



James N. Moylan

December 19, 1944 - December 11, 2025

"Think where man's glory most begins and ends,
And say my glory was I had such friends."

--William Butler Yeats

James "Jim" N. Moylan, age 80, of Plymouth, Michigan, passed away at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit on December 11, 2025.

Born in Detroit to Percy and Margaret Moylan, Jim was the youngest of six children and grew up in a lively, loving family on Forrer Avenue. He graduated from Our Lady Gate of Heaven and then Detroit Catholic Central High School in 1962. He later earned a Bachelor's degree in Plastics Manufacturing Technology from the University of Detroit Mercy in 1999.

Jim began his 34-year career at Ford Motor Company as a draftsman and worked his way up to engineering management. His family takes great pride in his invention of the fuel door indicator that is now on vehicles all around the world and dubbed it the "Moylan Arrow." However, Jim would have said his greatest career accomplishment was the friendships he built with many colleagues along the way. His work took him around the world, including extended assignments in Hiroshima, Japan, during the 1980s.

Outside of work, Jim was an avid sports enthusiast, playing baseball, hockey, golf, racquetball, and especially tennis. Tennis became his passion later in life—he took great pride in mastering his game, participating in rigorous guided lessons right up until his hospitalization. His determination and love for the sport reflected his lifelong commitment to staying active and how he approached life with curiosity, embracing new challenges with enthusiasm.

Jim was famous for his humor, legendary family vacations, and his love of photography—he often coerced people to pose in human pyramids for pictures. A lifelong music lover, he created countless mix tapes and volunteered as an usher for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in retirement. He was always tinkering in his workshop and sharing his knowledge with his grandkids, and enjoyed many hours playing cards and board games with his family and friends. He was also active in the Kiwanis Club of Colonial Plymouth, most notably for his service in the Popcorn Wagon. His grandkids will be making his famous smoothies for the rest of their lives.

Jim never met a stranger and his warm personality attracted friends in all walks of life. He is survived by his beloved wife, Kathleen “Kathy” Moylan, his children Andrew Moylan of Plymouth; Elizabeth Wilson (Christopher) of Takoma Park, Maryland; and Kara Moylan (Christian Lorensen) of Plymouth; grandchildren Norah and Nathaniel Wilson, Theodore and Charles Lorensen; and brothers Thomas and Edward, along with dozens of nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by siblings William, Patrick, and Carol.

Visitation Saturday, December 27th from 2 PM until 8 PM at Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home, 46401 Ann Arbor Road West (between Sheldon and Beck) Plymouth.

A memorial service will be held on Sunday December 28th at 12 PM at Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Henry Ford Health Tom Groth Patient Medical Needs Fund - <https://www.henryford.com/development/make-a-gift>

or the University of Detroit Mercy College of Engineering and Science -<https://www.udmercy.edu/giving/donate/ces.php>

To share a memory, please use the share a memory tab on this webpage.

Previous Events

Memorial Gathering

DEC 27. 2:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home Plymouth
46401 Ann Arbor Road West
Plymouth, MI 48170
(734) 459-2250
plymouth@vermeulenfh.com

Memorial Service

DEC 28. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (ET)

Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home Plymouth
46401 Ann Arbor Road West
Plymouth, MI 48170
(734) 459-2250
plymouth@vermeulenfh.com

Tribute Wall



“ Vermeulen Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of James N. Moylan



Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home - December 27, 2025 at 01:52 PM

TF

“ RIP Jim. Thank you for making driving a little easier for us all.



Tim & Colleen Moylan Family - April 14 at 08:59 AM

AM

“ Rest in peace, in flowers, in purity dear James.. we will never forget you.. thank you for everything for humanity.. I remember you kindly each time I enter gas station with my car..

Alper Sakir Metin - January 15 at 09:59 AM

AM

“ I judge every car I drive on it's implementation (or not!) of the 'Moylan Arrow'! A small moment of genius that, from reading the obituary, actually features as only a small part of a great life lived! Regardless, countless millions of refuelling motorists thank Mr James Moylan unknowingly every day!

A. Motorist - January 14 at 06:46 AM

BM

“ Condolences and peace to Jim's Family. I just read about Jim's passing and wanted to pass along my prayers to the Moylan Family from our Moylan Family.

