



## William J. Sullivan

November 1, 1940 - April 4, 2023

William John Sullivan, age 82, a longtime resident of Royal Oak, passed away peacefully on April 4, 2023.

Bill was born on November 1, 1940 to the late James and Geraldine Sullivan. He attended Shrine Catholic Schools from grade school through high school graduation in 1958, and he remained a member of Shrine Parish throughout his lifetime. Bill graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 1962 and then attended Wayne State University's Mortuary Science program, so that he could join the family business as a funeral director. In later years, he would go on to complete a master's degree at the University of Detroit.

A year of service in the Peace Corps took Bill away from the Detroit area to Colombia in 1963. There he lived and worked among members of a local community in conditions markedly different than life back in Michigan—indeed, a faithful horse was his main vehicle of transportation to and from work!

When Bill returned to Michigan, he rejoined the family business and immersed himself in a wide variety of community activities. Bill was naturally social, and he seemed to know just about everyone. He was a longtime member of the Rotary Club of Royal Oak, the Royal Oak Chamber of Commerce, and the Royal Oak Historical Society. He enthusiastically dedicated himself to supporting countless events over the years, whether it was a special dinner

for the Historical Society, the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade, or simply organizing a park cleanup day. He also faithfully served as an usher at Shrine Church for many years. People in Royal Oak also knew Bill through his specialty shop, Dos Manos, that he opened with his wife, Cathy, in the 1980's. The shop featured a wide variety of Latin American handcrafts and hosted a variety of community events over the years, helping Bill keep a direct connection with the part of the world that he had served during his time with the Peace Corps.

Simply put, Bill was a kind soul. He was always friendly and genuinely interested in how others were doing. More than anything though, he loved his family and his grandchildren in particular, and few things made Bill happier than spending time at the family cottage on Lake Michigan with those he loved most. He will be dearly missed.

Bill was predeceased by his wife, Cathy. He is survived by his children: Brian (Beverly) and Tim (Kelly); his grandchildren: Molly, Jake, Joe, Kate, and Keira; his siblings: John (Judy), Meg (Ray) Lopé, and Marty (the late Dennis) McGinnity; and his nieces and nephews: Christy, Mike, Matt, Jim, and Eric.

Visitation will take place on Wednesday, April 12, from 2 – 8 p.m. (Scripture Service at 6 p.m.) at Wm. Sullivan & Son Funeral Home, 705 W. Eleven Mile Rd. (4 blocks east of Woodward), Royal Oak. A Funeral Mass will be held on Thursday, April 13, at 10 a.m. (visitation 9:30 a.m.) at National Shrine of the Little Flower Basilica, 2100 Twelve Mile Rd., Royal Oak. The Mass will also be livestreamed at [www.shrinechurch.com/mass-livestream](http://www.shrinechurch.com/mass-livestream). Private interment will take place at St. Mary Catholic Cemetery in Royal Oak.

Memorial contributions can be directed to the American Cancer Society (<http://donate.cancer.org>) or Cane and Able Stroke Recovery Group (<https://www.caneandable.org/donate.asp>).

Share a memory at [www.SullivanFuneralDirectors.com](http://www.SullivanFuneralDirectors.com).

# Cemetery Details

## St. Mary Catholic Cemetery

Royal Oak, MI 48067

# Previous Events

## Visitation

APR 12. 2:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Wm. Sullivan and Son Funeral Directors-Royal Oak  
705 W. Eleven Mile Road  
Royal Oak, MI 48067  
(248) 541-7000  
royal@sullivanfh.com  
<https://www.sullivanfuneraldirectors.com/>

## Scripture Service

APR 12. 6:00 PM (ET)

Wm. Sullivan and Son Funeral Directors-Royal Oak  
705 W. Eleven Mile Road  
Royal Oak, MI 48067  
(248) 541-7000  
royal@sullivanfh.com  
<https://www.sullivanfuneraldirectors.com/>

## Funeral Mass

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APR 13. 10:00 AM (ET)

National Shrine of the Little Flower Basilica  
2100 W. 12 Mile Road  
Royal Oak, MI 48073

# Tribute Wall

PM

“ I was fortunate to enjoy Bill's company and friendship in the latter part of my time in Michigan. He treated me with kindness and invited me to go places and meet his wonderful family. I am so sorry to no longer be able to meet with him when I return for visits from Ohio. He was always interested in reaching out to others, attending interesting events, eating out, or just working on crossword puzzles together. His membership in the Cane and Able Stroke Recovery Group was appreciated and the time spent with him treasured. I miss his gentle good humor.

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**polly mcilrath** - May 04, 2023 at 11:55 AM

AY

“ Our deepest condolences. From our entire family and staff at Southfield Funeral Home and Cremation Services.

