



James Wellington Shilling

March 17, 1932 - October 17, 2015

His accomplishments were many; his disappointments few....

James Wellington Shilling, age 83, of Knox, Indiana, passed away at home on Saturday, October 17, 2015. Born on March 17, 1932, in the LaPorte Hospital, he was the son of Russell and Mary Edna (Pulver) Shilling. He lived his entire life on the Shilling family farm just north of Knox. Jim was a well known farmer, businessman, historian, and community leader in the Starke County area.

He is survived by his wife Melba (Burton) Shilling, his son Bradford Shilling of Yonkers, New York, his daughter and son-in-law Brenda and Mark Krom of Knox, Indiana, and his two grandchildren, Kaylee and Carson Krom. He was preceded in death by his parents, Russell and Mary Edna (Pulver) Shilling, and his brother, Donald Shilling.

He was inquisitive from an early age. His favorite pastime was taking things apart to see how they worked, then meeting the challenge of putting them back together. He was a boy scout and was in 4-H, taking his Black Angus cattle for his 4-H project.

After graduation from Knox High School in 1950, he signed up for the Purdue Short Course in Agriculture. That was so much fun that he enrolled in Purdue for real, graduating with a B.S. in Agriculture in 1955.

While at Purdue, he became active in Wesley Foundation, the Methodist Student Foundation on campus, where he met his future wife, Melba. His story is that his first thought was, "There's the girl who will take care of me when I'm 80!"

Wanting to serve his country, he enlisted in the Army in 1955, being stationed with NATO in Germany for a year. He and Melba were married on April 1, 1956.

Back home in Starke County, Jim eventually took over the family farm. He was one of the first local farmers to practice minimum tillage, use a semi tractor and trailer to haul grain, and implement soil conservation practices.

When an excavating business became available, he broadened his agricultural interests by digging ditches with skilled operators as employees. He also obtained a real estate broker's license, to be able to sell farms.

An innovator in the Agricultural Industry, he "improved" most equipment he bought. Seeing the need to monitor the temperature in stored grain, Jim developed "Agri-therm", a system which was used by farmers and the popcorn industry.

His agricultural-related honors include selection as an Indiana Prairie Farmer Master Farmer, Indiana Master Farm Conservationist, Purdue Agricultural Alumni Board of Trustees, and PCA Distinguished Service Award.

He was presented the Henry F. Schricker Award for "Outstanding Community Service Before Self" in 1998. The Purdue Alumni Association presented him with the Citizenship Award in April of 2002.

His was a pioneer family in Starke County, having come from Stark County, Ohio, to Starke County, Indiana in 1851. Jim's love of history was a life-long adventure. He was president of the Starke County Historical Society for over 15 years, until his health began failing.

He had a major responsibility in building the Knox United Methodist Church, in developing the Gateway Area and restoring the Depot in Knox, in moving the Rochester pony truss bridge to Wythogan Park, in repairing the Starke County Courthouse for public tours, in building the Farm Bureau building in Knox, in planning the Courthouse Centennial celebration, and in planning the Starke County Sesquicentennial celebration.

Jim was always thinking of ways to improve the community. He left a legacy of volunteerism that will be hard to match. He was always striving to help young people learn, be creative, and have an interest in the local history.

Visitation is scheduled for Thursday, October 22, 2015, from 4:00-7:00 p.m. CST, at the Knox United Methodist Church at 201 S. Shield Street in Knox. The funeral will be held at 10:00 a.m. CST on Friday, October 23, 2015, in the church, with a burial ceremony to follow at Crown Hill Cemetery in Knox. Pastor of the Knox United Methodist Church, Dr. Dean Fager, will officiate. Rannells Funeral Home of Hamlet is assisting with arrangements. Donations may be made to the Starke County Historical Society, the Knox United Methodist Church, or to a charity of the donor's choice.

Tribute Wall

TH

“ When I was the secretary for the Chamber of Commerce I had the privilege of being the first one to occupy the Depot. Jim would stop almost everyday to see how things were going. We had wonderful visits and he not being from Starke county Jim enlightened me on the history. I will cherish those talks. Thank you to the Shilling family for sharing Jim and all his talents with our community. Many blessings to you.

Theda Hardesty - June 18, 2018 at 10:46 AM

JB

“ Mr. Shilling was always there to give me a friendly smile or hug when I would attend church at the Knox United Methodist Church. My prayers are with Mrs. Shilling and the whole Shilling family.

Jennifer Bailey - June 18, 2018 at 10:46 AM

AK

“ Dearest Melba: I hope your wonderful memories sustain you in the time ahead. You have a wonderful family to help you too. How fortunate you have been to have Jim as your husband. A more perfect couple never existed than the two of you. My deepest condolences in the loss of Jim. I feel privileged to have called him my friend. The work I did for you both on your family trees was such fun and I thank you for having let me do it. Jim has taught me so much over the years. I can't even begin to list the things he opened the doors on. Jim was the best of the best in so many areas. What a great man he was. So many people will miss him. I will miss his wisdom and wit. God bless you Melba.

Audrey Kinezian - June 18, 2018 at 10:46 AM

RS

“ Dear Melba and family-Our deepest condolences to you on Jim's passing. He surely touched many people's lives, and we shall always remember him. He was a very compassionate and understanding man. Bob and Karen

Robert and Karen Scholz - June 18, 2018 at 10:46 AM

EP

“ He will be greatly missed. Thoughts and prayers to the family.

