



James F. Byrnes

August 5, 1933 - July 4, 2021

James F. Byrnes, formerly of Bethesda, Potomac and West River, Maryland passed away peacefully at his home in Sarasota, Florida on July 4, 2021. Mr. Byrnes was surrounded by his loving wife of 64 years, Mary Ann (Mackert) Byrnes and immediate family at the time of his death.

Son of Mr. and Mrs. Michael J. Byrnes of Frostburg, Maryland, “Jimmy” was the youngest of the Byrnes family. He attended St. Michael’s Parochial School, LaSalle High School (1951) in Cumberland, Maryland and Frostburg State Teacher’s College (1956). He met the love of his life, Mary Ann as she walked home from high school, and it was love at first sight!

Byrnes is remembered as a charismatic person who liked to help others, a good friend, strong student, hard worker and an exceptional athlete. During his college years, he lettered in Soccer, Basketball, and Track. Most notable was his competitiveness as a Center Halfback in Soccer earning 4 letters in 4 seasons from 1952-1955. He was recognized as an All-American Athlete (1953) and All-South (1953-1954) in Soccer. In Baseball, he was an outstanding shortstop and third baseman from 1953-1955 earning 3 letters in 3 years. He also played Basketball during his college years. On October 18, 1975, Byrnes was honored as the 22nd Inductee into the Frostburg State Athletic “Hall of Fame” and was celebrated at a Homecoming Game at the renamed college, Frostburg State University.

A devout Irish Catholic, Jim was an altar server at St. Michael’s Catholic Church, served on the parish council at Our Lady of Mercy Church in Potomac, Maryland and was a dependable usher at Our Lady of Sorrows Church in Galesville, Maryland. He faithfully attended mass and joyfully served the Lord and his many church communities.

Mr. Byrnes began his career in education in 1956 as teacher of English and History at North Bethesda Middle School with Montgomery County Public Schools. Excluding a two-year period of military service in the U.S. Army, he remained on staff at North Bethesda MS until June 1968. Concurrently, Jim was a counselor at Camp Inverness and later was named Camp Director in 1966. In 1968, Mr. Byrnes was elevated to Headmaster of the McLean School, Inverness Campus. His reputation was respected by school leaders in both the private and public sectors throughout Montgomery County. In 1977, Byrnes

resigned his position at the McLean School- Camp Inverness and founded The Byrnes School in Potomac, Maryland. The Byrnes School was his passion, stretching the minds and developing the spirits of students in preschool through eighth grade on a beautiful 27-acre property in Potomac, Maryland. The mascot was the eagle, and the school motto RESPECT which modeled the character virtues that Byrnes so deeply valued, Responsibility, Excellence, Service, Perseverance, Enthusiasm, Character, Tenacity. After retiring in 1992, Mr. Byrnes and wife, Mary Ann moved to West River, Maryland and enjoyed a quieter life; boating, crabbing, fishing and enjoying life together with the beauty of the Chesapeake Bay. They relocated to Sarasota, Florida in August 2020.

Jim Byrnes will be remembered as a loving brother, loyal husband and devoted father. He is survived by the patriarch of the Byrnes family, Paul, and wife, Hope of Sarasota, Florida; his adoring wife, Mary Ann Byrnes and their children, Mary Lynn, and son-in law, Ralph Fullgrapp of Sarasota, Florida; James F. Byrnes, Jr., and daughter in law, Debbie Byrnes of Rockville, Maryland; Susan Borst of Olney, Maryland; and Kelly Ann Kavounis of Frostburg, Maryland. Jim was loved and adored as "Pop Pop" to ten grand-children and two great-grand-children.

The family would like to express their gratitude to Sarasota Veteran's Administration HBPC, with special thanks to nurse Sandy. We also give thanks to personal caregivers Geranice and Laura for their excellent care of Jim.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Parkinson's Foundation at www.parkinson.org. Condolences and remembrances are appreciated by the family and can be posted at www.MFHcares.com. At this time, funeral plans have not been finalized.

Tribute Wall

NU

“ *Nadine Underwood lit a candle in memory of James F. Byrnes*



Nadine Underwood - October 15, 2023 at 06:36 PM

MC

“ *Greatest educator in my lifetime. I cannot say enough good things about this man. His devotion and caring was made quite clear by the examples he set . He was tough, fair , encouraged his students, and faculty. I lived close by and he would regularly catch me riding my bike to school smoking cigarettes. I would hide it in my jacket pocket as he slowed down to say hi, as if he did not know every single time . He would come up to me later at school and say " you should not smoke, " lol . In regards to education , discipline, and a positive attitude, I owe this man an awful lot.*

Mark Connell

mark connell - September 16, 2021 at 11:22 AM

JM

“ *I was very fortunate to begin my teaching career as a student teacher at North Bethesda Junior High where I met Jim and his wonderful family. Yes, I taught English, and Jim was my resource. I could not have had a better person since he knew everything about English and teaching this age group. Later I taught for him at the McLean School and then at the Byrnes School. He showed me how to be the teacher the students needed.*

Judy Markline

Judy Markline - July 12, 2021 at 06:34 PM

ET

This week, I encountered a fellow student from the North Bethesda Junior High School seventh and eighth grades of 1959-1961, who mentioned Mr. Byrnes. I was in Mr. Byrnes' Social Studies class in 7th grade and in his English class in 8th grade at North Bethesda. I knew he later founded the Byrnes School so I googled the Byrnes School to refresh my memory of its years of operation, and found this obituary of Mr. Byrnes, which greatly surprised me. I had not realized that he was still alive in 2021, and I greatly regret not having tried to contact him over the years.

Mr. Byrnes was a wonderful and memorable teacher. He was also a wonderful personality in the school: strong and disciplined but also kind; he tried to teach all of those qualities to his students, and I think he succeeded.

When I returned to the Washington area in the 1970s, I soon saw ads or notices about the Byrnes School in the newspaper, and thought about trying to contact him to tell him how much I benefited from his teaching, but I never did. More recently, in the years after 2000, I occasionally felt regret for not having contacted him in earlier years, but I assumed at that time that he was no longer alive, though I have now learned that he was.

I can still picture him striding into the classroom full of students, telling us about sentence structure, and generally transmitting wisdom (sometimes using his army experiences for examples). What a great teacher.

*Edward Tabor
Bethesda, MD*

Edward Tabor - October 10, 2021 at 10:02 AM