

James Bowers



James R. Bowers, 89, of Bloomington, passed away 2:42 a.m. Tuesday (Dec. 5, 2017) at Heritage Health, Bloomington. His funeral will be 10 a.m. Saturday at Holy

Trinity Catholic Church, Bloomington, with Rev. Geoff Horton officiating. Burial will be in Holy Cross Cemetery, Normal. Visitation will be 3 to 7 p.m. Friday at Carmody-Flynn Funeral Home, Bloomington.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Bloomington High School Athletics or the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

He was born Nov. 29, 1928, in Pittsburgh, Pa., the son of James J. and Katherine Baker Bowers. He married Jo Ann C. Ruffing on Aug. 9, 1958.

Surviving are his wife, Jo Ann Bowers, Bloomington; three sons, Jim Bowers Jr., Orland Park; Jeff (Stephanie) Bowers, Whitefish Bay, Wis.; and Kurt (Stephanie) Bowers, Bloomington; and 12 grandchildren, Jessica, Justin, Cheyenne, Cameron, Eli, Caleb, Chloe, Kallan, Brynn, Kyleigh, Ava and Isabel Bowers. Also surviving are a sister, Joan F. Bowers Baacke, Pittsburgh, and a daughter-in-law, Tamara Shupp.

He was preceded in death by a son, Paul Bowers, and a brother, Robert J. Bowers.

Jim was a graduate of Penn Hills High School in Pittsburgh and attended Penn State University

for one year prior to serving in the U.S. Navy from 1948 to 52. He earned bachelor of science and master of science degrees, both from Illinois State University.

A longtime educator, Jim taught physical education at Bloomington Junior High and High schools for 37 years, beginning in 1955. During those years, he also coached golf, football and wrestling at the high school level. What Jim enjoyed most in his career as an educator and a coach was being “down in the trenches” with the kids, dedicated to instilling discipline, responsibility and respect in his students and student-athletes. He was inducted in the District 87 Hall of Fame in 2016.

Jim found success and recognition in many of his coaching opportunities, including being inducted into several wrestling and coaching halls of fame, as well as receiving several wrestling coaching awards. In addition, Jim was inducted into the ISU Athletics Hall of Fame in 1983 and the Penn Hills High School Athletics Hall of Fame in 2006.

In retirement, Jim and JoAnn enjoyed golfing and travelling in the U.S. and abroad. Jim especially enjoyed his vacations spent in

Perdido Key, Fla., with family and friends. He also continued to take pleasure attending local sporting events, most importantly those where his grandchildren were participants.

Jim was a longtime member of Holy Trinity Catholic Church and Crestwicke Country Club. The family would like to thank the staff at Heritage Health in Bloomington and OSF Hospice for their loving care and compassion in Jim's last days.

To view this obituary, please visit www.carmodyflynn.com.