



James Leo Franklin

December 29, 1936 - August 23, 2023

Jim Franklin waltzed out of this life on August 23, 2023, after two years of declining health. James Leo Franklin joyfully danced into Goodhue, Minnesota on December 29, 1936, as the third child born to Lucille A. Haustein Franklin of Red Wing and Thomas B. Franklin of Goodhue County. Jim's smile and exuberant personality flourished in the village where he graduated from Goodhue High School in 1954, having played basketball, football, baseball, and his clarinet in the school band. In 1958, Jim graduated from St. John's University (near St. Cloud) with a bachelor's degree in Music Education. Jim played clarinet, saxophone, flute, piano, sang choral music, learned to study under the watchful eye of St. John's Benedictine monks, and made many dear friends. Jim directed MoonMisters, a dance band that played for area dances during college. Upon graduation, Jim served in the Army as 2nd Lt Reserve Officer and retired from the Reserve as a 1st Lt. Jim earned a master's degree from University of Northern Iowa and a PhD from University of Iowa (1976) where he conducted the Hawkeye Marching Band and University Concert Band No. 3 as a graduate assistant. During doctoral studies, Jim married Theresa Vernon Franklin and they had two children, Anne and Joe.

Early in his career, "Mr. Franklin" spent seven years teaching band students in McGregor, Iowa. His career spanned 30 years teaching instrumental high school music in Minnesota and Iowa and also directing bands, concert bands, and jazz bands at universities in Oklahoma, Michigan, and Colorado. In 1995,

Jim returned to McGregor and launched Popcorn Press as an independent author and publisher of 20 books including Midwest histories and an autobiographical trilogy starting with Last Waltz in Goodhue. Well into his eighties, Jim set up his Popcorn Press canopy at art festivals to connect with his readership, friends, and family in the Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin Upper Mississippi region. Always athletic, Jim played team sports, golfed, danced, and ran half-marathons into his 60s. Jim enjoyed RVing in the southwest for two decades and drove into Hillsboro, New Mexico where he played tennis and met his musical and life partner Merideth. Having lived in Roswell, NM for the past eight years, Jim especially enjoyed music programs at the Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art and the annual Roswell Jazz Festival. He was a loyal Iowa Hawkeye fan - Go Hawks!

Jim was a member of Knights of Columbus, Kiwanis International, McGregor Chamber of Commerce board, Editor of the North Iowa Times, a liberal Democrat, and a lifelong critiquing Catholic. Jim was preceded in death by his father, Thomas Bernard Franklin (c. 1894 -1951), Lucille Anna Haustein Franklin-Ryan (1900 - 1970), brother Daniel Franklin (1940 – 1940), brother Thomas Edward Franklin (1934-1987), and sister Rose Marie Franklin Kelly (1933 – July 9, 2023). Jim is survived by his two children, Anne, and Joseph (Cristina Portela-Vales), their mother Theresa Vernon Franklin, life partner Merideth Hildreth, nieces, nephews, cousins, friends, students, and fans of Popcorn Press.

Slow waltzing back to Goodhue, Jim's Services and Burial will take place at St. Columbkil Church and Cemetery in Belle Creek, Goodhue County, MN., date tbd.