

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
James Lee Zamrzla
1939 ~ 2025

MASS OF CHRISTIAN BURIAL
Saint Mary's Queen of Angels Catholic Church
Russell, Kansas
Saturday, December 13, 2025, 10:00 A.M.

CELEBRANT
Father Daryl Olmstead

MUSICIANS
Organist ~ Laurie Jackson
Cantor ~ Melanie Banks

LECTORS
Jamie Princ-Leow Mike Zamrzla

MUSIC SELECTIONS
"In the Garden" "The Old Rugged Cross"
"How Great Thou Art" "Go Silent Friend"

PALL BEARERS
Eugene Zamrzla John Zamrzla Tony Princ
Scott Zamrlza Mike Zamrzla Jimmy Zamrzla

INTERMENT
St. Wenceslaus Catholic Cemetery
Wilson, Kansas

MEMORIALS
St. Mary's Queen of Angels Catholic Church

In Loving Memory



James Lee Zamrzla

January 21, 1939 ~ December 2, 2025

Plumer-Overlease Funeral Homes
Brad Plumer, Larry Foster, Audrey Bell ~ Directors
www.plumeroverlease.com

Remembering...

James Lee Zamrzla died on December 2, 2025, at the Main Street Manor in Russell, Kansas. He spent his final days with his daughter, Christine and her husband Todd. There he found time to share a few stories with them and his brothers and sister and laugh and reminisce a bit. His life will leave an imprint on all those who knew and loved him. His passing will leave a huge hole in all their hearts.



He was born on a cold winter's day January 21, 1939, the first son of James Edward and Mary Ann (Charvat) Zamrzla in a small house in Wilson, Kansas. He married Karen Koerner on January 24, 1962. They had one daughter, Christine.

James grew up on the Charvat family farmstead in Wilson, where his family lived their lives working the land and tending to the farm. He attended a one-room county school in rural Wilson and graduated from Wilson High School in 1957. James went on to further his education at Fort Hays State University.

He was a storyteller at heart. His memories of the "old days" were as vivid and real as if they had just happened. He and his father would spend long Sunday afternoons sitting at the dining room table sharing tales of their past. Jim and his brothers were well known as "The Zamrzla Boys," a name that carried a reputation throughout the community. One of his favorite memories was being part of the state championship team during his senior year. Jim continued sharing stories until the very last day of his life.

Throughout his life, Jim worked hard and with great determination. He began as a surveyor on the crew that laid Interstate 70 through Russell County. He often balanced multiple jobs to provide for his family, including work in the oil fields with Red Tiger, pumping gas at Scotty Richardson's gas station, and the Texaco Station. He also built several homes in Russell while working for Harry Hibshman. He loved buying old cars and fixing them up on the weekends while his daughter stood on the fender and kept him company. His natural ability to connect with people contributed to many years of success as the City Inspector in Russell. He also served as a volunteer with the Russell Fire Department.

The crown jewel of Jim's professional life was the purchase and expansion of Quality Music and Vending in 1974. He and his wife, Karen sometimes worked seven days a week and managed to triple the business in just six short years.

In later years, he worked as a bus driver for the Russell School District—a job he truly loved. Many of his riders were the children of the friends his daughter had grown up with, and he delighted in treating his kids to Dairy Queen or Sonic on the last Friday of each month. It quickly became the envy of every child who didn't ride his bus.

Jim's final job was working on Chet Loving's ranch south of Russell, where he returned to his farming and livestock roots. In retirement, he enjoyed putting around his yard and became known for growing some of the most beautiful flowers on his block. He treasured trips to Colorado to visit his daughter and son-in-law. He loved Sunday football and long rides with his daughter when she would come to visit.

Jim was a faithful member of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Russell from 1962 onward. His faith was of the utmost importance to him. In his later years, he found great comfort in creating relationships with the priests of his parish and prided himself in "Getting good with the Lord." Family. Faith. Friends. Community. These were the pillars of Jim's life, and he lived each of them fully.

Survivors include his daughter, Christine "Kris" and (Todd) Schoech, Salida, Colorado; brothers, Eugene "Goog" (Joan) Zamrzla of Wilson, John (Sharon) Zamrzla, of Wilson; sister, Mary Ann (Frank) Princ, of Wilson; 9 nieces and nephews; his step-daughter Kim (Mark) Ajax, granddaughter Jucynda (Jobe) Hathaway, grandson Derek Ajax, and two great-grandchildren, all of Port Hadlock, Washington.

He was preceded in death by his parents James and Mary Zamrzla, his wife, Vivian, and step-son Kirk Lakenes.