



James Russell Watson

May 1, 1942 - March 21, 2026

James Russell Watson, age 83, of Plymouth, Michigan, passed away peacefully on Saturday, March 21, 2026. Jim was a long-term resident of the community he loved. Known for a charming personality that could light up any room, he moved through life with a giving spirit and a genuine desire to help others. He was especially fond of the waitstaff at Zack's Restaurant, who always welcomed him like family. Jim was truly generous to a fault, finding great joy in lending a hand to a neighbor or supporting a friend in need.

A true outdoorsman, Jim found peace and purpose in nature. He was never happier than when sharing his passions with those he loved, whether fishing, hunting, or spending quiet afternoons picking black raspberries. He actively participated in sports for his sons and grandchildren. He coached basketball for many years in the 1970s and 1980s, kept stats for his sons' high school football teams, and traveled far and wide, spending countless days cheering for his grandchildren's sports teams. Jim was always more than willing to offer his opinion and advice to the officials and coaching staff alike. On fall Saturdays, he could always be found rooting for his beloved Ohio State Buckeyes. These simple pleasures were the backdrop of a life well-lived, but his keenest passion was always reserved for his family and friends.

Jim was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Kathy (Sroufe) Watson. His legacy of love continues through his three sons, Russ (Kathy) Watson, Jim

(Kim) Watson, and Ernie (Terri) Watson. He was a proud and devoted grandfather to Alex (Maggie) Watson, Maureen (Zach) Barnett, Jack (Emily) Watson, Katie Watson, Joe Watson, Christiana (Davide) Viquez, Samantha Watson, Megan Watson, and Eli Watson, and two step-grandchildren Emma Galeota and Aidan Galeota. His light further shines in his four great-grandchildren, with two more expected to join the family soon. Jim also leaves behind his special friend, Florence Chance, with whom he shared many cherished memories.

Though he has cast his final line, the impact of Jim's kindness and the warmth of his charm will remain with all who knew him. He leaves behind a family rooted in the strength and love he provided so freely. May his memory serve as a reminder to live generously and to cherish every moment spent with those we hold dear.

Visitation Friday, March 27th from 3 PM until 8 PM at Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home, 46401 Ann Arbor Road West (Between Sheldon and Beck) Plymouth.

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

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 27. 3:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

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

Tribute Wall



“ Jim was such an important and big part of our lives as youth. As my brother noted, he was like a 2nd father to us, especially after our parents split up. Jim was our mentor and coach in youth sports, making sure we had rides to practice and games and also placing us on his teams as his “sons” :) He had a larger than life role, and his positive impact was felt across all the kids that crossed paths with his life. He was kind, funny, positive, and let us play “street ball” during our youth basketball games- which was just his way of saying; “have fun and enjoy what you are doing”. Rest in peace Jim, and may your spirit shine bright in the next world!

William Lesko - March 30 at 10:55 AM

JL

“ Mr. Watson was like a second father to my brothers and I (and other kids) when I was growing up. We spent a great amount of time at his home near ours, where he had three sons the same age as us, and often enjoyed Kathy's meals there as well as Pizza nights out. He sponsored us for the PCJBA Basketball league, which he also coached, and where we won some impressive championships, and enjoyed many after-game pizza parties. In addition to teaching Sunday School at his church, which we also sometimes attended. He also took us Water Skiing behind his boat, and even took me hunting once.

He taught us, both by instruction and example, how to be good men. He was an excellent father to his own kids, providing quality love, support, and discipline. He was a good husband, and always put his family first. Even while he worked hard running his own successful businesses for many years. He and Kathy even took other kids in to stay at his home for months, perhaps years at a time.

His spirit of happy generosity and selflessness is and was an inspiration to me and my family, and we will never forget him. To me, people like Jim and Kathy are what really make this country what it is, in both its success and generosity.

-- John Lesko

John Lesko - March 28 at 04:53 PM

MS

“ MSI purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of James Russell Watson.



MSI - March 27 at 09:21 AM



“ MSI planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James Russell Watson.

MSI - March 27 at 09:21 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of James Russell Watson.

March 27 at 07:29 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* was purchased for the family of James Russell Watson.



March 27 at 07:29 AM



“ *Arrive in Style* was purchased for the family of James Russell Watson.



March 26 at 08:53 AM

TF

“ Tony DeBoard and Family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of James Russell Watson.



Tony DeBoard and Family - March 25 at 11:36 PM

TF

“ Tony DeBoard and Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James Russell Watson.

