



Mr. James E. "Jim" Feisthamel

February 5, 1961 - February 27, 2026

FRANKFORT - Mr. James E. "Jim" Feisthamel, age 65, went home to the Lord on Friday, February 27, 2026, where he was greeted by his mother, Joan, who had passed just a week prior. At the time of his passing, his wife, Mary Ellen, and their daughter, Megan, were by his bedside, supporting and loving him.

Born in Utica on February 5, 1961, James was the son of the late George C. and Joan (Zeh) Feisthamel. He attended Whitesboro High School until he and his family relocated to Texas, where he graduated from Duncanville High School in 1979. He then furthered his education at the University of Texas.

Answering the call to serve his nation, he enlisted in the United States Navy, where he served as an underwater welder and electrician's mate. He later advanced to become a member of SEAL Team Six, an elite special operations unit. He served in Grenada, Iran, and Iraq, and was a proud soldier who earned the respect and admiration of his peers.

On June 4, 1984, while still on active duty, he married the former Mary Ellen DeBernardis in Texas. After his discharge, they celebrated a second marital blessing on March 15, 1986 at St. Agnes Church so that their family and friends could be part of the celebration. They knew they loved each other and wanted everyone to share in their joy. Jim was a selfless husband and father, always putting the needs of his wife and daughter above his own. Jim and

Mary Ellen's devotion to one another never wavered—they were affectionately known as “Spanky and Darla.”

After his time in the Navy, Jim began his vocation as a New York State Correctional Officer, with his first assignment at Sing Sing Correctional Facility. He later returned to the Utica area, where he was stationed at Mid-State Correctional Facility. While the career provided a means to support his family, he also formed many lasting friendships and a strong brotherhood with his fellow officers. He was a member of NYSCOPBA Union Council 82, Local 1249, in Oneida County, demonstrating his dedication to his brotherhood.

In 2017 he retired but had concurrently owned J. E. Feisthamel Electric, a business well known and respected by both his clients and the community at large. In 2015, he suffered an injury that limited his ability to continue in this passionate line of work.

Shortly thereafter, he was diagnosed with MDS (Myelodysplastic Syndrome), a disease he fought valiantly and courageously. He never complained about his disabilities or treatments. His wife and daughter supported and encouraged him throughout his care at the Wilmot Cancer Institute in Rochester. Throughout his entire medical journey, they never left his side. After four years of treatment, he ultimately succumbed to complications of the disease.

Blessed with a terrific sense of humor, Jim could entertain any crowd. He was part of a close-knit group of dear friends and felt supported by them all throughout his life. His generosity was abundant, and he helped many people without seeking acknowledgment. Anyone in need was touched by his kindness.

As a father, he was a natural caregiver. He was the strong, silent type who, at

times, carried his worries quietly. Megan always knew he was in her corner. He encouraged her independence and offered guidance only when she sought his advice. He never opposed her decisions and supported her with unwavering compassion. He also served on the Board of Trustees for CSF – the Chiari Syringomyelia Foundation – in support of Megan’s own illness.

Jim loved being outdoors, especially fishing in his favorite spot and hunting deer as well as pheasant with his English Setter, Keegan, always by his side. He could also often be found tending his vegetable garden or riding his motorcycles. He had a special fondness for his 1940 Ford Deluxe Coupe... it was red in color and he had it rebuilt and restored to perfection.

He was an avid reader and loved spending time with family and friends. He was the heart of many gatherings, sitting around, reminiscing, and enjoying good food. Over the years, he had several dogs, including Keegan, Chloe, Abigail, and, most recently, Chase. Friends and family will fondly remember him saying, “You do what you got to do,” and, “It is what it is!”

Jim is survived by his devoted wife, Mary Ellen; his treasured daughter and son-in-law, Megan and Anthony Santa Maria; siblings and their spouses, Sue and Jeffrey Briney, John and Grace Feisthamel, and Kathleen and Noe Resendez; nieces and nephews, Amanda and Bradley Palmer, and David and Sarah Resendez; great-nieces and great-nephews, Georgia, Bradley III, and Noah Palmer; Owen, and Luke Resendez; brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Anthony and Carrie DeBernardis and their children Savanna and Devin, and Rachael; aunts, uncles, cousins; and many friends, especially Stewart “Puddin” Hamlin, Al Tahan, Bob Tenbrink, Russ Abel, and Mike “The Original Buddha” Britton. He was predeceased by his parents, George and Joan (Zeh) Feisthemal; and his father-in-law and mother-in-law, Anthony and Millie (Carbone) DeBernardis.

