



James A. Distler

December 15, 1947 - July 19, 2026

James Arthur "Jim" Distler, a devoted husband, father, grandfather, educator, and lifelong learner, passed away surrounded by the love of his family.

Jim was born on December 15, 1947, in Brooklyn, New York, to Frederick Charles Distler and Evelyn Tibbets. He grew up alongside his siblings, Joan and Frederick, and from an early age demonstrated the determination and character that would define his life. As a member of the Boy Scouts of America, Jim achieved the rank of Eagle Scout in 1964, an accomplishment that reflected his commitment to service, leadership, and perseverance.

On August 18, 1979, Jim married Carolyn DeSales Whiteley, and together they built a loving home and shared many wonderful years together. Jim was the proud father of five children: Chuck, Nancy, Mary Allyn, Caitlyn, and James. Nothing brought Jim greater joy than his family. He was grateful for his grandchildren Victoria, Joel, Opal, Chloe, and Gavin, and great-grandfather to Everlee. He also leaves behind many beloved nieces and nephews who will cherish his memory.

Education was Jim's calling. He began his teaching career in Talbot County. Earning his Doctorate from Temple University, and continued teaching at Chesapeake College. He later spent more than 20 years as an educator in Montgomery County Public Schools, where he retired after a distinguished career. Throughout his years in Montgomery County, Jim was deeply involved in the FIRST Robotics program, inspiring countless students to explore engineering. His passion for teaching extended far beyond the classroom, and

his influence can be seen in the many lives he helped shape.

Jim was known for his strong work ethic, compassion, willingness to lend a helping hand, and his unwavering sense of humor and infectious laugh. He was always tackling a new project around the house, happiest when he was building, repairing, or improving something with his own hands. In retirement, he and DeSales enjoyed traveling and camping in their RV, making memories together on the open road. He also had a lifelong appreciation for the outdoors, classic cars, and was an avid coin collector, finding joy in preserving pieces of history.

Above all else, Jim will be remembered as a loving husband, devoted father, proud grandfather, dedicated educator, and loyal friend. His wisdom, kindness, and steady presence touched everyone who knew him. His legacy lives on through his family, his former students, and the countless lives he influenced through his compassion and commitment to education.

Jim's family will forever cherish the memories they shared and carry his love and lessons in their hearts.

The family will receive guests and friends on Friday, July 31, 2026, from 10am until 11am at St. Joseph Catholic Church, 13209 Church Lane, Cordova, MD 21625. A Mass of Christian Burial will follow at the church beginning at 11am. Internment in the church cemetery will immediately follow.

In lieu of flowers, those wishing to make a donation in Jim's memory, are encouraged to do so to: Wounded Warrior Project (<https://support.woundedwarriorproject.org/>), P.O. Box 758516, Topeka, Kansas 66675-8516; Tunnel to Towers Foundation (<https://t2t.org/>), 2361 Hylan Boulevard, Staten Island, NY 10306; or Samaritan's Purse (<https://www.samaritanspurse.org/>), P.O. Box 3000, Boone, NC 28607.

Cemetery Details

Old St. Joseph's Cemetery

Cordova, MD

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL **31**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (est)

St. Joseph's Catholic Church
13209 Church Lane
Cordova, MD 21625

Mass of Christian Burial

JUL **31**. 11:00 AM (est)

St. Joseph's Catholic Church
13209 Church Lane
Cordova, MD 21625

Graveside

JUL **31**. 12:00 PM (est)

Old St. Joseph's Cemetery
Cordova, MD

Tribute Wall

MM

“ I had the pleasure of being one of “Dr. D’s” students for several years between middle school and high school, nearly 30 years ago now. I have few memories of any other classrooms K through 12, but have plenty of really fond memories in his. He was kind, supportive, fun, and gave a younger me (and my peers) confidence in my work. I’m sad to hear of his passing, he was a great man and crosses my mind from time to time when I have the space to reflect on my own past.

Rest easy Dr. D! May your family and friends find comfort in your memory.

Matthew Marshall - August 22 at 12:08 PM

JS

“ Jean Startt lit a candle in memory of James A. Distler



Jean Startt - July 30 at 11:42 PM

BB

“ Bruce and Barb Burkhardt



Barbara Burkhardt - July 30 at 07:36 AM



“ *Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of James A. Distler.*



July 29 at 01:00 PM



“ *Christy Fike lit a candle in memory of James A. Distler*



Christy Fike - July 29 at 09:58 AM



“ *Phil Foster lit a candle in memory of James A. Distler*



Phil Foster - July 28 at 12:53 AM



“ *I was able to have the honor of meeting Mr. Distler through his amazing children. He became a second father to me and was such an amazing support over many years. I loved his sense of humor and the absolute joy that his family brought him. He was truly one of a kind and I'm so grateful to have had the blessing of getting to know him!*

Lydia - July 24 at 09:14 PM



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

July 24 at 04:13 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of James A. Distler.



July 24 at 04:13 PM



“ Melinda Howell lit a candle in memory of James A. Distler



Melinda Howell - July 24 at 03:23 PM



“ Amy And Donnie Dulin lit a candle in memory of James A. Distler



Amy and Donnie Dulin - July 23 at 09:43 PM

KD

“ So sad to hear of Jim's passing, I always enjoyed chatting with him when our paths crossed. Prayers go out to his family and friends.

Keith Dixon - July 22 at 11:33 PM

CS

“ Connie Harris Sypniewski lit a candle in memory of James A. Distler



Connie Harris Sypniewski - July 22 at 09:45 PM

LP

“ We send our condolences to the Distler family. Bruce and Louise Perry

Louise Perry - July 21 at 08:19 PM

FD

“ Jimmy was a loving brother. He will be missed. He had so many talents and a great laugh. Love you brother. Fred

Fred Distler - July 21 at 05:18 PM