



James Couch Upchurch

August 18, 1927 - June 1, 2018

James Couch Upchurch passed away peacefully at his home June 1, 2018. He was 90 years old. Jim was born August 18, 1927 in Italy, Texas to the parents of Ida V & Thomas Walter Upchurch. He is survived by his wife of 66 years, Minerva, his sister Betty Easter and three children: Thomas Hayne Upchurch (Elizabeth) of Brenham TX, Laura Ellen Banowsky (Bill) of Austin TX & Susan Elizabeth Rutledge (Tim) of Dallas TX, and nine grandchildren: Kyle Banowsky, Alison Banowsky, Ben Banowsky, Seth Rutledge, Allister Rutledge, Brennan Upchurch, Wilson Upchurch, Emily Crawley and Thomas Hayne Upchurch Jr.

Raised on his parent's farm, Jim graduated from Italy High School in 1944. He enrolled in college at the age of 16, but his schooling was postponed for service in the US Navy. Upon his return, Jim continued his education earning Bachelor and Master degrees in Chemical Engineering from the University of Texas at Austin. Active in UT's intramural sports program, he received the Athlete-of-the-Year award in 1951. Jim attended University Christian Church in Austin where he first met Minerva. 1951 was a big year for Jim. He began his career with Union Carbide Corporation on March 31st and on September 22nd he married Minerva at UCC. They lived in Texas City until being transferred to Houston in 1967. Jim enjoyed a career of 42 years with Union Carbide Corp., specializing in distillation technology and equipment design. Jim was a member of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE). He received the Outstanding Young Member award of the South Texas Section in 1961 and he was honored to be elected as a Fellow of the AIChE in 1986.

Jim was a lifelong member of the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ. He served as building chair for the construction of two new churches. The first, for the relocation of First Christian Church in Texas City in 1963 and for Memorial Drive Christian Church in Houston in 1971. He served in many leadership roles at MDCC.

Jim enjoyed his ranch in Elkhart, Texas where he raised cattle. For a period of time, he grew vegetables in that East Texas sand, continuing his lifelong passion for gardening.

Jim was an avid sports fan, enjoying season tickets to Texas Longhorn football and Houston Astros baseball games.

A committed family man, Jim was a loving husband, father, grandfather, brother and friend. Generous with his time for others, Jim enriched the lives of all who knew him.

The family wishes to thank Maria Rivera, Melissa Shetto, Melvia Williams, the Talbot family and our neighbors for their loving care. A Memorial service is scheduled for 11:00 AM Thursday, June 7th, 2018, at Memorial Drive Christian Church, 11750 Memorial Drive, Houston, TX 77024. An inurnment service will be held 10:30 AM on Saturday, June 9th in Italy, Texas. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to the Memorial Drive Christian Church. Visit www.DettlingFuneral.com to leave words of condolence for the family.

Events

JUN **Memorial Service** 11:00AM

7

Memorial Drive Christian Church
11750 Memorial Drive, Houston, TX, US, 77024

JUN **Inurnment Service** 10:30AM

9

Italy Cemetery
Italy, TX, US

Comments



“ Condolences to this nice family on the loss of a great man who lived a great life. He was my little league coach on the "Steers" in Houston and we won the league championship. After the final game, he drove us around the field in his green pickup for multiple victory laps. He was a great coach. He was a close college friend of my father (H. Carter Howard), who always talked and still talks of the speedy Jim Upchurch and their days playing intramurals at UT for Oak Grove Co-Op and how one time he ran down a national sprint champion (Charlie Parker, a Phi Gam) and tackled him to help them win one of their many their many school championships. Their photos are all over the Wall of Honor in Gregory Gym.

Steven C. Howard
West University Place, TX

Steven C. Howard - September 04, 2018 at 10:50 AM



“ Please accept my family's heartfelt condolences on the loss of your dear loved one. May you find peace in fond memories of them, and hope in God's biblical promise to shortly resurrect those asleep in death, and rid us of death forever.

Greene's - June 15, 2018 at 12:57 PM



“ Jim was a fine man and gentleman. I always considered him to be the distillation expert in Union Carbide. I joined Union Carbide at Texas City in 1960. It was a privilege to know and work with Jim. May God bless Minerva and family at this sad time.

Jerry L. Bradshaw - June 06, 2018 at 03:35 PM



“ Jim was a professional Engineer and a super gentle man. I enjoyed our friendship from the time I first him and Minerva when we moved into the Greenway UCC office building. Our prayers and thoughts are with the Upchurch family.

Hal & Sandra Yeager
Cypress, Tx.

Hal Yeager - June 06, 2018 at 12:38 PM



“ Susan, Tim, Seth, Allister,
My deep sympathy to you, Susan, on the death of your father - and of course to Tim, Seth, and Allister. My prayer is for strength and comfort as you are surrounded by family, friends, and God's love.
thinking of you,
Cindy Dowell

Cindy Dowell - June 06, 2018 at 10:37 AM



“ Jim was a fine man. He was my mentor when I arrived at Union Carbide in 1957. He was a straight arrow who was easy to look up to. As time past and our paths diverged I never forgot his influence on me as I was getting started in the engineering profession. William S. McLaughlin JR.

William McLaughlin - June 05, 2018 at 07:47 PM



“ My sincere sympathy to the Upchruch family. Jim was a fine person that I worked with in the UCC building in Greenway Plaza. I was an engineering assistant working for Andy Gibson's polyethylene group. UCC was a fine company and treated the employees fairly.

Mike Andrus
Kerrville, Tx

Mike Andrus - June 05, 2018 at 01:23 PM