



## James Howard

August 20, 1930 - May 7, 2023

James William Howard of Detroit, age 92, passed away at home with his family on May 7, 2023.

James was born in Waukesha, WI in 1930. He was the eldest of five sons and grew up on a small farm in western Michigan. The unending demands of a Depression-era dairy farm shaped his youth, and established his lifelong values of hard work and economy.

James' humble early life was enriched by his lively mind. A chance reading of "The Swiss Family Robinson" when James was a boy sparked his imagination and he realized that problems could be solved through ingenuity. This became a foundational principle of his life.

James began his education in a one-room schoolhouse and went on to graduate from Michigan State University with a degree in electrical engineering. After completing his military service in 1956 he began his career with Chrysler's Sound & Vibration Laboratory. He was admired and respected by his colleagues and was an oft-sought source of guidance and consultation. James retired from Chrysler after 40 years and went on to hold a number of consulting positions in the automotive industry.

James was an inventor who held several patents and was an artist at heart

and in practice, creating works of beauty, craftsmanship, and skill. His body of work encompassed art, sculpture, lighting, and furniture. It spanned disciplines including woodworking, blacksmithing, and industrial, electrical, and mechanical design. James was dedicated to conservation and took great delight in turning modest materials into things of beauty. He pursued new ideas until the end of his life, with his most recent patent application submitted in 2018.

James was a member of Gesu parish in Detroit for 56 years. He was a compassionate person who dedicated much of his life to the needs of others. He was relied on by his neighbors as someone who could relight a pilot light, rewire a basement, or supply lanterns during an ice storm.

James met his wife, Sallie Stewart, at a mixer during Sallie's first week of school at MSU and they married in 1956. Their early married life included a two-year stint in Turkey and Italy where James worked on a US military installation. Their third daughter was born in Italy during their stay.

James brought a sense of creativity and exploration to everything he did. There was nothing he loved more than a caper and his seven children recall with delight the excitement of their many adventures.

James was survived by his wife of 67 years, Sallie Howard, and was the beloved father to Heidi Howard (Doug Green), Constance Howard (James Spink), Jane Howard (Eric Vicini), Timothy Howard, Carolyn Howard (Scott Lowell), Jennifer Fremont-Smith (Phillip), Paul Howard (Susanna Weckerle). An infant daughter, Mary Margaret, died in 1963.

James was the adored grandfather to 15 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

James was preceded in death by his parents, George and Lenore Howard, and his brothers William Howard and Joseph Howard. He is survived by his brothers Thomas Howard and Raymond Howard.

James was a man devoted to conservation and we honored his wish to be interred with a green burial at The Preserve at All Saints Cemetery. Funeral services will be held at 12:00 pm on Friday, May 12th at Gesu Catholic Church in Detroit. Reception immediately following at Bayview Yacht Club, 100 Clairpointe Street, Detroit, MI.

The family wishes to express our special thanks to the parish and community for their love and care for our father.

# Cemetery Details

## The Preserve at All Saints Cemetery

4401 Nelsey Road  
Waterford Township, MI 48329

# Previous Events

## Memorial Mass

MAY 12. 12:00 PM (ET)

Gesu Catholic Church  
17180 Oak Drive  
Detroit, MI 48221

# Tribute Wall



“ I worked with Jim at Chrysler. He always was an enthusiastic engineer trying to come up with new solutions. I also had the good fortune to work with Jim when Chrysler laid off all its engineering staff for several months, and Jim with his entrepreneurial mindset, started a handy-man service in the Palmer Park area. He insisted that all the work be done with the utmost craftsmanship and quality. He took pride in his work.

I remember Jim was one of the first to warn about keeping one's social security number secret. In the 70's it was a common practice to write one's social security number on such things as tools for identification. Jim was vocal about how dangerous that that common practice could be. At the time I thought he was over cautious. Years later I realized how right he was. He also came up with very interesting commodity investment strategies that compared relative price ratios of precious metals. He always looked for new approaches to doing something, and doing it better.

Nils Omholt

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Nils Omholt - May 11, 2023 at 08:07 AM



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



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May 10, 2023 at 08:57 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of James Howard.



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May 09, 2023 at 04:49 PM