



James Arthur Gray

October 30, 1948 - March 1, 2025

James Arthur Gray 76, of Sublette, IL, a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and friend, left us on March 1, 2025, at the Serenity Hospice & Home in Oregon, IL after a valiant battle with Alzheimer's.

Jim touched the lives of many with his deep love, kindness, and unwavering support, especially toward his beloved wife, Colleen Brown Gray, whom he married on July 24, 1976. Together, they shared 48 years of marriage. Jim will be fondly remembered by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Jim earned his Bachelor's Degree in Social Studies from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership from the University of Illinois, Springfield, and a Specialist Degree in Educational Leadership from Eastern Illinois University. A lifelong educator, Jim began his career at Olympia High School as a teacher, football, and wrestling coach. He then transitioned into administration, serving as Principal and Athletic Director at Tower Hill Schools. Jim led the way for the first rural conversion of the New Holland-Middletown School District, creating new opportunities for the rural community. His culminating achievement was the creation of Liberty Junior High School for Burbank District #111, a suburb of Chicago. Jim was a staunch advocate for public schools, teachers, and students, and earned respect throughout the educational community for his commitment and leadership.

Above all, Jim was most proud of his children and grandchildren. He cherished attending their events and admiring their many accomplishments

throughout his life. His love for his family knew no bounds, and his greatest joy came from seeing them thrive and grow. His presence will be deeply missed, but his memory will continue to inspire all who were fortunate enough to know him.

Jim had a deep passion for classic cars, owning and cherishing many models. He also loved restoring old houses, from Queen Anne to Bungalow, Prairie to Victorian, always taking on the work himself with skill and dedication. Beyond his love for cars and craftsmanship, Jim was passionate about dancing, especially swing, which he competed in during college and continued to enjoy throughout his life with Colleen. He also delighted in teaching his children the joy of dance, sharing with them the joy and energy it brought to his life.

Jim's life was filled with memorable accomplishments and unique experiences. He was a Rugby National Champion with the Bloomington Blues and earned the SIUC Golden Helmet Award. He contributed to "This Old House Journal."

Jim is survived by his loving wife, Colleen Brown Gray; children, Aaron Gray (Kelsey), Katie Henkel (Adam), and Jacob Gray; grandchildren, Jamison and Ivy Gray, and Olivia and Vivienne Henkel. He is also survived by his brother, Joseph Gray; two sisters, Jean Sheridan and Jackie Gray; special cousins, Sharon Terneus and Rusty Boone; and numerous nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, Joseph and Doris Gray, and his in-laws, Raymond and Ruth Brown.

A Funeral Mass will be held on Saturday, March 15, at 11:00 a.m. at Holy Family Catholic Church in Litchfield, IL. Visitation will be on Saturday March 15, from 10:00 AM until the time of service at 11:00 AM at Holy Family Catholic Church in Litchfield. A Celebration of Life will follow the Mass.

In lieu of flowers, a scholarship is being established in Jim's honor at SIUC.

Previous Events

Service

MAR 15. 11:00 AM (CT)

Holy Family Catholic Church
410 S State ST
Litchfield, IL 62056

Tribute Wall



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of James Arthur Gray.

March 14, 2025 at 09:16 AM



“ *Fairest of All* was purchased for the family of James Arthur Gray.



March 14, 2025 at 09:16 AM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket* was purchased for the family of James Arthur Gray.



March 04, 2025 at 03:38 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Jim Gray



Aaron Gray - March 03, 2025 at 04:04 PM

CG

Friends till the end!

Colleen Gray - June 27, 2025 at 04:00 AM

CH

“ I didn't know Mr. Gray, but I knew Coleen & her brother Don Brown. I am so sorry for your family's loss. It is a great loss to a family. May God give you peace within to continue your lives, as he would want you to. God bless you all.
Carolyn Townsend Honeycutt

Carolyn Townsend Honeycutt - March 03, 2025 at 12:31 PM

CG

Thank you Carolyn, we had a 48 year marriage and a many beautiful memories with our family and friends!

Colleen Gray - April 01, 2025 at 12:00 AM

PT

“ So sorry for your loss

Peggy Tobias - March 03, 2025 at 11:03 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of James Arthur Gray.



March 03, 2025 at 10:34 AM

DB

“ Mr.Gray, was a great guy and the best boss I ever had! Sending thoughts and prayers to Colleen and his kids and grandkids.

Denise Bartman - March 02, 2025 at 09:11 PM

BH

“Katie, Adam, and all the family. So sorry to hear of your dad’s passing. Ed and Barbara Henkel.

Barbara Henkel - March 02, 2025 at 05:52 PM