



## Dr. James G. McCullagh

August 26, 1936 - April 27, 2022

Dr. James (Jim) Gerald McCullagh died on April 27th, 2022 at Allen Memorial Hospital of heart failure.

He was born on August 26, 1936 to James John McCullagh and Anna Patricia Rogers in New York City, New York where he grew up. His parents had emigrated from country Tyrone in Northern Ireland. Jim was a dual U.S. and Irish citizen. Jim served in the Army for 3 years in several locations including Germany and California. He attended Curry College in MA before graduating with a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy from Chico State University of CA in 1963. He received a Master of Science in Social Work (MSSW) from University of Missouri-Columbia in 1970 where he met his wife Cheryl Ann Edwards, a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Counseling from Northern Illinois University in 1979, and a JD University of Iowa in 1993. Jim worked as a welfare worker in San Francisco in the early to mid-1960s. Before coming to UNI, Jim was an assistant professor at the University of Kentucky. He, his wife, and their son moved to Cedar Falls in 1981.

Jim was a professor of social work at the University of Northern Iowa from 1981 until he retired in 2021. He was honored with the Randy A. Fisher Lifetime Achievement award as well as a UNI regent's award. His research focused on Native American Indians and their contribution to social work. During this process he made a life-long friendship with Howard Chandler

Walkingstick who was a prominent Cherokee and social worker. As a part-time lawyer he focused on juvenile law in Cedar Falls and Waterloo. Jim was a member of St Stephens Student Center in Cedar falls where he volunteered as the sacristan for over a decade. Additionally Jim was a Benedictine Oblate.

Jim loved to travel. He visited Europe many times including several visits with his family in Northern Ireland. He also visited the near east and Israel. In Israel he worked on a kibbutz for four months. Additionally Jim often travelled to Hilton Head with family and friends. Jim was an avid antique collector and deeply enjoyed puzzles and Sudoku.

Survived by: son, James John, and his sisters Kay Wojnicki and Chris Cronin and their families.

Mass of Christian Burial will 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, May 4, 2022 at St. Stephen The Witness Catholic Student Center in Cedar Falls. Visitation will be the following day, Thursday, May 5, 2022 at the Richardson Funeral Service from 4 to 7 p.m.

Jim will be buried at St. Patrick's Cemetery in Greencastle, Northern Ireland with his deceased wife Cheryl McCullagh.

# Previous Events

## Mass of Christian Burial

MAY 4. 10:30 AM (CT)

St. Stephen the Witness Student Center  
1019 W 23rd Street  
University of Northern Iowa Campus  
Cedar Falls, IA 50613  
(319) 266-9863  
<http://ststephenuni.org>

## Visitation

MAY 5. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Richardson Funeral Service  
615 Main Street  
Cedar Falls, IA 50613  
(319) 266-3525  
[richardsonfuneralservice@gmail.com](mailto:richardsonfuneralservice@gmail.com)  
<http://richardson.funeralplan2.com>

# Tribute Wall

RJ

“ *Time flies. I woke up this morning thinking of how influential Dr. McCullagh has been in my life. Decided to look him up and try to meet for lunch. Didn't realize he had passed.*

*I was in one of Dr. McCullagh's first social work classes at UNI. He was so inspirational. My interest in social work was social change. Remove the ditch. He was a teacher, mentor and friend. Dr. McCullagh wrote a recommendation for me to get into law school. Years later I wrote a letter of recommendation for him to get into law school. He did great things as an attorney, but it did not surprise me at all when he went back to his love of teaching.*

*I am 71 years old and still practicing law as a consumer advocate. Still using those UNI social work skills, still hearing advice and encouragement from Dr. McCullagh. "Don't make them worse off than they already are" comes to mind.*

*Dr. McCullagh touched so many lives. A true giant in his profession. He is and will be missed.*

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**Ray Johnson** - April 27, 2024 at 11:37 AM



Katherine  
van  
Wormer

“ *A beautiful funeral and burial mass was held in N.Ireland where he was buried as was his wife Cheryl. Around 28 minutes in the priest describes the remarkable life of Jim McCullagh. The link is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrdUNqfbEI8>*

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**Katherine van Wormer** - August 23, 2022 at 05:22 PM

JM

“ Jim McCullagh was very kind and friendly. I first met him in the UNI campus student union at lunchtime, in passing, about 20 years ago. We chatted many times through the years, mostly seeing each other by chance around campus. I worked in the reference department in Rod Library, and he sometimes consulted with me and other librarians when looking for resources to support his research. Finally, about 4-5 years ago I visited his office. I retired in 2018, and hadn't seen Jim in a while. He was also my friend on Facebook. He was a kind and intelligent man, dedicated to his students and his research. He was also my friend on campus. I will miss him, knowing that he is no longer in the world. I'm happy to know that he has been reunited with his beloved wife.

