



## James Milton "Jim" Macpherson Sr.

April 15, 1923 - February 12, 2019

James Milton Macpherson, Sr. Jim was born April 15, 1923 in Louisville Kentucky to Joe and Loretta Macpherson. His mother was the former Loretta Jacob of Louisville, she of German English descent with 3 sisters and 1 brother. Father Joe, also of Louisville, was the son of a railroader, who went off to WWI before kids, and returned with a bonus, and started a grocery store at 17th and Garland Ave. Jim was the second of 4 children with Joe being the oldest, Ray the youngest, and Louise somewhere in between. The grocery store could not support the brood, so Joe followed his Dad and went to work for the L&N as well. School for Jim was California Elementary grades 1-6, Parkland Junior High 7th and 8th grades, and Male High School to finish. Jim says his favorite childhood school memory was catching a teacher smoking in the coat room which in turn got him all A's for not telling anyone what he saw! His favorite subject was math and his favorite teacher was Ms. Alice Haley who by the way was not a smoker. There were a few mischievous times thru the school years like riding the fire escape slide, asking middle school teacher Ms. Baldwin for a kiss and nearly getting expelled ! Jim also remembered the tough times during the Great Depression when there was plenty of hunger and very little work. Even Prohibition showed him and his Dad, where there is a will there is a way--Home Brew! Jim played football (halfback) at Male for Coach Ed Hunley and enjoyed good times with friends Richard Falls and Russell Head. He even had an interest in ROTC at Male and liked the Navy best. He also had unknown ambition to be an actor, and appeared in many

high school plays like Huckelberry Finn, Tom Swift, All American Boy, and others. He said his motive for acting was “the actresses”. Oh and he had a “little girlfriend” by the name of Agnes Wermuth who lived in the same neighborhood he did. He said he met her thru her brothers Tommy and Larny, but I bet there is more to the story. Jim went to work at General Box Company making wood boxes for beer and coke a cola for about a year and then in 1940 he went to work for the L& N Railroad as an apprentice machinist. It was somewhere in this time that Jim and Agnes made it official by him asking her to marry him while having a soda at Kaplin’s Drug Store. He bought her a ring and on December 27th, 1941 they were married!

The war was raging now and in 1943 he enlisted in the Navy. He and a fellow L&N buddy Adolf Fleischman were sent to Great Lakes Illinois for basic training. He ended up in San Diego and was assigned to a brand new ship, the USS Doyen, he was apart of the ship’s first crew! They did a few “shake down” cruises up and down the coast and landed in San Francisco where they increased the crew members, to full staff and off to the Hawaiian Islands to pick up Ground Troops Marines, 1000 strong, for maneuvers in and around the islands, and then off to the War in the south pacific, namely Saipan. The US Navy and Air Force bombed the Japanese into submission, took control of the island, and took plenty of prisoners aboard the USS Doyen for transport back to Hawaii. There they would pick up fresh troops and go to the Philippines and the war zone called the South Pacific Theater. Jim’s ship was now used as a hospital as it ferried the wounded back to the Hawaiian Islands. Then it was off to New Guinea as he was approaching 18 months of active where his crew would set up air fields, landing strips, and housing on the small islands in line with the Japanese mainland. He saw active duty at Iwo Jima in 1945 where his ship was hit by the Japanese from the hillside bunkers and caves. The USS Doyen then “limped” back to Hawaii where it was found to need many repairs that could only be done in San Francisco. Jim gets shore leave and time off, then goes back to Louisville, picks up the little bride and gets back to L.A.,and finds his ship in Long Beach being fully

repaired. Having cousins in Los Angeles helped with getting a place for his wife to stay, so off he went to rejoin his ship and crew. He asked for shore leave once more to tell his bride goodbye and missed the departure of the ship! He had to be ferried out to the ship where they threw down a rope ladder and he climbed up the side of the ship for the trip to San Fran. His ship mates got a kick out of that and he spent a little time in the hokey for his tardiness. And then there was the bombing of two of Japan's cities with two atomic bombs in 1945 that would bring about the surrender of the Japanese and end the war! Jim was sent back to Great Lakes Naval Station near Chicago awaiting discharge in December of 1945. He made it back home by Christmas, along with Agnes's brothers Tom, Larny, and Marvin, all safe and sound.

