



James Mark Vanzo

February 14, 1934 - December 13, 2022

ADRIAN- James Mark Vanzo, 88, of Adrian died on Tuesday, December 13, 2022 at the Hospice of Lenawee Home with his family by his side. James took the time to jot down a few of his antidotes and life experiences to share.

I was born on February 14, 1934 in Indiana Harbor, Indiana, a town that like me, no longer exists. My birth cut short my mother's trip to the Indiana Theater where she was planning to pick up a soup bowl on "dish night". Instead of the bowl she got me, a bad trade, I think.

I attended Ball State University where I played football and little else. I married Judith Ann Hale, a woman who deserved far better than me. I sired two children; Mark a son, and Michele a daughter, both of whom will never know how much I loved them. After leaving the US Army, I attended 6 universities and taught high school for 36 years. I won several scholarships including a Fulbright scholarship. I loved books and reading, a passion that accompanied me throughout my life, just ask anyone who knew me well. I travelled to about 30 countries and was always curious about literally everything.

During my time on earth, I have met scores of people, some of whom I loved dearly, most of whom wouldn't know me now from Adam's off ox, and a few that were such jerks that their very existence called into question the assumption of an intelligent creator.

I leave behind six grandchildren, Amy, Michele, Tim, Nick and Lilly from my son, and James from my daughter (you can put all those names in the dearly loved column). I was preceded in death by my mother Elizabeth, my father

John, and my brother Robert, all their deaths snuffing out the brightest stars in my sky. I am survived by my sister Virginia of Westville Indiana, and my longtime companion Beverly who always gave me great comfort and purpose. I approached my own death with both curiosity and trepidation. (Curiosity because it would be a new experience, and trepidation in case the bible thumpers were right). I never felt that God could be as petty and vindictive as some others make him out to be. But, just in case he is, I hope whoever buries me remembers to put me in asbestos underwear.

So goodbye people, life has been interesting, if a bit pointless. I would much rather you go out and have a few drinks, hear some music, and enjoy a decent meal than shed any tears for me. Think of me now and again as I was in life, paying respects to my remains is secondary in any case.

If you do find the time to come to my funeral, just know that I will be headed into eternity as I was around the house, in my favorite shirt, suspenders and comfortable blue jeans. I would like you to come as I knew you in life; this is no time for superficiality.

There will be a Gathering of Family and Friends to celebrate James on Sunday, December 18, 2022 from 2 to 5 p.m. at Wagley Funeral Home in Adrian. Come join us as we laugh and share stories about James and his many adventures in life.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to . Online condolences and memories may be shared at www.wagleyfuneralhomes.com.

If you wish to donate to Hospice of Lenawee you may follow this link.

<https://www.hospiceoflenawee.org/donate.php>

Previous Events

Gathering of Family and Friends

DEC 18. 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM (ET)

Wagley Funeral Home (Adrian)

1501 W. Maumee St.

Adrian, MI 49221

(517) 263-1400

info@wagleyfuneralhome.com

<https://www.WagleyFuneralHome.com>

Tribute Wall

MW

“ I'd like to thank Mr.Vanzo's family for loaning him to us for all these years! He was so very special and will be missed! One of the truly great teachers, not sure he'd admit that but any one of his students, and he had a lot of us, would say he influenced them far more than other teachers ever influenced them!

One of a kind! The summer I turned 16 was a very great time, for me! Mr.Vanzo was my driver's ED teacher. We had the use of a brand new 442 Oldsmobile. Letting a 15 year old drive such a car was probably a mistake but it was great to have him guiding use in it!!

Loved to have had the time with him all those years ago! Learned so much!

Michael Ward - April 12, 2024 at 09:06 AM

SB

“ To the family of Jim Vanzo--I just discovered today Jim passed away. I'm so very sorry for your loss and wanted to let you know what an incredible teacher and human I knew him to be--one of the very best teachers I have ever had. I was fortunate enough to know him as a teacher through CAP at LISD in the mid 80's. I'm not sure I can put into words how much his encouragement and advice meant to me in high school--and as recently as May 2022 when I told him my family was going to Mexico and he gave me some traveling tips! What a wonderful legacy lives on in all of you. My sincere condolences and prayers for peace sent to you.

Sarah Bush Berriman - May 30, 2023 at 05:15 PM



“ **James Mark Vanzo**

January 28, 2023 at 12:24 PM

JS

“ I met Jim in 1989 when we moved to Onsted. He was my husband Charlie Van Sickle and friend Gary Onsted teacher and coach when they were in high school. Jim never failed to email a greeting sometime short sometimes long for every holiday even Chinese New Year. He was a wonderful human being that will be sorely missed and Heaven is a better place now that he is there and sadder here.

Jo Ann Van Sickle - December 18, 2022 at 10:19 PM



Thanks for the kind words Jo Ann, we appreciate them very much. We heard all of your names 1000s of times over the years. Thanks again and take care!

Mark Vanzo - January 13, 2023 at 06:02 AM

JO

“ Great individual with the want to teach what he had learned and have fun. The Junior Play at Madison High School needed a the sound affect of a car backfiring. Mr. Vanzo thought maybe the sound of a 30.06 blank shot in a 55 gal barrel would do it, but he found something else that was just as effective and startling.

