



# A Life Well Lived

Jim Owens  
1924-2013



Dear Friend ,

We know there are many adages about losing loved ones near the holidays. And in fact we have lost one of our great members this holiday season. But on this occasion we prefer to focus on the gift that one man gave to us, by living an extraordinary life, rather than on our loss. James Rigueur



Jim relays a pilot's day in WWII

Owens, Jr. was such a man, a man of contribution. Like the recently departed Bill Rich, Jim was one of the "Greatest Generation," a World War II pilot and consummate gentleman.

Many of you will remember when on the shores of Laurel Lake Jim shared with us his story of, "In a Day of a Pilot." Where he relayed with great clarity and detail what it was like to be a WWII Pilot. Jim loved people and interaction on a vast many topics. He inquired about the local rivers, he told many veteran stories, and he loved to eat oysters. He had an extensive professional career in textiles and consulted on aspects of the industry even after his

retirement.

This week, we had a chance to visit with Caroline, his wife of 57 years. She relayed that Jim left us on a very high note, in that a number of organizations were hailing his achievements. Many of you will remember that just recently Jim did his "Honor Flight" to Washington, DC. Honor Flight is a program where American veterans are honored for the personal sacrifices they made. Veterans visit the memorials of comrades in DC, and special focus is given to veterans that have not had that opportunity or are elderly. The Millville Army Airfield Museum has documented Jim's story on numerous occasions. Caroline also relayed that she felt very cheated since Doctors anticipated that because of Jim's robust health he would have had a healthy 10 years left on his clock. Our heart goes out to Caroline, and we want her to know we feel cheated too, but we also cherish the contributions he made during his great life, and we're sure she does too. To

learn more about Jim we have posted a short accounting of his well lived life below.

## James Rigueur Owens, Jr.

James Rigueur Owens, Jr., age 89, of Upper Deerfield Township, died unexpectedly at home on Monday, December 9. The son of James Rigueur and Katharine Young Owens, he was born in Memphis, TN on November 30, 1924.

He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Caroline Mulford, and their three children: Cecile Owens Plattner of Greenville, NY; Elizabeth Owens Wakefield of McLean, VA; Jonathan James Owens of Pleasantville, NY; and seven grandchildren. He is also survived by a sister, Julie Owens Sanderson Lyman of Essex, CT, and was predeceased by a son, James Bowie Owens.

A 1942 graduate of Western Reserve Academy, Hudson, OH, Jim entered Yale University in 1942, served in the Army Air Corps from 1943 to 1945, and then returned to Yale and graduated as a political science major in 1948 with the Class of 1945W. While at Yale he was a member of the championship Yale Swimming Team, earning a varsity "Y."

While in the service, Jim piloted a B-17 bomber, and was stationed in Eye, East Anglia, England. He and his crew flew 20 missions over Germany plus several humanitarian missions including a food drop in the Netherlands and the return of POW's to Paris. He was not yet 21 when he was discharged in September 1945.

Following graduation from Yale, Jim entered the textile fibers industry, working for Burlington Industries and then joining the DuPont Company in Wilmington, DE and New York City. Later he was self-employed as a consultant with Textile Marketing & Development, working with textile companies in India. He lived in Wilmington, DE, New York City, and settled in Westport, CT for 38 years.

An avid choral singer, he sang for a dozen years with the Berkshire Choral Festival, Sheffield, MA and toured Russia and Great Britain with the Yale Alumni Chorus, singing with several notable conductors including the internationally acclaimed Valery Gergiev. He also sang with the Y's Men

chorus in Westport, CT and the Trinity Chorale at Trinity Episcopal Church, Southport, CT, performing several times at Carnegie Hall under the baton of Charlie Walker.

Since moving to the Bridgeton area in 2003, Jim has been an active member of the Bridgeton Luncheon Rotary, where he was a Paul Harris Fellow; St. Andrew's Episcopal Church; and the Advisory Board of the Millville Army Air Field Museum. During the past year, he participated in living history presentations about World War II for high school and community groups, providing audiences with a personalized account of that world-changing event. On December 9 he was posthumously awarded the Preservation of American History medal from the Greenwich Tea Burning Chapter of the DAR.

Friends and relatives are invited to attend a memorial service at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 186 East Commerce Street, Bridgeton, on Saturday, December 21 at 11:00 a.m. The church will be open beginning at 10:30 a.m. for a period of musical meditation and an opportunity to view scenes from Jim's life. Interment will be private.

In lieu of flowers, the family welcomes memorial contributions in Jim's name to the Bridgeton Rotary Club Foundation, 122 Rosedale Drive, Pittsgrove, New Jersey 08318 or the Millville Army Air Field Museum, 1 Leddon Street, Millville, NJ 08332. Written condolences and tributes may be sent to the family through the Freitag Funeral Home web site at [freitagfuneralhome.com](http://freitagfuneralhome.com).



*We wish you a warm and safe holiday!*

**CU on the River!**

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