*Brent Moylan
Boise, Idaho*



Brent Moylan - January 07 at 11:05 AM

ML

“ Kathy, Andy, Liz and Kara - Our hearts are so saddened to hear of the passing of Jim. It is with such warm and fond memories we look back on our time on Waverly because of the Moylans. Jeff still tells people about the Moylan Arrow and how we proudly know Jim Moylan who invented it. We so enjoyed and love all of the Moylan Clan. Please know our prayers are with you and may you feel God's peace as you walk thru this difficult time.

Meg Lindsey - January 05 at 07:04 PM

PM

“ Hello. I read an article in the Wall Street Journal about your Dads ingenuity The Moylan Arrow. I’m writing because my Dad John Moylan was also an engineer. He worked for Grumman here on Long Island. He designed cockpits for the F-14 fighter and the LEM lunar module.
Your Dad seems like ours ...maybe it’s a Moylan thing. God Bless.

Patti Moylan - January 05 at 10:11 AM



Hi Patti. Thank you for reaching out. FYI that I have worked at the Smithsonian National Air & Space Museum for the last 17 years, so I know about the F-14 and the LEM. Feel free to reach out to me at moylanel@yahoo.com

Elizabeth Wilson - January 05 at 12:38 PM

PS

“ I just read the wonderful article about Jim in the Wallstreet Journal this morning. It made me smile. I am sure my father and Jim worked together in the Plastics Paint and Vinyl Division at Ford. In fact, my dad used to correct people when they referred to a “dashboard” with the joking response that “dashboards went out in 1908, they are instrument panels now.....”

I am sorry for your loss. He sounds like he was a great person! I’ll always think of him when I look at the arrow by the gas gauge. Paul Smith, Northville

Paul Smith - January 04 at 09:36 AM



That is so kind of you to reach out! I’m glad they were “dashboard” purists.

Elizabeth Wilson - January 05 at 12:39 PM

KL

“ Karen, Rachel, and Lindsay purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of James N. Moylan.



Karen, Rachel, and Lindsay - December 27, 2025 at 08:48 AM

IM

“ Jim was a really good guy. He was always happy to be around his family and friends. He was a terrific husband and father to his wonderful family. He had a great sense of humor. He liked to tell jokes and play jokes. The last time I saw Jim was in Canada at an amazing compound he had rented for a family vacation. There were two houses that could have been on "The Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous." The family was cooking breakfast and getting ready for a rematch of yesterday's board game because Jim and tricked everyone by setting the game up to his advantage. Jim was happy and enjoying this vacation "fit for a king." Jim will be missed.

Isabel McCann - December 27, 2025 at 08:35 AM

DH

“ Daniel H. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James N. Moylan.

Daniel H. - December 26, 2025 at 04:49 PM

RC

“ Ronald C. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James N. Moylan.

Ronald C. - December 26, 2025 at 02:50 PM

TB

“ *The Bengers purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of James N. Moylan.*



The Bengers - December 23, 2025 at 01:02 PM

TB

“ *The Bengers planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James N. Moylan.*

The Bengers - December 23, 2025 at 01:02 PM

TM

“ *Tom and Julie Moylan planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James N. Moylan.*

Tom and Julie Moylan - December 20, 2025 at 05:34 PM

NS

“ *Natalie S. purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of James N. Moylan.*



Natalie S. - December 20, 2025 at 04:10 PM

NS

“ *Natalie S. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James N. Moylan.*

Natalie S. - December 20, 2025 at 04:10 PM

KO

“ I am so very heartbroken of the sudden loss of Jim. He definitely had a hand in shaping my adult life, as a mentor when I was heading to college. He encouraged me to enter into an engineering degree that I was only 1 of 5 women in the entire program. More importantly though he consistently checked in with our family after the passing of our dad and supported us through our grief. He always managed to sneak in a little story about his good friend, Jack - that meant so much to me. Some of my earliest memories involve the Moylan family. Every time we saw Jim he always had a smile on his face and such positive energy in his words. You were always in a good mood after talking to him. He was such a good friend to all and amazing husband, father, and grandfather. I will miss him dearly and send my love and prayers to Kathy, Andy, Elizabeth, Chris, Norah, Nathaniel, Kara, Chris, Teddy and Charlie. I cherish the friendship that our families enjoy attributed to the bond started by Jim and Jack. May the road rise to meet you. May the wind always be at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face, the rains fall soft upon your fields. And until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of his hand. ~ An Irish Blessing.

