



Society of Mary - Compañía de María - Société de Marie
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October 25, 2023

Biography of Death Notice N. 17

The Province of the United States recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **James Patrick BROWN**, of the Marianist Community at Alumni Hall, Dayton, Ohio, USA, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on October 15, 2023, in Centerville, at the age of 82 with 63 years of religious profession.

Bro. Jim was a teacher, a business manager, a fundraiser, and a storyteller who generously dedicated his life in service to Mary. He was a person of deep faith, gratitude, and prayer whose smile and humor delighted and inspired those who were blessed to know him.

James Patrick Brown was born in 1941 to Ralph and Virginia Brown in Cleveland, Ohio. He was introduced to religious life when he met the Ursuline Sisters, who taught him in grade school. He then attended Saint John's High School, where

he met the Marianists. He later recalled that starting his freshman year there, he felt called to join the Marianist order. During his sophomore year, he expressed this calling to Brother Len Kuntz, who recommended prayer and spiritual readings and continued to encourage Jim to pursue his vocation.

He professed first vows at Marcy, New York, on August 22, 1960. Brother Jim entered scholasticate in Dayton, Ohio, and earned a bachelor's degree in education, with a focus on business, from the University of Dayton in 1964. He then professed perpetual vows in the Society of Mary on August 15, 1965, in Dayton.

When Brother Jim wrote to his Provincial Superior, Father James Darby, to request permission to take first vows, he expressed a deep desire to "lead others to Christ" and to educate students. This vision of his future proved correct. Brother Jim taught classes, including theology, for over 25 years and furthered his knowledge of the topic with summer graduate courses at Notre Dame from 1968 to 1970.

But Brother Jim also discovered an unexpected aptitude at this early stage of his career. Beginning with business courses during his undergraduate studies and an assignment in the typing room at Mount Saint John, Brother Jim found himself able to serve the Marianist mission as a business manager. He would spend most of the first 25 years of his career serving in both teaching and business management roles.

After his first year teaching theology and typing at Covington Catholic High School in Covington, Kentucky, Brother Jim used his administrative skills as a secretary at the offices of the Marianist Province in Dayton, Ohio, until 1968. Then, he moved to Purcell High School in Cincinnati, where he first worked as a business manager. He also taught accounting, typing, and shorthand there. In 1969, Brother Jim went to Chaminade High School in Dayton, Ohio, where he taught classes in theology and business. It was here that he undertook work in fundraising for the first time as Director of Alumni Development.

In 1989, his teaching career ended, but he would further the mission of Marianist education in a new way. He employed his gifts for fundraising and finances in service of the Marianist Mission in Dayton, Ohio. He began as a member of the

Development staff and later became Director of Planned Giving and Legacy Giving Administrator.

In these roles, not only did Brother Jim fulfill the goals he set for himself at the beginning of his life of religious service, but the business acumen he spent his career developing served the Marianist mission directly. He viewed this work with profound gratitude, often sharing a passage from Saint Paul's letter to the Colossians, which directs the reader to "dedicate yourself to thankfulness and... pray in a spirit of thanksgiving." From the prayerful daily routine of religious life to detailed financial spreadsheets to conversations with donors, Brother Jim expressed his gratitude by dedicating himself and all his skills to serving the Mission of Mary.

Outside of work, Brother Jim relished the community that religious life provided. He was initially drawn to the Marianists, in part because when he encountered them in high school, they stood out to him as "a happy bunch."

As a Marianist Brother, he would contribute to that same happiness. He was known as a great baker of bread and cornbread who loved to tell stories or discuss sports. He also delighted his brothers with impressions; as Brother Robert Flaherty recalls, "Jim was blessed with the unique ability to entertain us by imitating the speech and gestures of others, especially politicians and superiors, and we all looked forward to his performances." Father Bert Buby agrees, "Jim was a wonderful and generous Brother whom I admired for his ability to tell stories and even imitate our leaders' accents and way of speaking."

Brother Flaherty continues, "Jim's love for the Society of Mary was expressed by how he lived with and served his fellow Brothers daily. Never seeking attention; always ready and willing to serve. It was always a thrill to spend time with Jim. His insights on just about anything, especially politics, were cause for reflection, refutation, but seldom resolution!"

Linda Hayes, Director of the Marianist Mission, recalls, "Brother Jim's service to the Marianists at the Marianist Mission is what stands out in the last 30 years. He invited our donors to partner with the Society of Mary through charitable gift annuities and making bequests to support the work of the Marianists."

"Brother Jim relished the chance to serve and work directly with donors. He was

truly grateful for donations and gifts given, and he never tired of expressing that gratitude to the donors. He lived a life of gratitude. Millions of dollars have been given to the Marianists due to his stewardship. He loved Mary, Mother of Jesus, and he loved the Marianists. No one can replace him.

May he rest in peace.