



James V. Nealon

December 30, 1944 - November 29, 2023

James V. Nealon, 78, of Sarasota, Florida, passed away on November 29, 2023, at Doctor's Hospital. He faced Parkinson's for over 15 years with unwavering resilience, living his adventurous life to the fullest. Jim lived life with purpose, that is the only way he wanted it. He passed away peacefully with his wife and daughter by his side.

Born on December 30, 1944, in Washington DC, Jim earned a BS in Chemical Engineering from the University of New Hampshire, where he met his wife, Gail. He later earned an MBA from Rochester Institute of Technology while working at Eastman Kodak. Jim was a skilled speaker at photographic engineering conferences, held certificates in electrical engineering and even taught math at RIT. He held many different jobs at EK Co. and they flew him around the world a few times.

An outdoor enthusiast, Jim spent winters cross country and downhill skiing and served over 30 years on the National Ski Patrol at Bristol Mountain. Summers were dedicated to sailing and racing on the Finger Lakes and Lake Ontario. When Jim and Gail lost their 16 year old daughter Jennifer to brain cancer, they created the Sunset House, a hospice house run by volunteers, which still exists today and has served over 400 people in its 2 bed house.

After retiring from Kodak In 1999, he and Gail embarked on sailing adventures

on their 44 foot sloop the Endymion. Exploring the coast and the Caribbean, they eventually settled in St. Croix, USVI, in 2002. Here he drove dive boats, chartered his own, took a position as an Operations Manager for a new EDC company, then became a Real Estate agent. Jim and Gail bought a beautiful home on top of a mountain between the Mt. Victory Eco Tourist Camp and the VI Sustainable Farm Institute which was the beginning of his “green conversion”. Jim actively participated in environmental initiatives and served on the board of directors for the St. Croix Environmental Association and V.I. Land Trust and acted as Treasurer and President of the UUSC Fellowship.

After 15 years in St. Croix, Jim and Gail moved to Sarasota, Florida, finding community in various organizations, including the Unitarian Universalists of Sarasota, the Sarasota Sailing Squadron, and the Freedom Boat Club. An active participant in Parkinson's groups and the YMCA, Jim enjoyed spin classes, pickleball, and rock steady boxing to fight back against what Parkinson's was doing to his body. There he found kindred spirits that could keep up with his boundless energy when he wasn't with his grandchildren (his favorite playmates).

James is survived by his wife Gail, daughter Joyce (Brett) Windrow, grandchildren Riley and Alex Windrow, sister Judith (Warren) Bergstrom, and his beloved nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his daughter Jennifer Nealon.

Jim's zest for life, love for family, and enduring friendships will be fondly remembered. Remember, “Life is a reach and then you jibe”

“A smooth sea never made a skilled sailor” -Franklin D Roosevelt

A memorial service will take place December 23rd at 2:00pm at the

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS OF SARASOTA, 3975 FRUITVILLE RD.

A celebration of life will be held in Rhode Island next summer.

In lieu of flowers please donate to

Donate to The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research

(michaeljfox.org)

And a special thank you to Toale Brothers Funeral Home for helping us with preparations and being such a comfort.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

DEC **23**. 2:00 PM (ET)

Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota
3975 Fruitville Road
Sarasota, FL 34232

Tribute Wall

KS

“ Gail, so sorry to hear about Jim's passing. He was a big part of our lives with Bristol Ski Patrol (he was on S&T when I joined) as well as racing Spectrum for so many years. I was fortunate to have him as a mentor on the boat as well as on the mountain. Sincere condolences.

If you ever make it up to Crystal River where I live now (manatees and all that), let me know.

ken streb - January 04, 2024 at 11:28 AM

JR

“ Gail, I'm sending you sincere condolences from myself and Jim's pickleball friends. We just heard of his passing. Jim was such an inspiration to us all. He played with us at Arlington Community Center. I had the opportunity to chat with him about some of your boating adventures, and they sounded amazing. May your memories of happy days spent together help you through these difficult times. Julie Robeson (aka-OJ) and friends

Julie Robeson - December 31, 2023 at 05:29 PM

JU

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Julie - December 31, 2023 at 05:24 PM

JW

Love him at the end of the table. What a ham :)

Joyce Windrow - January 10, 2024 at 01:05 AM

MI

“ 1 file added to the album Jim Nealon



Merilee Imamoto - December 23, 2023 at 07:25 PM

PT

“ *Mary and I were really sad to hear of Jim’s passing.*

We first met while sailing in the Thousand Islands with our kids. Jim’s and Gail’s warmth immediately drew us to them (plus they were tied up beside us!).

We had many fun adventures with them - racing on Lake Ontario, skiing in Algonquin, diving and dodging trucks in St. Croix...

Jim was truly a wonderful man who will be sorely missed by everyone who knew him.

We send our love and condolences to you, Gail and to Joyce and your family.

Jim, we continue to tack to try to catch you but for the time being you are leading the fleet... again!

