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James N. McGill

James "Jim" Norman McGill passed away peacefully at OSF St. Francis Medical Center in Peoria on May 5, 2011 at 3:15 a.m., surrounded by his beloved family.

Jim was born on May 27, 1935, to John Inman McGill and Opal (Mezo) McGill in "Tucker's Corner", near the town of McLeansboro, Hamilton County, Illinois. Born of the Great Depression, he was one of eleven children, raised on a small farm where everyone was required to pitch in. Some of his many tasks were teaming horses at age 10 and working the large garden so there was food on the table, which led to his strong work ethic, sense of community and commitment to family. This sense of community drove him to hold high ethical standards. Growing up during the depression in a home filled with love but without material belongings, he took the conveniences of modern life that we take for granted as daily blessings.

Jim moved to Peoria at age 17 immediately after high school. He soon started working at Caterpillar as a shop floor sweeper. Jim completed his Accounting Degree by attending night school from 1961 through 1978 at Bradley University under the GI Bill. In 1996, he retired from Caterpillar as an accountant after nearly 44 years of service, rising to the level of Plant Auditor.

Shortly after starting to work at Caterpillar, Jim was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1958 and served in the military intelligence department in Germany, receiving an honorable discharge in 1960. While serving his country, he met a beautiful, intelligent woman, Elfriede Anna Meiser, whom he later married on June 12, 1960. She survives, along with their three children, Norman (Sheri) McGill of Dunlap, Monica McGill of Morton, and Chris (Julie) McGill of Groveland; ten beloved grandchildren, Sean, Mitch, Ian, Collin and Miles McGill all of Dunlap, Annamaria, Olivia, and Ava Lu all of Morton, and Nicole and Bradley McGill of Groveland. Two brothers, John (Becky) McGill of Peoria and Gary (Sue) McGill of Benton along with sisters Judy (Jerry) Prince, JoAnne (Robert) Gray, Grace DeVolt and Mary Ruth Craddock, all of McLeansboro, Dorothy Roberts of Peoria, and Jane (Bill) Hollis of Washington. Preceding him in death were his father (Inman), his mother (Opal), and two sisters, Alice (McGill) Kelso and Glenda Sue McGill.

Jim was devoted to his family and had attended countless concerts, ball games, birthday parties, and other special occasions of his children and grandchildren. His family often found strength in his encouraging words, guidance, and his optimistic outlook on life, even despite his own battles with serious health issues over the latter years.

Jim loved his country and was also devoted to the love of brotherhood of mankind through his commitment to make the community a better place to live through public service. Jim modeled this in many ways. He helped salvage and keep alive the North Pekin's Cub Scout Pack 145 from 1967 through May 1972. At times he served as a Little League coach in various youth baseball organizations, inspired by his life-long love of baseball and the St. Louis Cardinals. He served the Village of North Pekin for 40 years, serving as Village Treasurer, Trustee, and on various committees from 1971 through 2002. He was a past member of UAW Local 974, serving on the election committee, publication committee, chairman of community services committee and was a delegate to the state AFL-CIO Convention.

He was a life and 54 year member of the Empire Lodge # 126 Ancient Free & Accepted Masons in Pekin, a member of the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite, Valley of Peoria and was active and was a past president in its' Mens's Club for many years.

Jim was a member of the Tazewell County Democratic Club. He was a long serving democratic precinct committeeman. He was a member of the Boy Scouts of America, AMVETS, National Association of Accountants, and the American Foundrymen's Society. He was an active member of the AARP, a board member of the Friends of Friedrichshafen, and the treasurer for Harmonie. He was an Emeritus Member of the Illinois Society Association of Executives since 2006. Always eager to help his fellow man, he served and helped with numerous other volunteer organizations.

In retirement, he served as Executive Director of the Illinois Cast Metals Association for many years. In the past, he also served on the Tazewell County Board and on the Pekin Township Board.

Jim served as past president of the following organizations: Illinois Municipal Treasurer's Association (1989-90), North Pekin-Marquette Heights Jaycees, Peoria's German American Society, Harry S. Truman Club (1973-76), Illinois Cast Metals Association, and the Caterpillar Retirees Club. He served on the Advisory Board of the Salvation Army for twenty years, serving as Chair from 1992-1995. As if all that wasn't enough, he served as the head of the Hamilton County Association here in Central Illinois from 1972 to 2010. It was a small commitment of time that he greatly enjoyed, visiting with old friends and neighbors from his home county.

Jim and Elfriede loved to travel to visit family and friends in Germany and spend time on the beach in Florida. Constantly on the go, he was an affable encyclopedia of names and information. Tell Jim your name and where you were from, even if you were from thousands of miles away, and he could instantly make connections that tied you to people he knew. He never knew a stranger for more than a few minutes. If he knew someone was having a bad day, he would instantly try to cheer them up or make them forget about their worries, if only for a few minutes.

He was a rock to many, and he leaves a void in many that will be hard to fill.

His funeral will be at 11 a.m. Tuesday, May 10, at Preston-Hanley Funeral Homes & Crematory in Pekin. Captain Jerry O'Neill will officiate. Visitation will be from 4 to 7 p.m., Monday at the funeral home, with Masonic rites following the visitation at 7 p.m. Additional visitation will be one hour before the funeral. Entombment will be in Glendale Memorial Gardens in Pekin, where military rites will be accorded by the U.S. Army and the Tazewell Area Ceremonial Team.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made in his name to the Salvation Army, 243 Derby Street, Pekin, IL 61554.

To express condolences online, visit www.preston-hanley.com.



Died: May 5, 2011

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