

## Eulogy for James T. McDonald

Sep 26, 1929 - Mar 14, 2017

Hello I'm Jim McDonald's niece Moira McDonald and I'm grateful to Jim's children Tim, Amy, Sarah & Rachel for giving me the opportunity to honor the life of Jim McDonald.

Jim was the third child of Tim and Mary McDonald, both Irish immigrants who arrived in America in the early 1900s and raised their family in Chicago. Jim was fiercely proud of his Chicago and Irish roots and spoke fondly of his time growing up in the two flat on Fletcher Street. By the time he was in grade school Jim's mom was hospitalized, his older siblings were busy with high school and college and his father worked full time as a Chicago cop.

That left Jim a lot of time to fend for himself. He told us how his dad would leave a hot dog in a pot of cold water on the stove before he left for work in the morning with instructions to come inside and turn the stove on when he was hungry for dinner. To some having so much unsupervised time at a very young age might seem sad but I'm guessing that it was during this formative time of his life that Jim developed the traits that served him well for the rest of his long life.

He was a fiery, tenacious red head who learned the importance of friendships, community and having fun. He forged lifelong friendship with the kids from his neighborhood at St. Timothy's Parish Grammar School and Loyola Academy High School. While his siblings never left the Midwest, I believe his early independence and scrappy nature made it easier for him to seek out an adventurous life beyond Chicago.

With his characteristic courage and determination, Jim aimed high, and attended Loyola University School of Law. He told his daughter Rachel when she started law school that he wasn't the smartest guy there but he knew he could outwork them all.

He joined the Navy shortly after his admission to the Illinois Bar and was posted to Treasure Island in San Francisco. He served as a defense attorney for three years during the Korean War and settled in San Francisco at the end of his service. He joined a law firm where, with his gregarious nature, he made many life-long friendships and eventually became the senior partner.

I remember Jim telling us the story of being a new lawyer in San Francisco and visiting one of his acquaintances from Chicago who was serving time in Alcatraz for bank robbery (I told you he was tough - not too many people can say they knew a classmate who spent time in Alcatraz)!

He was a member of the Board of Directors of the Association of Defense Council of Northern California and the American Board of Trial Advocates. It was at a Navy dance on Treasure Island that he met the love of his life, Nancy Lumijarvi. He had vowed that he would ask the prettiest girl in the room to dance with him. He did, she accepted, and they married in 1960.

Being the son of immigrants must have influenced Jim's interest in peace and justice throughout his life. During the 1960's he served as President of the Catholic Interracial Council and advocated for housing justice for African-Americans in the Bay Area. In 1964 he traveled with a group of attorneys to Mississippi to help register African-Americans to vote. In the 1980's, Jim was active in the Irish Forum which sought to create peace in Northern Ireland. In the

2000's, when Jim was in his 70's, he participated in the AIDS/LifeCycle and bicycled from San Francisco to Los Angeles in support of those affected by HIV/AIDS. He was an active cyclist throughout his retirement and impressed all who knew him with his athleticism and grit.

Jim was a loving husband, father, uncle and an active member of St. John of God parish. He had a quick laugh, a big smile and the soul of a dreamer. He loved being surrounded by his family and was especially proud of his children, their accomplishments and his beloved grandchildren Bryanne, Anthony and Eve.

He was generous and kind to his many Caraker, Quinn and McDonald nieces and nephews too. Earlier in today's mass one of the parishioners mentioned the St John of God banners that Jim worked on announcing All are Welcome Here! Seems like all of Jim's Midwestern relatives took that literally!

He welcomed me and my sisters Ellen & Heather (who are also here today) into his family. He and Nancy and their kids let me stay in their house on Avila St the week after I graduated from college and helped me get established here. They invited me to their happy place at Feather River for a summer vacations and for the many Christmas masses they had in their home.

He found me my first job at the Presidio Golf Club (where I once waited on Joe DiMaggio – I think Jim would appreciate a mention of fame and glamour in his eulogy). He helped me find my first apartment, and Nancy & Jim would come over for Sunday dinners - they met my roommates and checked out my boyfriend, came to my wedding, and were one of the first to visit me at CPMC when both of my babies

were born. They also introduced me to Father Mickey who married me and baptized both my kids.

I will always be grateful to Jim for his generosity and kindness. Jim leaves a legacy here at St. Johns and most importantly in his beautiful family and grandchildren. We will miss Jim but keep his spirit and quick laugh in our hearts and remember him always for his faith, high energy, playful smile, sentimental nature and fighting spirit.