In January of 1946 he was back at the L&N, this time as a full time apprentice machinist on steam and diesel locomotives. Just as his grandfather did and as his father did, they all made a career of the transportation industry, even Agnes's father was a railroader at the L & N. He did maintenance and repair work on a 48 hour 6 day work week with no overtime pay in the largest L&N shop in the company, the South Louisville shops on Floyd Street. (Papa John's Cardinal Stadium stands on that ground now and U of L blows a locomotive whistle every time the Cards score!) They lived with Agnes parents for a short time, then moved to Dixie Highway (18th Street) where they bought a house. He would take the street car to work until he bought a 39 Chevy which required him to work 2 jobs now- a machinist and, a butcher at the grocery across the street- Weller's. Gil was the owner and kept the peace with a handgun in case of robbery. About this time, January of 1952, Jim and Agnes adopted a baby boy, named him Gary Steven (your author of this biography) and carried him home in a wicker laundry basket. No I wasn't left on a door step, it was a short stay at St. Joe's orphanage where the little sister's of the poor had a hard time parting with the blond haired blue eyed bundle of joy. (That's what Mom said anyway). Dad moved up the ladder,

union representative, shop foreman, general foreman, as he paid his dues of hard work and treating everybody the right way. In 1960 two things happened, James Michael was born, and Dad decided they needed more space- in the suburbs! Dad's friends talked about Shivley, new homes on Mary Catherine Dr. with a good catholic school St Lawrence. He ended up trading with a realtor and bought 6302 Powder Horn Drive in Hunters Village on the edge of Shivley nearly to the PRP line. He said the \$67.00 a month mortgage liked to have killed them. The L&N liked Dad and a couple raises later helped eased that pain, enough to buy a 1962 silver blue 2 door Chevy Impala. I remember that car, it was the most beautiful car this 10 year old had ever been in. Dad really liked Chevy's, he said " They're reliable well built and I'm hooked on em."

St Lawrence parish was busting at the seams so they spilt the district and moved us to St Pauls on Dixie Hwy. Mom didn't appreciate the late notice in August, she had already bought books and lunch tickets for the soon to be 5th grader. Speaking of soon to be, Kathy Lynn was soon to be in 1964, and give Mom and Dad that little girl they had been praying for. (Dad still kids Kathy about wanting 3 boys but now we know better).

Dad is the kind of man that really liked people, never met a stranger, and engaged everyone he talked to. He joined numerous organizations to help and assist others. He enjoyed going to the VFW Post and hanging out with fellow veterans. Mom joined the ladies auxiliary so they could attend functions together. He even became a Commander of his VFW Post. He joined the Knights of St John and in 1952 Dad was an organizer of the Living Rosary, held 1st at Parkway Field on U of L's campus. Dad was even recognized in 2016 as the oldest and longest member of the attendees at the living rosary. He was a member of the Knights of Columbus as well, the world's largest Catholic Fraternal Service Association. He bowled in the leagues each organization had, even played softball on the VFW teams. Anyone who has met Jim Macpherson has said "To know Jim Macpherson is to like Jim Macpherson". His principals and ethics were instilled by his parents and

grandparents he has said. His sense of humor is always on display, and he nearly always has a joke to tell. He remembers stories from years ago, and only needs a simple reference to recall, with great detail, the situation, the result, and how people reacted to the circumstance they were in. For instance, on a vacation with the neighbors, Sonny and Mary Ford, Dad told Sonny he was going to get a vasectomy. Sonny said he would too. So Dad called Dr. Sexton when they got back, and asked if they could get a discount for both of them getting clipped on the same day! His joking demeanor could even enter into a serious situation. When Mom and Dad celebrated their 70th anniversary of marriage, they were profiled on one of the local TV stations. When Dad was asked what advice he could share with people on how they achieved 70 years of wedded bliss, he deadpanned “ You do a lot of this (nodding his head up and down) and none of this” ( turning his head side to side).That even made the camera man laugh!

A funeral Mass will be held 10:00 A.M. Friday at St Paul Catholic Church, 6901 Dixie Hwy. with burial in St Andrews Cemetery.

Visitation will be 2:00 – 8:00 P.M. Thursday at Owen Funeral Home, 5317 Dixie Hwy.

Memorial gifts may be made to Hosparus of Louisville.

# Cemetery Details

**Saint Andrews Cemetery**

## Previous Events

### Visitation

FEB **14**. 2:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Owen Funeral Homes - Dixie Highway  
5317 Dixie Highway  
Louisville, KY 40216  
(502) 447-2600  
<https://owenfuneralhome.com>

### Service

FEB **15**. 10:00 AM (ET)

St. Paul Catholic Church  
6901 Dixie Highway  
Louisville , KY 40216