Kathy O'Connor - December 19, 2025 at 01:49 PM

MH

“ Jim Moylan made an important impact on my career that continues to this day. He was my supervisor at Ford's Plastic Trim Product Division. I sat with him to discuss a very difficult problem. Jim asked what I thought were possible courses of action. So I told him a few. Then he asked which one I would choose. When I answered him, he said "go do that, I trust your judgement". Jim's faith in me gave me confidence to try new ideas. I think of Jim's leadership often as I show trust in my subordinates. In that way, Jim is impacting the lives of people he never met. I am always proud to say that I worked with the inventor of the fuel-fill arrow!

Michael Horvath - December 19, 2025 at 11:44 AM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of James N. Moylan.*



December 17, 2025 at 10:10 AM



“ *So many wonderful memories with Jim and Kathy. Full of humor and love, with some adventure added in. So very sorry to hear of Jim's passing and we extend our condolences and prayers to Kathy and the entire family. Sincerely; Ron and Carol Wilson*

Ron Wilson - December 16, 2025 at 12:31 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of James N. Moylan.*



December 15, 2025 at 08:14 PM



“ *By luck and happenstance I met Jim when he stepped out of a wallyball court and asked me if I wanted to play, as they were short one person. That was the beginning of years of great memories with him and the other gentlemen, playing wallyball, curling and assorted gatherings. He was a great man, and I will miss him. My condolences to his family and friends. Steve Plasko*

Stephen Plasko - December 15, 2025 at 02:34 PM

JB

“ *Many many years ago, my cousin, Jim and his lovely wife Kathy, hosted Linda and me while we were in the Detroit area, probably to attend a Brown reunion. I remember the hospitality and friendship that Jim and Kathy reached out to extend to us that weekend. Kathy, please accept our condolences.*
John and Linda Bruder

John Bruder - December 15, 2025 at 09:38 AM

SP

“ *Jim will be missed. His volunteerism in Downtown Plymouth set an example for many in the community. We will miss seeing Jim at all of the events in DTP in the coming year.*

Sam P - December 15, 2025 at 08:56 AM

GE

“ *Both of my sons were happy recipients of the best popcorn and pancake breakfasts around. He was always so kind to be around.*

Genevieve - December 15, 2025 at 06:55 AM

RC

“ My first recollection of Jim was during my childhood at my Grandparents, Margaret and Bernie Burger's, home. He was fun and joked with my brothers and I. He and Kathy were so warm and loving, and so were their children, as their family grew. I enjoyed talking with Kathy and Jim at family get-togethers, and they liked my husband, Matt too. In fact, when Jim discovered Matt loved soccer, he gave Matt and I tickets to a World Cup game when it was played in Detroit. I was pregnant with our first child. We were blown away by his generosity, and it was an opportunity to go to a huge soccer event that we would not have had otherwise. We have seen Jim and Kathy most recently at milestone birthday parties, or funerals. Although the years have flown, to know Jim was to really know him, and to love him. My condolences to Kathy, Andy, Elizabeth, Kara, and your families. He was a lovely man, and he lives on in all of you and in the hearts of those who knew him well. Hugs

Rosanne Coty - December 15, 2025 at 12:25 AM

JC

“ So sorry, Kathy. Praying for you. We have lots of memories together!

Joy Coyle - December 14, 2025 at 03:21 PM

MR

“ I believe it's going on ten or so years when I first met Jim when he came into Detroit Popcorn Co. he was looking for a replacement popcorn Mach., for the Kiwanis Popcorn Wagon he ran in Plymouth. Since From the machine I sold him, to all the years following refilling the supplies he needed, we became fast friends. Always looked fwd., to hearing from him in the spring when he placed his supply order, and when I would meet him working the Popcorn Wagon in Kellogg Park. Several times he would join me at Sean O'Callaghans Pub we'd share a laugh as I told everyone that he's a celebrity being his invention of the gas cap indicator 😍
To his family and friends, as we mourn his passing, let's remember that many are now rejoicing to meet him beyond the veil+.
Condolences to family.

