

## James Francis Duffy



Commander James F. Duffy, USN (Ret.), died on 24 November 2021.

Born and raised in Chicago, IL, “Jim” enlisted in the Navy at age 17. He attended boot camp at Naval Station Great Lakes and attained the rank of petty officer second class by age 19. Jim’s commanding officer soon recommended that he apply to the Naval Academy. Stationed close to Chicago, Jim received permission to go home and speak to his father about his decision. When Jim described the opportunity, his father replied, “Son, it sounds like this man is trying to hand you a golden football. You grab on to it and run like hell.” Jim took his father’s advice. Gaining admission in 1956, Jim entered the Naval Academy as a member of the Class of 1960. He played multiple intermural sports and won the 1958 welterweight Brigade boxing championship. During his time as a Midshipman, Jim formed countless enduring

friendships.

Following graduation, Jim attended flight school in Pensacola, FL, earned his Wings of Gold, and embarked on a 30-year career as a Navy pilot. At the end of his career, Jim welcomed the opportunity to join the Naval Academy faculty, teaching leadership to Midshipmen and living in lovely, old quarters at Hospital Point.

Jim retired into civilian life in 1986. He worked for several years for the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory, serving as a test director and project manager in the submarine security directorate. “That job,” he boasted, “allowed me to play with the Navy’s toys without actually being in the Navy.”

Upon his second retirement, Jim spent his time traveling, teaching sailing and guiding walking tours of the Naval Academy.

Jim married Carolyn Novak in June 1960. Their marriage lasted 61 years, until Carolyn died on 31 August 2021. The couple had four children, Kevin, Ellen, Brian and Brendan; and 13 grandchildren, including Emmett Jenkins ’21.

In November 1998, Jim and Carolyn’s son, Lieutenant Brendan Duffy ’95, was killed during a nighttime landing aboard ENTERPRISE. Having served as air boss on a carrier, Jim took the loss personally and particularly hard. His patriotism and dedication to the Navy never wavered, however, and his love for his alma mater never diminished. It is only fitting, then, that Jim now rests at the Naval Academy’s Columbarium, just down the hill from Hospital Point, alongside Carolyn and only a few feet from their beloved son.

*July-August 2022 Shipmate*