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**Anthony Yono** - April 23, 2023 at 10:15 AM

EJ

“ Sincere Condolences to the family. Bill and Cathy were the first people in my life that talked about the excitement of travel, Latin America and the Peace Corps. I was able to talk with artisans in Costa Rica and Mexico that I would have never met without Bill and Cathy's help. True and good friends to so many.

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**Elaine Jirkans** - April 13, 2023 at 03:26 PM

AD

“ Always a smile on Bill's face and so much kindness for everyone he met. There will never be another Bill Sullivan. I send my deepest Sympathy to the family and all his friends. He will surely be missed. He is once again with his love of his life Cathy. May he RIP.

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**Ann Dylewski** - April 13, 2023 at 01:37 PM

VB

“ Bill was a neighbor for many years and always a dear friend. In other messages written here I repeatedly see the word “kind” and I can’t think of a more apt description of his character. He was always interested in what was going on in his friends’ lives. His support of the Royal Oak community in countless ways put him in a place that I’m sure he knew everyone in town. Bill sponsored me as the second woman to join Royal Oak Rotary ; a true honor. His devotion to his wife Cathy during her illness was a lesson in love for all of his friends. Brian and Tim were friends with our children growing up .....part of the Woodland-Linwood gang.....a life-long group of friends. Royal Oak has lost a supporter of all things positive and so have we lost a dear friend.

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**Vee and Gary Barnes** - April 13, 2023 at 08:40 AM

LF

“ I graduated with Bill from Wayne State Mortuary Science in 1963. We had a very small class and everyone got to know everyone. Bill was always the most kind and generous man that I have ever known. My deepest sympathies to the Sullivan Family

*Larry Frohriep*

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**LAWRENCE F FROHRIEP** - April 12, 2023 at 08:23 PM

RS

“ What a wonderful, caring, loving human being, Bill was! We need more Bill Sullivans in this world.....NOW! Rick & Maureen Sage

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**RICHARD P SAGE** - April 12, 2023 at 04:31 PM

DM

“ He was a very kind man. God rest his soul.

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**Doug Misiuk** - April 12, 2023 at 04:22 PM

JC

“ *Bill has always been a warm and smiling neighbor and friend to us.*  
*Joanne & Jim Cross*

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**Joanne Cross** - April 12, 2023 at 11:32 AM

MF

“ *Bill was always gracious and kind to me. Bill stood out as a shining example of what it means to serve your community and care for your neighbor. His contributions to Royal Oak are immeasurable and his legacy will live on. My heartfelt sympathies to Bill's family. The RO community mourns his passing. - Mayor Fournier*

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**Mayor Fournier** - April 11, 2023 at 01:45 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of William J. Sullivan.*



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April 10, 2023 at 08:12 PM

RV

“ *Bill was always a true gentleman. Our deepest sympathies to all the Sullivan family.*  
*Bob & Bonnie Vandenberg*

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**Robert Vandenberg** - April 10, 2023 at 02:21 PM



“ *Your Light Shines was purchased for the family of William J. Sullivan.*



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April 10, 2023 at 01:01 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of William J. Sullivan.*



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April 09, 2023 at 01:34 PM



“ *I am so very very saddened to hear about Bill's passing. My memory is jarred back to our summers at Williams Lake beginning when we were in our early teens...they were wonderful times and those memories have stayed with me all these many years. He was a kind, humble and gentle man who cared deeply for his family. My condolences to his children and to John, Meg and Marty.*

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**Julie Gainer Weitzman** - April 09, 2023 at 09:33 AM



“ *Bill was such a wonderful and kind man. I was a caregiver for Cathy for several years and I had the opportunity to get to know Bill. He was a gentle soul and such a kind man. It was an honor to know him.*

*My condolences to his family.*

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**Debbie Schwager** - April 09, 2023 at 08:44 AM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of William J. Sullivan.*



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April 08, 2023 at 05:55 PM



“ *Peace to you all during this difficult time. You've been such a constant during others grief, I hope you know how fondly we regard you and William and Sons. Thank you for my mother's service, and my condolences to Brian, Tim and Cathy.*

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**Mariela Gómez** - April 07, 2023 at 08:06 PM



“ *To all the family of Wm. Sullivan Funeral Home, I will always have great memories of working at the funeral home in the summers while I was going to seminary. Bill was a wonderful boss, insofar as he never seemed like a boss, just someone who wanted to make each family feel specially cared for. Because of that, Bill helped to bring that same concern to my work there and in my ministry. Thank you Bill for a life well-lived. I am sorry I will not be able to attend the wake or the funeral Mass. I will offer Mass here at home. God Bless all the Sullivans. Patrick Casey*

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**Patrick Casey** - April 07, 2023 at 04:33 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of William J. Sullivan.*