Joe Orbeck - December 17, 2022 at 11:53 AM



Thanks for sharing the memory Joe! We appreciate it very much! He truly loved madison and all his students.

Mark Vanzo - January 13, 2023 at 05:56 AM



“ i had the great fortune of meeting mr vanzo while i was an exchange student at madison high school. i made a life long friend and i credit him with me going on to getting a university degree

Simon Simonsen - December 17, 2022 at 10:43 AM



Simon, You know Jim thought so much of you and your family. He constantly talked about his visits to your home in Denmark. Thanks for writing and I'll be in touch soon. Best wishes to you and your clan!

Mark Vanzo - January 13, 2023 at 05:53 AM

NC

“ *Dear James*

We never had the pleasure of meeting you.

Reading your thoughts, brought me to tears.

Your Grandson James Espinoza is our son in law and he is a blessing in our lives.

We have not met Michelle yet but hope to in the future.

James is an incredibly brilliant young man.

He is a wonderful husband to our Alexis. He is very kind and giving and displays many of the gifts you shared. We are very proud of him as we are sure ,you were as well.

May your next journey be filled with wonder and love. ❤️❤️

Nora and Bob Copithorn 🇨🇦

nora copithorn - December 16, 2022 at 08:27 PM



Hi Nora and Bob, I'm Michele's brother Mark. Thanks so much for taking the time to write and wish our father well. Hopefully, it won't be too long before we can all get together. I would also very much like to meet James and Alexis, and both of you as well! Until then :)

Mark Vanzo - January 13, 2023 at 05:48 AM

RP

“ My favorite story about Jim occurred when he was attending Ball State... He and a couple of buddies noticed that a cannon on the square downtown was not plugged. So they got some gunpowder, made a fuse, and stuffed a sheet from the dorm in there. Lit it and got a spectacular explosion. Fired that sheet across the square, where it hung on the face of a big department store. Jim and his buddies exited the scene, of course, laughing up a storm. Never did get caught for that piece of mischief.....

Robert Ploegstra - December 16, 2022 at 11:46 AM



You knew Jim very well and how much he loved gunpowder! Right to the very end! :))

Mark Vanzo - January 13, 2023 at 05:42 AM

R'

“ Mr. Vanzo was much beloved by anyone fortunate to have him as a teacher, coach, and/or friend. I was sad reading his obituary, of his passing of course, but especially that it seemed he didn't realize how many lives he had affected in a positive way, and how fondly we remember and respected him. I was fortunate to have him for several classes and to be on the first Madison football team, for which he was coach. Thank you Mr. Vanzo. You will be missed.

Robert Dunbar, '68 - December 15, 2022 at 06:24 PM



Thanks for taking the time to write. We appreciate it very much and I'm sure he does as well.

Mark Vanzo - January 13, 2023 at 05:40 AM

JL

“ *Class of '95, was always fun to listen to his stories and get him sidetracked talking about something other than the class material to get out of homework for the day. Especially if we got him going on the topic of guns. The last of my great list of teachers. He joins Mr. Marquette, and Mrs Rawlins*

Joshua Lynn - December 15, 2022 at 01:45 PM



I see you knew him well! Thanks for the kind words.

Mark Vanzo - December 15, 2022 at 03:13 PM

LS

“ *Mr. Vanzo was one of my favorite teachers. I loved how you made everything sound so interesting by telling a story that was related to the subject we were studying. Rest in peace*

Lisa Snyder-Miller

Lisa Snyder-Miller - December 15, 2022 at 10:25 AM



Thanks so much for the kind words!

Mark Vanzo - December 15, 2022 at 03:16 PM

MV

“ *Mr Vanzo was a great man. I could say he was my favorite teacher but that wouldn't be fair and that's only because when I was at Madison there were many teachers that were great in many ways. You will be missed by many and that's is an understatement! R.I.P Mr Vanzo!*

Matthew Vickery - December 15, 2022 at 12:46 AM



Thanks Matthew, He will really be missed by many!

Mark Vanzo - December 15, 2022 at 03:17 PM



Mr Vanzo was a exceptional Teacher ! He always made me use my intelligence to the max ! Thank you for the faith you had in me !!! Fly high with the Angels sincerely your student ... Jody Lockett ❤️❤️❤️

Jody Lockett - December 15, 2022 at 06:18 PM



“ Wonderful teacher and human being. I will remember his World History Class and the open window in his classroom which he said he did so no one would fall asleep! Christine King Ehinger, Class of 72, Madison High School.

Christine Ann Ehinger - December 14, 2022 at 07:52 PM



Thanks Christine for taking the time to remember and share!

Mark Vanzo - December 15, 2022 at 03:18 PM



*“ I remember in history class, I was reading a book before class started and was still reading when class started. I needed to get in a few more pages. Mr. Vanzo saw me reading after he started and he threatened to tell me the ending if I didn't put the book away!
-Craig Pearson*

Craig Pearson - December 14, 2022 at 05:56 PM



That was definitely him! Thanks for sharing.

Mark Vanzo - December 15, 2022 at 03:19 PM

DS

Mr. Vanzo was my lit teacher and football coach way back in the late 50's at Onsted . His personality and teaching encouraged me to become a teacher. As the years passed he always had time to stop and chat when we would meet ..Thank you Mr. Vanzo for your influence on my life. Denny Van Sickle

Denny Van Sickle - December 17, 2022 at 10:18 PM