



James David Ely

January 12, 1939 - January 19, 2020

Jim passed away peacefully on January 19th, after a battle with Parkinson's and dementia. He was born on January 12, 1939 in Detroit, Michigan and moved as a toddler to Honor, Michigan near Traverse City in the northern part of the state. Jim grew up working hard along with his brothers on the family's cherry orchard and blueberry patch all the while making a name for himself at Honor High School. He played varsity football as a quarterback as well as basketball and track. He won 14 letters and was voted to the All State Class C football team. He was also the class president his junior and senior years. After high school, Jim attended Central Michigan University and Ferris State College. While at Central, he played quarterback on the Varsity football team and was also a Varsity tennis player as a freshman. More importantly, he met his future wife when they were both students.

After graduating with a degree in Marketing, Jim was preparing for job interviews with some major corporations. But first decided to set up a "practice" interview with a smaller company he had never heard of called Kawneer. He was very impressed with them, accepted a job offer, and didn't bother looking elsewhere. Jim had a successful 30 year career with Kawneer. His various positions took him and his family to Boston, Niles, Michigan, Cleveland, Visalia in 1975 for 2 and 1/2 years then to South Bend, Indiana. He returned to Visalia as General Manager in 1984. In 1996 Jim started his own business called Management Recruiters International of Visalia, and finally retired in 2006.

Jim was an accomplished tennis player and played everywhere throughout his life making friends along the way. He especially treasured the close friendships he made on the courts of Visalia. However, Jim also married into a family of golfers. Being a fairly intelligent man, he quickly determined it might be in his best interest to try a new sport! After gamely giving golf a try, he came to enjoy it as well and led to him making more great friends. He always looked forward to the many golf outings through the years with his buddies from Kawneer and the building products industry. They were a wonderful part of his life. Jim also enjoyed working in the yard and always found projects to do - large or small.

Jim was an active member of the Visalia community. He served on the Visalia Chamber of Commerce, The Rotary Club of Visalia, was a member of the Visalia Country Club and a

charter member of the original Visalia Racquet Club

Jim was preceded in death by his mother Hazel, his father Les, and his younger brother Bill.

He is survived by his wife of over 57 years, Linda, his daughter Lynne of Visalia, son Jim Jr. and husband Michael Gallagher of San Diego and son John and daughter-in-law Monica of Visalia. Jim is also survived by his brother Les and wife Joyce of Honor, Michigan, his brother Ed of Traverse City and brother-in-law John Johnson and wife Judi of Ann Arbor, Michigan, along with 5 nieces and nephews

It has been extremely heartening to learn of the great affection and respect so many people felt for Jim. He was truly a "Great Guy" Jim loved his family very much and they loved him back. His love, kindness, honesty and integrity will always be remembered. We were proud to call him a husband, proud to call him a father and proud to call him a friend.

Private family remembrances were held.

If you would like, donations may be made to The American Parkinson Disease Association or the charity of your choice.

Comments



“ To the Ely family;
Having shared a common work location downtown for 10 years when Jim started MRI, we became friends through our conversations on each other's health often times those conversations were shared in the men's restroom of all places! Jim always had a pleasant greeting for me and my office staff at that time. To John and the rest of the Ely family you all should be very proud of your Dad and his character and integrity as he met and made friends through his life.

Glenn Black

Glenn Black - February 01, 2020 at 11:57 AM



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Jan Kusy - January 31, 2020 at 02:14 PM