



## James Edward Bourque

November 1, 1940 - April 8, 2020

WORCESTER - When we reach up in that final breath God will say, welcome good and faithful servant. God welcomed Jim Bourque to eternal life on April 8, 2020. He passed from this life after a long history of heart disease.

Jim was the son of Emil Bourque and Mary (Meuse) Bourque. His brother Charlie was 4 when Jim was welcomed to Brockton on November 1, 1940. He took special pride in being born on All Saints Day. His wife Gail made sure to dust off his halo for that day.

Jim loved Brockton. The Florence St crew, St Margaret's, Breen's Diner and the Rocky Marciano legend. He learned to drive on his Dad's 1950 Studebaker, sang with the Galloneers and graduated as valedictorian of his Brockton HS Class. He and his friend T.Eddie distinguished themselves by being the only seniors not to achieve 1st clarinet.

Jim studied at St. John's Seminary in Boston, where he received a Master's Degree in Church History and was ordained to the Roman Catholic priesthood in Boston where he served for seven years.

He then went on to earn his master's degree in social work (MSW) from Boston University concentrating in community organization. He dated his future wife, Gail, while at BU. Jim loved Gail. He wooed her with words, wine, flowers and his intelligent blue eyes. She resisted. He persisted. Persistence paid off. They happily married in October 1973.

After marrying they moved to Muncie, Indiana where Jim began his professional career. He worked in a community mental health center, followed by a stint as Associate Director of the United Way of Delaware County. In 1976, Jim and Gail moved to the Jersey Shore where Jim was Chief Professional Officer of the United Way of Monmouth County for 26 years.

Retiring in 2002, Jim began a 15 year career teaching Social Work, mostly at the graduate level, at Monmouth University in West Long Branch, NJ, Smith College in Northampton,

with great delight at Wheelock College in Boston, and his newly adopted new hometown of Worcester. In 2012, Jim became (did all the ground work) Director of Wheelock's off-campus MSW program in Worcester where he taught Social Welfare Policy and Social Work Practice.

At about this point in most New Englander's obituary there comes an expression of devotion to one or more New England professional sports teams, especially the Boston Red Sox. Jim's story is no different, except to underscore that he maintained the Red Sox Nation loyalty while living for decades in the diaspora, peopled with teams called the Mets, the Phillies, the Jets, the Giants and, yes, even the Yankees.

Jim liked a lot of things. In his early days, hiking the White Mountains. He always sang in choirs. He liked gardening, reading and politics; and some simple things: weekends at the beach, vacations on Peaks Island, beef burgundy, a winter fireplace, a snifter of bourbon and apple pie with cheddar cheese.

And Jim's loves. He loved justice and God. He lived the Micah quote "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?" He loved Gail always and in all ways. Most memorably, he loved her into being when she was challenged with depressions. He loved sons, Matthew and Michael. He taught them how to be good and compassionate men. He supported their strong decisions and many a whim. He was proud of them and proud to say that he attended their every flute-o-phone recital and back to school night. He loved his dear grandsons, his brother, Charlie and daughters-in-law, Araidia and Laura.

And teaching at Wheelock. He loved teaching in the graduate level social work program. He was a class act teacher who could make his career in the community into teachable moments for his students. He gave him the gift of his experience. They appreciated it.

In a tribute to Jim, Gail wrote that he was an all-around nice guy. His friend Paul added that he indeed was that- in the ultimate.

Jim was treated for heart disease since 2008. He had excellent medical care. Special gratitude to Stephen Smith, primary care MD and Joseph Kirkpatrick MD cardiologist. Their professional care of Jim was topped only by the kind and personal care they also extended.

Jim will be held in loving memory by many. He leaves his beloved spouse of 47 years, Gail (Petroski) Bourque; two sons, Matthew Bourque and his wife, Araidia Blackburn of Chicago, IL and C. Michael Bourque and his wife, Laura of Brick, NJ; two grandsons,

Dexter and Corvus both of Chicago; his brother, The Rev. Charlie Bourque and cousin, Kathryn Burke Kelly; as well as many nieces and nephews.

Celebration of life and reception will be held when possible at All Saints Episcopal Worcester.

Donations in Jim's memory may be made to St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 921 Pleasant St., Worcester MA 01602. Funeral arrangements are under the care of Miles Funeral Home, 1158 Main Street, Holden.