Ellen Pitcher - June 18, 2018 at 10:46 AM

TW

“ My thoughts to Melba, Brad, and Brenda. Enjoyed speaking with Jim through the years in our store. He was an asset to our community which is shown in all his gracious accomplishments which his legacy will live on through. He will be missed but never forgotten.

Tony Williams - June 18, 2018 at 10:46 AM

DE

“ You read a tribute from a Texan.

In my years of reporting, many people impressed:

*Lyndon Baines Johnson, Lady Bird Johnson,
Richard Nixon, my classmate Fess Parker, Senator
John Tower, Senator and Judge Ralph Yarbrough,
George Bush and his father and his wife, Barbara,
Senator Everrett Durksin, Sammy Baugh, my sailing
Buddy Ted Hooks-the first Purdue graduate I met,
Ross Perot, Billy Graham, Darryl Royal, Walter
Cronkite, Liz Smith, Historian H. Bailey Carroll,*

*Include Jim Schilling, one of the most impressive
persons I ever met.*

*If to be a man, you must first be a citizen, then
Jim Schilling ranks as one of the better Men I Have
Ever met.*

Dick Elam, reporter and retired journalism teacher.

Dick Elam - April 29, 2018 at 06:57 PM

DM

“ Dear Melba, Brad, Brenda, Kaylee and Carson,
My deepest and sincere condolences go out to you all.

The first month I moved to Starke County I started working at the depot and Jim became a part of my life. He would stop by almost daily to be sure I was comfortable in his "home away from home". He sat down and taught me much of what I know about Starke county today. His wonderful stories kept me captivated and gave me a love of Starke county that will never leave me.

Jim demonstrated to me what being a Community Trustee is all about. He taught Servant Leadership without ever using the words. He taught me in ways that I wasn't aware I was being taught. I now help teach the History part of the Leadership Classes and I have Jim to thank for all I know and love about Starke county.

Jim will be sorely missed in ways many don't even know exist. Who could say no to Jim? He was always accommodating and worked so hard to be their helper, that few could tell Jim no without a guilty conscience, knowing how much he gave of himself in all he did. He told his stories with a great sense of humor and his sense of humor stayed with him until the end. He teased the nurses and was not shy as he teased the love of his life, you, Melba. You were always on his mind and his love for you was his shining light. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. With all my love, Debbie

Debbie Mix - April 29, 2018 at 06:57 PM

WS

“ Although we only lived in Knox for two years, the KUMC quickly acquainted us with Jim and Melba. Just as quickly we became aware of Jim's total commitment to Knox and Starke County ! Over the past 25 years our frequent trips from New England to Illinois always included a stop for a meal, and lovely visit with them. During our visit, and meal with them in late August, Jim drove us around Knox, even past our 'home in Knox' . We concluded with the 'full view' of the now famous 'Shilling Barn Quilt' ! Thank you, Jim...The Shilling family , Knox, Starke County, and the State of Indiana has lost an amazing husband, father, grandfather and loyal friend .Our thoughts and prayers are with Melba, Brad, Brenda, and familyPeace and love,Wally and Shirley

Wally and Shirley Strauch - April 29, 2018 at 06:57 PM

RF

“ WE WERE VERY SAD TO HEAR THE NEWS OF JIM'S PASSING. PLEASE KNOW THAT YOU ARE ALL IN OUR PRAYERS AT THIS TIME. MAY GOD COMPLETELY SURROUND YOU WITH HIS LOVE AND COMFORT AS YOU GRIEVE. I AM SURE MY DAD, HAROLD ADAMS, WAS ONE OF THE FIRST PEOPLE HE SAW IN HEAVEN AND ARE WALKING THOSE GOLDEN STREETS OF HEAVEN.

Ray and Debbie Kilmer and family - April 29, 2018 at 06:57 PM

HL

“ Brad: I was saddened to hear that your father passed and want you to know that you and your family will be in my prayers.

Harriet Lewis - April 29, 2018 at 06:57 PM

EL

“ Brad and family - My sincerest condolences on the passing of your Dad. I was not surprised when reading his obituary and all the accolades posted by people. I knew you came from great stock! From all accounts your Dad was a wonderful person who will be missed by many. He leaves a wonderful legacy. Again, my sincerest condolences. Elyse

Elyse Lottier - April 29, 2018 at 06:57 PM

AS

“ Dear Brad

May The Lord comfort you and your family in this difficult time.

*My prayers and my thoughts are with you. May your dad's soul RIP.
Amen*

Anne M. Santiago - April 29, 2018 at 06:57 PM

UM

“ On behalf of the Planning Unit of NYSDOT, we condole Brad and family on the passing of their father. Our prayers are with you and may his soul rest in peace.

Uchenna Madu - April 29, 2018 at 06:57 PM

VU

“ My sincere condolences to you and your family. My prayers and thoughts are with you.

Victor Udensi - April 29, 2018 at 06:57 PM

WF

“ *My condolences to Brad and the entire Shilling family on this sad moment.*

Woodley Fontaine - April 29, 2018 at 06:57 PM

DM

“ *Melba, Brad, and Brenda:Sad to hear of Uncle Jim's passing. Betty and I are so sorry for your loss...you are in our thoughts and prayers. We pray that God will grant you the strength needed to get through this moment in your life.*

Dick McCord - March 19, 2015 at 12:00 AM