The Feisthamel family would like to express their deepest and most heartfelt gratitude to the incredible ED physicians, nurses, and staff of ICU East at Wynn Hospital, especially Nurse Eldar Hodzic. Gratitude is also extended to his home health aide, Crishonda Pritchard, who truly dedicated herself to Jim's care. They are profoundly grateful to Edwards Ambulance Service for their dignified assistance. Thank you as well to Cody Leitz and Leon Saville, whose willingness to assist at any hour made an immeasurable difference. Your kindness, professionalism, and unwavering support will always be remembered and cherished. At the time of Jim's passing, he was also surrounded by the Rusev family, Philip, Leo, and Ludmilla, and Greta Scotellaro.

A Memorial Gathering in Jim's honor will take place on Saturday, March 14, 2026, from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. at the Eannace Funeral Home, Inc., 932 South St., corner of Hammond Ave. Jim's Memorial Service and Celebration of Life will commence at 1:00 p.m. at the funeral home. In lieu of floral offerings, memorial contributions in Jim's honor may be made to the American Syringomyelia and Chiari Alliance Project online at www.ASAP.org or the Wounded Warrior Project online at www.support.woundedwarriorproject.org; envelopes will also be available at the funeral home.

Previous Events

Memorial Gathering

MAR 14. 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM (ET)

Eannace Funeral Home, Inc.
932 South Street
corner of Hammond Ave.
Utica, NY 13501
(315) 724-6714
eannacefh@roadrunner.com
<https://www.eannacefuneralhome.com>

Memorial Service

MAR 14. 1:00 PM (ET)

Eannace Funeral Home, Inc.
932 South Street
corner of Hammond Ave.
Utica, NY 13501
(315) 724-6714
eannacefh@roadrunner.com
<https://www.eannacefuneralhome.com>

Tribute Wall

JO

“ 1 file added to the album *Visiting with friends*



Jeff & Camille Oczkowski - March 09 at 06:46 PM

JO

We cherish our visit last August with Jim and Mary Ellen - we hold dear such wonderful memories from over the years.

Jeff and Camille Oczkowski - March 09 at 06:48 PM

AF

“ *Mary Ellen and Family, we are so, so sorry for your great loss. May God Bless you all and may he rest in peace.*



Anthony and Selma Fumarola - March 06 at 10:00 AM

JB

“ *JoAnn Bonacci lit a candle in memory of Mr. James E. "Jim" Feisthamel*



JoAnn Bonacci - March 05 at 10:38 PM

KP

“ I new Jim for a short period of time. I can say he was a very nice guy to hang out with. He was full of stories. Good ones too. Job well done sir. RIP 🙏

Kirk O Parham - March 05 at 06:37 PM

TD

“ Theresa Devereux lit a candle in memory of Mr. James E. "Jim" Feisthamel



Theresa Devereux - March 04 at 06:46 PM

TD

Jim was just amazing man .. he made you feel so at home in his presence...his smile and humor were so contagious. He was so devoted to his wife and best friend Mary Ellen. I never saw two people who loved each more than them. He loved to be with friends and we all loved to be with them. He spent the last few years of his life with such incredible strength and determination to overcome what life had given to him and in all the times I was in his presence he never ever said one word of complain or anything negative. He always made you feel like just being with him and Mare was a blessing but the blessing was ours. He is going to be missed so much and our hearts and prayers will be with Mare and her daughter. We won't leave her alone. Rest in peace with your momma she was l'm sure waiting to take you home to Jesus. Love you big Jim. Tree

Theresa Devereux - March 04 at 06:52 PM

LM

Jim, is someone I called friend, and I thought it amazing that he reciprocated the same sentiment. He seem to know everything about everything. If had a question, he had an insightful answer. Even if it was something I knew rather well, he would add to it. It seem too soon. May GOD give comfort and peace to his entire family, but especially to wife Mary Ellen and daughter Megan.

Larry.

Lawrence March - March 07 at 06:31 PM