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April 07, 2023 at 03:30 PM



“ *Bill was such a kind soul and all round great man. I had the pleasure of working with him through the Royal Oak Historical. It was he and my father, Tom Wurdock that I was with when the ROHS moved into the first museum at what was then Churchill School. We unloaded box after box after box.*

*Bill's leadership, wisdom and friendship have made an indelible and permanent impression in what has been accomplished at the Royal Oak Historical Society and Museum and in so many other ways within our city.*

*There is no other way to put it---The Sullivan name is Royal Oak Royalty and Bill has lived up to it tenfold. But he has done so quietly and without fanfare.*

*He has never asked for or desired recognition for the incredible things he has done in Royal Oak as a business leader, volunteer and ambassador of Royal Oak history through his personal and professional life.*

*Bill still continues this tradition of excellence one great deed at a time. Our family will never forget him.*

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**Pete Wurdock** - April 07, 2023 at 02:55 PM

JS

*“ I had the privilege of working for The Wm Sullivan & Son Funeral Home and being around Bill on a regular basis. He was a kind, generous and genuine person to me and all he came into contact with. I and many others will miss him. Jim Stark*

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**Jim W Stark** - April 07, 2023 at 07:56 AM



*“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of William J. Sullivan.*



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April 06, 2023 at 04:01 PM

FU

*“ funeralOne purchased the Rainbow Of Remembrance Spray for the family of William J. Sullivan.*



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**funeralOne** - April 06, 2023 at 11:12 AM

BK

*“ Condolences to the Sullivan Family on your loss of your Father , brother , Bill  
Great loss to the Family , Community and Shrine Parish  
Will be kept in my prayers  
May he rest in peace with Cathy  
God Bless  
Bob Kristopik*

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**Bob Kristopik** - April 06, 2023 at 10:14 AM

FO

“ My deepest sympathy and prayers to all the Sullivan family. Bill and Cathy were and are loving children of God and friend to all they met. I cherish my memories of Bill and Cathy, dear classmates who were steadfast in faith and friendship through the years. Be assured of my prayers and affection as you mourn the loss of your brother and father, I hope to join you for the funeral Mass on Thursday. Fr. Michael Chowning, OFM, '58

Fr. Michael Chowning, OFM - April 06, 2023 at 08:41 AM

JB

“ So sorry to get that sad news. Thoughts and prayers for Tim and Brian and the whole family. So many fond memories shared with Bill and Cathy. They were very dear friends since high school and we cherished our friendship and looked forward to getting together every year. May God wrap his arms around you and comfort you during this difficult time. May God Bless you all. Jim & Jean Beauchamp



Jim & Jean Beauchamp - April 06, 2023 at 08:38 AM

KB

“ Our deepest sympathy to Tim & Brian and their families. Your Dad was a special man and a life long friend. We will miss him greatly. Our summer get togethers were always looked forward to especially when Cathy was with us. Many great memories. May God help you through this difficult time. Hugs to all of you. Kelly & Mary Lou Beauchamp



Kelly & Mary Lou Beauchamp - April 05, 2023 at 08:25 PM

JB

*Jim and Jean Beauchamp*

*So sorry to get the sad news. Please know that you are in our thoughts and prayers Tim and Brian as well as the whole family. We have so many fond memories of times spent together beginning in high school and as recent as last summer. Your Dad was a very dear friend and will be deeply missed. May God bless you all and hold you close to his heart. Jim & Jean Beauchamp.*

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**Jim & Jean Beauchamp** - April 05, 2023 at 09:35 PM

BD

*Many wonderful Sullivan memories from camping, Notre Dame games, Dos Manos, visits to us here in Hawaii , sharing the boys weddings, shopping trips to Mexico : all special. Bill was there for our family to comfort us during passing family members funerals.*

*A blessing to have known this kind man and shared our best life memories of him , Cathy and the boys.*

*The Bob Judie DeBone family*

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**Bob DeBone** - April 06, 2023 at 01:49 PM

JD

“ *Dennis' and my deepest condolences to both Tim and Brian. Your dad was a very good friend of ours for many years. I always loved going into his and your mom's shop in downtown Royal Oak, and for the past several years we were close neighbors on Evergreen/ Northwood.*

*When we moved to mid-Michigan in 2021, Bill hosted a little farewell party for us. It was so sweet. He was a kind and caring gentleman, and I will miss him very much.*

*God Bless you and your families during this difficult time.*

*Dennis and Judy ( Hikade) Dietrich*

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**Judy Dietrich** - April 05, 2023 at 07:26 PM

MV

“ *Our deepest sympathy on the passing of Mr.Sullivan. He was a very kind man. May he Rest In Peace. Monica and Glenn Voorhess*

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**Monica Voorhess** - April 05, 2023 at 05:39 PM