*Peter Taylor & Mary Moogk
Oshawa, Ontario*

Peter Taylor - December 22, 2023 at 05:36 PM

JW

Thank you Peter :)

Joyce Windrow - January 09, 2024 at 08:11 PM

WS

“ So sorry to hear of Jim’s passing.
We met while sailing about the Caribbean, meeting at various ports.
Subsequently we all “washed up” on St. Croix and were blessed to
enjoy many gatherings at Jim and Gail’s lovely hilltop home.
Since our birthdays are only a few days apart, we had another
reason to share time. We all shared enthusiasm about the Mount
Victory camp and the pig roasts.
Not sure who were the better dancers, Jim and Gail or Tony and
Ellen.
Rest in peace, my friend.
Bill & Melinda Scott
S/V Sovereign

William Scott - December 19, 2023 at 08:04 AM

LH

“ He was a great person. Will miss him too, but will keep all the
memories. So so sorry, Gail. Always here for you.

linda Hause - December 15, 2023 at 08:43 PM

EL

“ 3 files added to the album Jim Nealon



Ellen - December 15, 2023 at 05:45 PM

MI

“ Jim was "Jimmy" Nealon when I met him at Lynnfield Jr. High school as 6th graders. He never failed to bring smiles to others' faces as he entered a room, and although I moved to California 50 years ago, I felt that same warmth at each and every reunion over the years. Not only that, but he was now accompanied by his very own ray of sunshine, his delightful wife, Gail. After one reunion that was held in Old Orchard Beach, ME, the Nealons asked me and my husband if we could give them a ride to meet some friends with whom they were going to spend a few days. That was when we found out they had come to the reunion from...somewhere...on the bus!! I remember laughing my head off on the far-too-short car ride, but I felt ridiculously pleased and honored that we had spent some very special time with Jim and Gail without anyone else around! Tears are forming now, so I'd best close while I'm still able to make sense. To Gail with all my love, Merilee Imamoto

Merilee Imamoto - December 14, 2023 at 11:35 PM

JW

What a great memory, thank you!

Joyce Windrow - January 09, 2024 at 08:13 PM

BW

“Mike and I worked and played with Jim and Gail during their wonderful years here in St. Croix. Jim was a thoughtful realtor when selling our house and worked with Mike on the Trust for Virgin Islands Lands. We sailed, partied, and discussed. "Jim was the easiest going hard nose I ever met," says Mike.

I will never forget Jim and Gail's last visit here to the island after they moved north. Jim seemed more free and spontaneous than ever and it was wonderful - perhaps worrisome - as he went where he wanted to go, and did what he wanted to do - lying down to rest on a bench in our art gallery and dancing with me in the moonlight at Gail's birthday. Such a smooth dancer, I wish we had more time.

*With love and appreciation for your friendship, Jim and Gail.
Barbara & Mike Walsh*

Barbara Walsh - December 08, 2023 at 11:17 AM

GS

“So sorry to see Jim pass, he was a friend and more than that he was my daughters other Dad. I have very great memories of Jim, especially the times we skied with our girls. They were all so good and I was always a beginner. He gave me tours of Kodak and some of the work he had done. I would ski with him at Bristol when he was on Ski Patrol. I always enjoyed that, we could go to the head of the line. A special memory was when we took our daughters back to college and rented a lodge in Lake Placid. It was special to spend time with both of our Daughters, Laura and Joyce know what I mean. Love you all and our prayers are with you. George & Kathie Smith

George Smith - December 06, 2023 at 10:58 AM

JW

Awww Dad #2 Love you.

Joyce Windrow - January 09, 2024 at 08:14 PM

SM

“ *Jim was an amazing person on so many levels, but his courage and zeal for living life with kindness and goodwill toward all will long be remembered by all who knew and loved him*

smartin - December 05, 2023 at 02:19 PM

JB

“ *Warren and I finally convinced Jim and Gail to "lower" themselves to a cruise ship trip a year and a half ago. One day the seas were so rough people had to be hand escorted to the dining room. The only person navigating a straight line was JIM, Parkinsons be damned! He and Gail danced every night and I got to dance with my brother as well. Brothers don't come any better and I shall miss him terribly.*

Big sister, Judy

Judith Bergstrom - December 04, 2023 at 03:10 PM

SL

“ *I didn't know Jim, but I worked with his daughter Joyce. After reading Jim's obituary I feel I've met him; Joyce definitely takes after her dad! She's the kindest person I know. My love, prayers, and condolences to all the family.*

Sue Lacaillade

Susan Lacaillade - December 03, 2023 at 02:01 PM

JP

Jim and I had wonderful experiences all over the world together but especially sailing and skiing and just hanging out. We met in 1970 sailing together and being fellow Kodakers and began a life long friendship. He was a dear friend and great guy to all. He was always helpful, interested and fun. He loved life. I'll miss him so much. Many condolences to Gail and family.

Jonah Pruitt - December 03, 2023 at 05:05 PM

BB

“ *In about 1998, I crewed on Endymion after Jim and Gail had bought her in Cocoa Beach, Florida. He had 10 days to leave the state to avoid paying sales tax. As we were sailing out the Canaveral channel, waving at all the people on the cruise ships, I was on the helm and Jim was busy cleaning up loose ends on the foredeck. He found a line he didn't recognize and grumbled at people being sloppy as he tied it around the mast. But he didn't recognize it as the pull cord for the eight man inflatable life raft, which came to life and dutifully inflated itself on the foredeck. So we had to put back in to Canaveral, motoring past the same crowds no longer waving but laughing! After deflating and securing the raft, we set sail once again for Charleston, a delicious reach on starboard for two and a half days!*

Bob Brown - December 03, 2023 at 01:54 PM

PT

A great story! I can hear Jim laughing...

Peter Taylor - December 22, 2023 at 09:50 PM

AM

“ I’ve known the Nealon family my entire life - Joyce was my favorite babysitter during her time at URI. I always loved spending time with the Nealon family and will never forget the after party at our home when Joyce got married. He was an incredible human with an unforgettable spirit. His memory lives on. Sending you both so much love from the Marone family.

Andrea Petronello Marone - December 03, 2023 at 01:12 PM

TH

“ I knew Jim from RYC. He was a great guy. You have my condolences.

Tim Higgins - December 03, 2023 at 11:44 AM

JW

Thank you Tim.

Joyce Windrow - January 09, 2024 at 08:16 PM