of James "Jim" E. Gajda.*



December 07, 2023 at 10:15 PM



“ *jim was a great guy, i really enjoyed the conversations we had dropping off and picking up my tax returns*

**friend** - November 23, 2023 at 08:58 AM



*I have known Jim's brother Rich for most of my life. Sending condolences to the wonderful Gajda family.*

**Arlene Marsahall** - November 26, 2023 at 01:41 PM



*Sending our deepest sympathy and condolences to the Gajda family. Jim was just an all around good guy and a friend after preparing our family's taxes for so many years. He will be missed by many. We will be keeping you close in our thoughts and prayers.*

*Carmen and Ed Peterson*

**Carmen Peterson** - December 09, 2023 at 12:37 PM



*Jim was just a great guy. He will be missed alot.*

**Ed** - December 15, 2023 at 06:56 PM

JC

*Unbelievable! I thought something was off when I hadn't heard from Jim. We would have email exchanges once or twice a year. We worked together 40 years ago and kept in touch since. He was the most accomplished person I know with a great sense of humor. My condolences to Chrissy and Ashley.*

*Jan Chitjian*

---

**Jan Chitjian** - December 17, 2023 at 10:35 AM