*Jerilyn Marshall*

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**Jerilyn Marshall** - May 11, 2022 at 08:53 AM

LS

“ I work as an Educational Technologist at UNI. I met Jim a number of years ago when he reached out to our department, wanting to learn how to put some of his class materials online. He was doing this because of his dedication to his students. Students had told him they would like to be able to get access to materials on our learning management system. I was the one that supported him with these efforts from then on.

*I really came to enjoy scheduled support sessions with Jim. I always went to his office for these. In most instances, people came to my office. But I realized it would help him a lot if he could work on his own computer in his own environment. I've always admired seniors who take on technology, as it can be so overwhelming for those who didn't grow up with it. And our learning management system has a lot going on in it. So we worked together as often as needed for him to take on whatever new piece of the system he wanted to start to use and he got to where he could do quite a bit of it on his own.*

*When we would go for longer periods of time without a support session, I was always happy to bump into him on campus to chat for a bit. I often walked by his office door on my way from the parking garage to my building, as going through his building was a shortcut to my building. If I saw the light on in his office and I had time, I would occasionally stop and knock on the door.*

*He was a really, great guy and he had become a friend. I've missed seeing him since COVID and his retirement and will miss him. I work remotely still, but when I do walk past Jim's office door (and it will always be JIM'S office door to me), I will think of fond memories of our long conversations about his students, his travels, my travels, his family, my family, ping pong and so much more.*

*Goodbye, Jim. May you rest in peace alongside your beloved wife in a location I know was very dear to your heart. Who knows, maybe one day, I'll find your resting place. As you know, I have Irish in my blood too, and I've always wanted to visit Ireland.*

*Lori Seawel  
Senior Educational Technologist  
University of Northern Iowa*

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**Lori Seawel** - May 05, 2022 at 05:29 PM

MB

“ *Dr. McCullagh was one of my favorite people and such a joy to work with in creating curriculum applicable for public social work. Jim and I would often spend hours on the phone bouncing ideas off of each other. Some of the ideas actually ended up in courses for DHS workers and for UNI students. He was always so positive and supportive. He will be missed.*

*Mary Jo Beckman*

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**Mary Jo Beckman** - May 04, 2022 at 06:09 PM

 Kimi  
Larson-  
Venner

“ *A wonderful teacher who I learned much from.*



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**Kimi Larson-Venner** - May 03, 2022 at 05:18 PM

DW

“ *Department of Social Work purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Dr. James G. McCullagh.*



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**Department of Social Work** - May 03, 2022 at 01:19 PM

BK

“ J.J. Your parents were a positive influence on so many lives. I continue to remember fondly and with respect their friendship, from years of working with Cheryl. There were so many stories of Ireland, the cats, and, of course, how proud they were of you. With my sympathy at this sad time,  
Bea Koontz

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Bea Koontz - May 03, 2022 at 11:25 AM

KW

“ So many students will be heartbroken upon hearing of the death of one of their favorite professors, one who had gotten to know them personally through his teaching of the social work practice courses. As his colleague and friend, I can say Jim always put his students first and pressured faculty to do the same. I feel his loss deeply. I want to mention he had set up a scholarship for social work students in his beloved mother's name--Anna McCullagh--and I believe he will love contributions to this fund more than anything (at the [UNI.foundation.org](http://UNI.foundation.org)).  
Katherine van Wormer  
Professor Emerita of Social Work  
UNI

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Katherine van Wormer - May 02, 2022 at 07:04 PM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Dr. James G. McCullagh.



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May 02, 2022 at 06:26 PM

AK

“ Thinking of you, James, and sending prayers. Your parents were the most amazing people and did soooo much to make our world a better place. HUGSSSSS! Tom and Adel Kessler

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**Adel Kessler** - May 01, 2022 at 05:54 PM

LB

“ I had the privilege of having Jim and his son on the September Honor Flight to Washington DC in 2021. He was a very kind and interesting man who will be missed.

*Linda/Flight Coordinator for Honor Flight, Waterloo*

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**Linda Bergmann** - May 01, 2022 at 05:13 PM

JM

*My father just loved that experience of the honor flight. It meant a great deal to him. Thank you!.....James John McCullagh*

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**James John McCullagh** - May 02, 2022 at 12:03 AM

HH

“ I didn't know Jim well, but I worked in the same building and college with him for years. I always enjoyed running into him because of his smile and positive attitude. I'm sure he had an incredible impact on the many students he worked with, as the testimonials below attest.

