



Robert James Vavrek

November 10, 1948 - March 31, 2020

Robert James Vavrek, aged 71, passed away on March 31, 2020. He was born in Hammond, IN November 10, 1948 . He was known by his family and friends as Jim. He is survived by his wife Jennifer (nee Zack) Vavrek, son Jeffrey Vavrek, and daughter Jessica Vavrek. He is also survived by his nieces and nephews, Wendy Grebbien, Leigh Ann Lentz, Scott Richardson, Kristin Wurr, Michael O'Neil, David Zack and Lauren Zack. He is survived by his brother-in-laws John Zack and Perry Zack as well as his sister-in-law Debra Zack. He was preceded in death by his parents, Virginia (nee Derybowski) and Michael Vavrek of Whiting, IN, as well as his three sisters Gladys Richardson, Janet O'Neil, and Doris Mastin.

Jim was a graduate of California State University at Long Beach, CA and later obtained his masters at Indiana State University. He taught for nearly 40 years in the School City of Hammond. Anyone who knew him, knew about his passion for studying meteorology. He shared his enthusiasm for educating students and the public about severe weather safety. He received numerous mini-grants and two Lilly Endowment Teacher Creativity Fellowship Grants. He served as coordinator for the first National Weather Service "Lightning Safety Awareness Week". He was involved in over 55 publications on various meteorological topics, including Multiple Vortex Tornadoes and An Overview of Thundersnow. He also served as an advisor in several educational documentaries, including It Sounded Like a Freight Train and When Lightning Strikes. His primary focus was to improve weather safety through education

using all available media. He traveled throughout the country presenting weather information and how to stay safe. He was also invited to the US-Soviet Conference of Science Teachers in Moscow to present a paper on weather safety.

Jim was a beloved father and husband who always had a good joke for a friend and an easy-going attitude that was appreciated by everyone. He provided for his family, built their family home and was an ever-encouraging force of love and hope in the lives of his wife and children. His family would like to share their immense gratitude for having such a wonderful person in their lives. He will be missed very much. A memorial will be held at a later date when families can congregate again. Burns Funeral Home, Crown Point entrusted with arrangements. www.burnsfuneral.com

Tribute Wall

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“ *A top-notch human being and great weather educator! He gave me tons of support in my Chicago years.*

Alan Sealls, formerly of WGN and WMAQ-TV, now WPMI-TV Chief Meteorologist, Mobile, AL

Alan Sealls - July 07, 2020 at 10:38 PM

PS

“ *Jim was a wonderful person and always willing to discuss his passion for the weather. He will be missed in the fitness center at St. Anthony's Village. I am sorry for your loss and my thoughts are with you and your family.*

Paul Stofko Coordinator of the Senior Fitness Program

Paul E Stofko - April 21, 2020 at 04:21 PM



“ *sorry for loss*

Victoria Ternberg - April 04, 2020 at 04:31 PM