



James Alan Benson

February 2, 1944 - January 20, 2024

Benson, James Alan

James Alan Benson age 79 of Little Canada, MN passed away on January 21, 2024. James was born to Jim and Elsie Benson at Midway Hospital in St. Paul, MN on February 2, 1944. Growing up James and his sister Janet (Miles) Davenport spent many of their childhood summers at the cabin. He graduated from Central High School, St. Paul in 1962. James furthered his education at the University of Minnesota and the Minneapolis Vocational school where he received his training in printing. These milestones marked the foundation of his knowledge and beginning of a path that would shape his future endeavors and life journey.

James worked at Holden Printing as a Journeyman Pressman for several years where he was a member of the International Brotherhood of teamsters as well as an active member of the local ILPF and GCIU unions until leaving the field to explore and enjoy other interests.

James was a man of integrity and distinctive character. He was a loving and loyal husband. He married his true love Rosalita Soenksen from Brainerd, MN on May 22, 1971. Their first date included individually hand rolled mini meatballs, evenly measured on a homemade pizza perfected by James himself. They bought their first home in the Highland area of St. Paul where they lived until 1979. It was in this home that he and Rosalita added a couple of Great Dane fur friends to their family, one of which was 150 pounds in size.

As their family grew in size, they moved to Little Canada where they resided for the rest of their married life. During the next 53 years of marriage, they enjoyed raising and loving several fur friends as well as the variety of wildlife that would visit their property.

His most cherished moments were always spent with his Rosalita, whom he would call "Rose", which included many evenings of dining out, sailing, and driving to find the next best antique treasure.

Many of their boating adventures took place on their 29', CC sailboat in the Apostle Islands of Lake Superior. He could ride that sailboat in 7 foot seas like a professional while enjoying fireside stories with the Ranger. In his later years, he and Rosalita took to calmer waters by cruising the tranquil river of the Saint Croix and relaxing at the marina while meticulously cleaning and maintaining his boat. In addition to the various boats he owned, James also owned many fun cars throughout his years. His first of many cars included the '64 Volkswagen Bug and his last one included a cherry red Lexus LC 500 Sport Coupe.

James' love for antiques and the art of refinishing antiques would take him on scenic drives marked by spontaneous roadside stops in his pursuit of his antique-seeking treasure hunts. This love showcased his passion for preserving history and the craftsmanship of the past. He would often refinish and restore many of these artifacts in his personally designed and hand built man cave.

James was also intrigued by steam engines. One of his favorite encounters was while ferrying across Lake Michigan in his early days, he was invited by crew members to watch the steam engines in motion. Threshing and Steam shows became another favorite pastime especially the time he was given the chance to drive one of the antique tractors.

His love for Sailing, antiquing, steam shows and cars intertwined to form a rich tapestry that brought great joy to James' life. The gentle embrace of the wind on sailboats brought him solace, while each antique discovered held a story, connecting him to history. Steam shows ignited his fascination with machinery

and his love for cars spoke to a passion for both innovation and classic design. Together, these diverse interests painted a life uniquely colored by a blend of adventure, nostalgia and appreciation for the intricacies of the past while enjoying the present with his true love, Rosalita.

James is preceded in death by his parents Jim and Elise Benson and all of his family fur friends.

He is survived in death by his wife Rosalita Benson, sister Janet (Miles) Davenport, along with other family relatives and good friends. For those who he called friends, they will forever remember his gentle spirit, his kind heart, his perfectionism, his wisdom, his attention to detail, his ongoing projects crafted in his pristine, well organized, immaculate man cave and his vast knowledge of well- researched topics in which he so eagerly shared as conversation starters.

A memorial service and luncheon will take place at Washburn and McReavy Funeral Home on Saturday, February 17, 2024 from 1-4 pm with a visitation one hour prior to memorial service.

Livestream Available at: <https://youtube.com/live/CY71obz5ybs?feature=share>

Funeral arrangements entrusted to

Washburn and McReavy Funeral Home

515 Highway 96 West Shoreview, MN 55126

•651-482-7606•

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 17. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Shoreview Chapel
515 Highway 96 West
Shoreview, MN 55126

Memorial Service

FEB 17. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

Shoreview Chapel
515 Highway 96 West
Shoreview, MN 55126

Reception

FEB 17. 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM (CT)

Shoreview Chapel
515 Highway 96 West
Shoreview, MN 55126

Tribute Wall

JM

“ Many of my fondest childhood memories are of time spent with Uncle Harvey, Aunt Emma and you Rose. Jim was a perfect addition to our family. From waking up to a huge Great Dane sleeping next to me at the cabin, trips to Paul Bunyan and Bambi Land, fishing, wading in the Mississippi, to Aunt Em’s fish fry’s, those times were magical. As an adult those memories continued. We so treasure our times spent antiquing and enjoying a great meal with you and Jim. Jim was a remarkable man, his love and devotion to you so evident. I loved hearing his stories of finding and restoring another perfect piece for your collections. His knowledge and skill so evident in everything he did. That included making the best popcorn ever. His quiet and gently nature was one of my favorite things about him yet he was so well read he could carry on a great conversation on about any topic. Still waters truly do run deep. We were heartbroken to hear of Jim’s passing and again knowing we couldn’t be there with you today. I am so thankful to have been able to attend the service via streaming . It was a wonderful tribute to a lovely man and a life so very well lived. Much love to you today and always Rose and we will see you in 3 weeks.

Jodi McGivern - February 17, 2024 at 04:32 PM

JM

“ Rose both Jodi and I were so deeply saddened when we received the news of Jim’s death. I will never forget meeting you at your home in 1984 and the numerous times we visited over the years. With 3 or 4 of my brothers living in the Twin Cities when we came up for visits no trip was complete without spending time with you and Jim. I can honestly say that it is hard to think of anyone who made us feel more at home than you two. We enjoyed going to Stillwater or a night out for dinner. Such great memories that we will cherish forever. I am so glad we were able to spend the day with you when we came up at the end of the summer. It had been a few years since we had been up, but it felt like we hadn’t missed a day. I enjoyed reading the obit. I feel that it really captured Jim’s spirit. We are sorry that we will not be at the services tomorrow but we look forward to seeing you in 3 weeks when we are coming up to the Twin Cities. It was always evident to me how much you loved each other and that is something I will always admire and remember about both of you . See you soon. Love to you! Joe McGivern

Joseph McGivern - February 16, 2024 at 10:47 PM