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**Helen Harton** - May 01, 2022 at 04:10 PM

KR

“ *Dr. McCullagh taught me so so much not only about social work but also what it means to be a great person. I will always treasure our conversations and the knowledge he provided me about the Cherokee people. A truly amazing man who has left a legacy and mark on the entire UNI community. Rest easy.*



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**Kendra Renner** - April 30, 2022 at 05:47 PM

KE

“ *He was such a kind and dear gentleman. He touched so many lives and will be greatly missed. Grateful to have known him.*

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**Kelly** - April 30, 2022 at 05:18 PM

AO

“ *Thank you for your life and teaching! He was such a wonderful professor. I'm so blessed to have known him and been a grad assistant for him and doing lots of sudoku puzzles. Rest in peace* ❤️

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**Andrea Ooms** - April 30, 2022 at 04:40 PM

MS

“ *He was a great man and teacher. I was lucky enough to do my work study with him for 2 years. He will be missed by many. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends.*

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**Mackenzie Scott** - April 30, 2022 at 01:49 PM

MD

“ Jim, you were and are one of my professors that I hold in the highest regard. Thank you for the lessons, the chats in your office, the opportunity to assist with transcriptions, and for pushing me to enter a PhD program to pursue research. I will carry appreciation for you for years to come! I find comfort that you are reunited with your wife.

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**MacKenzie Dallenbach** - April 30, 2022 at 01:20 PM

 Johnet Dosee

“ Having you as a professor was the best gift anyone could ask for. You inspired me. You will forever be missed. Rest in peace Dr. Jim.

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**Johnet Dosee** - April 30, 2022 at 12:43 PM

JS

“ I met Dr. McCullagh In 1983. I had just served four years in the US Marine Corps. I was very uncertain what I wanted to do with my life. I was accepted to UNI but under academic probation. My first semester my courses were chosen for me. I was allowed to take a personal fitness course, a career decision making class, and an intro to social work class. My very first class on my very first day of college I met Dr. Jim. His words inspired me to become a social work major, go to grad school and become a social worker. I feel very lucky to have had him be part of my life. I would not have become the social worker or man I am without Dr. Jim . What an amazing life he led. Dr. Jim you will continue to inspire me. Thank you so much.

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**John Stanley** - April 30, 2022 at 11:52 AM



“ *Ocean Breeze Spray was purchased for the family of Dr. James G. McCullagh.*



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April 30, 2022 at 11:36 AM



“ *Heavenly Sentiments Spray was purchased for the family of Dr. James G. McCullagh.*



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April 30, 2022 at 10:31 AM



“ *Jim noticed me on my worst days & handed me packets of graduate schools on the east coast for me to consider (ha). He took time to process with me how community really really really really matters to me — which was a profound realization for me as a junior in college. Jim randomly showed up at Nazareth on a Wednesday to eat supper together and generously donated towards our mission trip to Jamaica. I'll miss his presence & smile at Panera — real thankful to be known by Jim!*



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**Kristin Sauerbrei** - April 30, 2022 at 10:30 AM



“ *Basket of Memories was purchased for the family of Dr. James G. McCullagh.*



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April 29, 2022 at 11:27 PM

Molly  
Scullin

“ To Dr. McCullagh’s family: my deepest condolences on the loss of such a kind man.

*One of my favorite memories was the Thanksgiving he and his son joined a small dinner at St. Stephen the Witness. So much joy and laughter was had. He and all the gentlemen present led the charge against the dishes and never has such a chore been done with such fun.*

*His volunteerism was commendable. He taught me so much about how to properly sacristan for Mass. He took pride in doing even the little tasks well. I enjoyed hearing about his life while drying Mass vessels. Often the last two people locking up the church after services.*

*His generosity was also often quietly financial. Supporting many social justice projects giving our students resources to start making a difference themselves. Always humble when thanked he truly was led by his faith.*

*I appreciated his leadership, mentorship, and most of all friendship. Always with a gentle listening ear, he advised and comforted. I truly enjoyed our conversations. I respected his very strong work ethic and dedication to a job well done. Jim was a wealth of knowledge and he put it to use in his quest to make a difference. He put his generous spirit into action. We are all the better for it!*



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Molly Scullin - April 29, 2022 at 11:25 AM