



James Rodney Gilbert Olson

June 13, 1925 - April 19, 2024

James R. G. Olson, 98, passed away on April 19, 2024, in Saint Louis Park, MN. Jim was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 1925, the second son of William C. Olson and Alice M. Resberg Olson of Minneapolis. He graduated from Washburn High School in Minneapolis in 1943 and enlisted in the Army Air Corps while in High School as an Aviation Cadet. He graduated as an Aerial Navigator and completed the Radar Bombardment course before his B-29 crew training in Alamogordo, New Mexico in 1945. The war ended before his scheduled date to fly to Japan. He served in the Air Force Reserves until 1965, retiring at the rank of Major.

He returned to Minnesota after the war, and received his Bachelor's of Business Administration degree in 1948, Master's degree in 1949 and his PhD. in 1965 from the University of Minnesota. He was a full-time Instructor in Economics at the University of Minnesota from 1949 - 1952, and was employed as a Research Analyst at the Minneapolis headquarters of International Milling Company from 1953 - 1958.

Jim married Geraldine Laird of Des Moines, Iowa in 1958 at Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis. Later that year, they moved to Champaign, Illinois, where he took a position as an Assistant Professor of Business Management at the University of Illinois. The family moved to Decatur, Illinois in 1965 when he was appointed Dean of the School of

Business and Industrial Management at Millikin University in Decatur. Jim retired as the Registrar of Millikin University in June, 1987. He was a member of the American Economic Association, the American Political Science Association and the National Tax Association.

While in Decatur, he served his community in many ways including:

- Member of the Rotary Club
- Member of The Golden K Kiwanis Club
- Advisory board member of the Salvation Army
- Vice Chairman of the Decatur Civic Center Board
- Served on the Decatur school integration committee
- Served a term as moderator of the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ and as clerk of the Session of the First Presbyterian Church

Among his interests were traveling (especially Florida during the winter months), genealogy, playing bridge, visiting his family, reading and volunteer work for several organizations.

He is preceded in death by his beloved wife of 46 years, Geraldine (Geri) Olson. He is survived by sister Joan Odell, daughter Christine Sheen (Patrick), son Kent (DeeDee), son Bruce (Nancy), 11 grandchildren and 4 great grandsons, as well as many nieces and nephews.

Plans include burial in the Olson family plots in Hillside Cemetery in Minneapolis, which include three generations of the Olson family.

Memorial service to be held Saturday, June 15 at 10:30am with visitation starting at 10am at the Washburn-McReavy Hillside Chapel, 2610 19th Ave NE, Minneapolis, MN 55418.

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN **15**. 10:00 AM - 10:30 AM (CT)

Hillside Chapel
2610 19th Avenue N.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55418

Memorial Service

JUN **15**. 10:30 AM - 11:15 AM (CT)

Hillside Chapel
2610 19th Avenue N.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55418

Tribute Wall



“ Washburn-McReavy Funeral Chapels created a Tribute Video in memory of James Rodney Gilbert Olson



Washburn-McReavy - June 15, 2024 at 01:45 PM



“ Washburn-McReavy Funeral Chapels created a Memorial Service for James Rodney Gilbert Olson in memory of James Rodney Gilbert Olson



Washburn-McReavy - May 29, 2024 at 10:38 AM



“ 109 files added to the album *Life Tributes* ”



Washburn-McReavy - June 15, 2024 at 09:40 AM

DO

“ *My memories of James R Olson by Donald B Odell*
My Uncle Jim is one of the best people I've been associated with in my life. It is an honor to write these notes.

1) 1970's - Jim, Geri, Kent, Bruce, Chris and myself had gotten together on some memorable occasions. The main one is going to a St Louis Cardinals game at Busch Stadium. Yes Kent, the same Cardinals that the Twins beat in the 1987 World Series...haha. I also recall while staying at the house in Decatur, Ill. walking down the trail to the public swimming pool nearby as it was a hot summer. Jim and Geri bought some Dairy Queen for us kids and I ate all of it before Kent, Bruce and Chris had a chance. Sorry about that K,B & C.

On a notable trip from Decatur to Excelsior, MN in the Olson family station wagon, I remember stopping for gas at the Hudson gas station just outside Excelsior. I stood by while Jim pumped the gas. The sign at the station showed that gas was \$0.25 per gallon.

2) 2004 - Jim and Geri attended my sister's wedding up north of Brainerd, MN. I spent most of the time at the reception talking to them catching up on lost time.

3) 2008 - Jim, my Mom and myself had gotten together a couple of times. In Lake Tahoe, we drove the road around the lake sightseeing. If you've ever been there you know how beautiful that drive is.

Mom and Jim also came to Las Vegas to visit. We drove down to Lake Mead and did a tour. Jim saved the day by having his Lifetime National Parks Pass to get us into the area.

4) 2010 - Approaching my 50th birthday, I met up with Mom and Jim in Englewood Beach in Florida. We stayed at The Sea Oates and had a great time. What a

*beautiful place and great
company.*

*5) 2019 - While visiting Minnesota, Chris, Pat, Jim, Mom and myself
went out for pizza. When*

*we arrived back at Jim's apartment, I mentioned to him that he was
one my favorite people and*

he said, "I'll do my best to honor your expectations".

Donald B Odell (Jim's nephew)

Donald Odell - May 20, 2024 at 10:52 AM