Tony DeBoard and Family - March 25 at 11:36 PM

YA

“ Your daughter and Alma purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of James Russell Watson.



Your daughter and Alma - March 25 at 09:32 PM

RG

“ Rosanna Gattei planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James Russell Watson.

Rosanna Gattei - March 25 at 11:18 AM

RG

“ Rosanna Gattei purchased the *Fairest of All* for the family of James Russell Watson.



Rosanna Gattei - March 25 at 11:18 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of James Russell Watson.

March 24 at 06:23 PM



“ *Enduring Grace* was purchased for the family of James Russell Watson.



March 24 at 06:23 PM



“ *Country Basket Blooms* was purchased for the family of James Russell Watson.



March 24 at 12:23 PM

JL

“ Jeff and Jennifer Laster planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James Russell Watson.

Jeff and Jennifer Laster - March 24 at 09:59 AM

JL

“ Jeff and Jennifer Laster purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of James Russell Watson.



Jeff and Jennifer Laster - March 24 at 09:59 AM

RF

“ Richard, Donna and family. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James Russell Watson.

Richard, Donna and family. - March 24 at 09:36 AM

RF

“ Richard, Donna and family. purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of James Russell Watson.



Richard, Donna and family. - March 24 at 09:36 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of James Russell Watson.



March 24 at 08:28 AM



“ Dreams From the Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of James Russell Watson.



March 23 at 09:00 PM



“ Love, The Widmer's, Katz's & Harney's purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of James Russell Watson.



Love, The Widmer's, Katz's & Harney's - March 23 at 08:39 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of James Russell Watson.

March 23 at 03:13 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of James Russell Watson.*



March 23 at 03:13 PM



“ *Fifty years ago I met Jim Watson at an interview for a job as his office manager of a health and beauty aid company in Plymouth, MI. Jim and his wife Kathy became fast friends with my husband Jack and I. Jack for four years became the sales manager for the Plymouth company. Later Jim and Jack together did contract work in New York City. The friendship with all the Watson family holds some of our best memories. Jim will be missed. He was a kind generous man who cared about peiople.*
Joanne and Jack Stewart

Joanne Stewart - March 23 at 02:48 PM



Alicia P. Van Pelt
My children Bill, John, Andy Lesko and Marisa Lesko-Downs will never forget our former neighbors and friends, the Watson's.
We exchanged babysitting for many years and our boys walked together to Smith School.
Jim was more generous with us that I ever knew.
Jim, I couldn't believe Kathy ever left , and now you: we will never forget you!

Alicia P. Van Pelt - March 23 at 03:56 PM



He will also be missed by his Special puppy Buddy who I had the pleasure of taking care of when needed.

Evelyn Logsdon - March 23 at 05:03 PM

MD

Jim was the most caring and giving person . He was always willing to help when a person was in need. You will be truly missed. "Go Blue"

Mary Ann Desjarlais - March 25 at 07:53 AM

AY

My uncle Jim was the absolute best! Both he and Kathy took such good care of my mom when she was ill. They also took her on several fun vacations. Jim and Kathy were two of the most loving and giving people. Give mom and dad, grandma and grandpa george and Kathy and Marilyn hugs from me! Love you Uncle Jim!!!

Amy (Stemen) Young - March 26 at 03:55 PM

WL

Jim was a member of the Widowed Friends Ministry for the last few years. He was always very active, caring and generous with his time, generous spirit and even cooking skills. He enjoyed bowling, attending dinners and concerts with our group. Jim will be missed. Our sincere condolences to his family.

Widowed Friends - Gerry Levy - March 28 at 08:20 AM

KG

“*May your happy memories give you peace and comfort during this challenging time.*”

Former Classmate of James LSH Class of 1960

Ken Gratz

Kennet Gratz - March 23 at 02:47 PM



“*A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of James Russell Watson.*”

March 23 at 02:04 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of James Russell Watson.*



March 23 at 02:04 PM



“ *It was 1973 and Ray and I were 18 yr old newlyweds. Visited his cousin Jim who offered Ray a sales job. We pack up and move from New Athens to Michigan and live with Jim, Kathy and their 3 ornery young boys until we got an apartment! Treasure our times with Jim and Kathy. She was such a character and Jim would just giggle at her antics. Boating on the lake, selling fireworks, visiting "down home", many great memories. I strive to be like them and be a better wife, mother, friend. They were the best. 💙💛*

Sharon Johnson - March 23 at 11:17 AM