Mike Robinson - December 14, 2025 at 02:53 PM

WM

“ I believe the generational divide between the younger cousins and the "older" cousins was 1950. I was younger and Jim was older. I didn't have a lot of interaction with Jim and the Moylans; but loved going to "exotic" Detroit. I had never been in a house with two staircases. I remember Jim having a light blue convertible, which we all got a ride in. The Moylans have always been the best of people; ready to host us; and always participating, in a big way, at the Reunions. Always friendly and always outgoing.
Now, when I get in my car all I see is the Moylan Arrow.
Our sympathies to Kathy, the children and the grandchildren.
Bill Mecke and Karen Lyn

WILLIAM MECKE - December 14, 2025 at 02:15 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of James N. Moylan.*



December 14, 2025 at 02:11 PM



“ *Kathy and Jim's Family - Condolences from the Ray family to the Moylan's.
Jim was a good friend and and colleague at Ford Plastics Division. Moreover, he is remembered as a wonderful dad to his children in their participation in scouting and sports with our children. Gone too soon! Rest In Peace until we meet again. Don Ray.*

Donald Ray - December 14, 2025 at 02:00 PM



“ *I have had the unbelievable pleasure of knowing Mr Moylan (he would say 'Kevin call me Jim) my whole life. I actually owe him my life as he pulled me out of the deep end of the Stanzcyk's pool when I was a young boy. While I was one of the Wineo children, Jim as ways treated me as a friend. I was lucky to be able to spend may life event with Jim and his family. From family vacations, New Year's football at their home and playing on the same softball team. His companion and friendship he gave me and our family after my father's passing will never be forgotten. I am truly grateful that I was able to know Mr Moylan and call him my friend. My heart goes out to Kathy, Andy, Elizabeth, Cara and all of the family. I will miss him.*

Kevin O'Connor - December 14, 2025 at 12:52 PM

KO

I am so very heartbroken of the sudden loss of Jim. He definitely had a hand in shaping my adult life, as a mentor when I was heading to college. He encouraged me to enter into an engineering degree that I was only 1 of 5 women in the entire program. More importantly though he consistently checked in with our family after the passing of our dad and supported us through our grief. He always managed to sneak in a little story about his good friend, Jack - that meant so much to me. Some of my earliest memories involve the Moylan family. Every time we saw him he always had a smile on his face and such positive energy in his words. You were always in a good mood after talking to him. He was such a good friend to all and amazing husband, father, and grandfather. I will miss him dearly and send my love and prayers to Kathy, Andy, Elizabeth, Chris, Norah, Nathaniel, Kara, Chris, Teddy and Charlie. I cherish the friendship that our families enjoy attributed to the bond started by Jim and Jack. May the road rise to meet you. May the wind always be at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face, the rains fall soft upon your fields. And until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of his hand. ~ An Irish Blessing.

Kathy O'Connor - December 19, 2025 at 12:50 PM

DM

“ Jim was my first boss at Ford when I moved to Michigan in 1994. I told him on several occasions including 3 years ago that he was the BEST boss I ever had in my 30 years of work. May he Rest In Peace! Jim was a wonderful man and I was lucky to know him. God Bless!

Dwayne Mitchell - December 14, 2025 at 12:21 PM

RL

“ Rich & Barb Lister purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of James N. Moylan.



Rich & Barb Lister - December 14, 2025 at 12:17 PM

RL

“ Rich & Barb Lister planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James N. Moylan.

Rich & Barb Lister - December 14, 2025 at 12:17 PM

LH

“ I am so sad to hear of Jim's passing. He has been a wonderful addition to our Kiwanis Club! He is a very dedicated Kiwanian and a very kind human being. I will also miss seeing him at Planet Fitness as he was dedicated to his health and flexibility as well. I was there yesterday and when I saw the stretching bars I immediately thought of him. I think I always will. Jim's attention to detail was unmatched, I once complimented him on that and he replied with a smirk, "Careful what you ask an engineer to do". I will miss Jim a lot, he was a great man and will leave a void behind.

Lee Harrison - December 14, 2025 at 11:35 AM

DS

“ Kathy,
I am so sad to hear about Jim's passing. I hope you are surrounded by loved ones who are supporting you through this difficult time. Jim was always so kind to me. He would make funny comments with a twinkle in his eyes. I'm going to miss him. I'm praying for you and your family. ❤️
Your next door neighbor,
Donna

Donna Small - December 13, 2025 at 09:30 PM