



## James Robert "Jim" Courtney

July 10, 1936 - September 23, 2023

James R. "Jim" Courtney, 87, a retired educator, passed away peacefully in the afternoon of September 23 in Butte with his loving wife Ann Marie by his side. Born July 10, 1936, in Butte to Elizabeth and Edward Courtney, he grew up in the family home on Alabama Street beneath the shadows of the Anselmo mine yard. He attended Immaculate Conception grade school, Boys Central High School and Carroll College where he graduated with a degree in History in 1958. He later earned a master's degree in Adult Education from Montana State University. In 1960, he was drafted into the U.S. Army and stationed at the Rhein-Main Air Base in what was then West Germany. He loved to tell tales of Army life and witnessing history unfold, sharing his first-hand view of the Berlin Wall being erected. He received an honorable discharge from the military in 1962.

He returned to Butte after his military service and began teaching American History and Government to juniors and seniors at Butte High School. A highlight of his teaching career was introducing students to Youth in Government and Model United Nations programs. During his tenure at Butte High School, he served as the chair of the history department, retiring in 2000 after 38 years. He also taught night classes at the former Butte Vo Tech classes for adult special needs, GED preparation and citizenship preparation.

Inspired by John F. Kennedy's 1960 presidential campaign, he became

involved in Democratic politics which became a lifelong passion. In 1964 he met his wife Ann Marie at a Young Democrats' State Convention while serving as vice president of the Butte chapter. His future father-in-law, John Mullany was the keynote speaker at the convention dinner. Following a two-year courtship, they married at St. John the Evangelist church in 1966. In 1967, they welcomed the birth of their first son John and settled on the "flats" near Clark Park where they lived for the next 54 years. Marcus joined the family in 1970.

Jim's commitment to make a difference for the people of Montana led him to campaign for a seat to the Montana House of Representatives in 1976. He won the election and served one two-year term in the legislature. He ran for reelection in 1978, but lost in a close Democratic primary. Despite this loss, he continued political activism serving on the Butte Democratic Central Committee, managing numerous political campaigns in Silver Bow County and attending state Montana Democratic Party conventions.

Jim demonstrated a deep sense of community service by joining numerous local boards for the betterment of the Butte, especially those involving children. He was a founding board member of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Butte and a member of the Butte Catholic Board of Education. Jim served as president of the Butte Historical Society for many years, putting his expertise and love of history to good use. He had a strong Catholic faith, holding lifetime membership in the Knights of Columbus and actively serving on the St. Ann's Parish Council.

He loved travel and enjoyed numerous trips to Europe and achieved his bucket list goal—a Panama Canal cruise. He delighted in frequent visits with his children, grandchildren, and extended family in Seattle. He also looked forward to his twice-yearly trips to Hermiston, Oregon, to visit his sister- and brother-in-law with whom he shared a special bond. Jim enjoyed his Monday-

Friday runs starting at 5:30 a.m. rain or shine. He was especially proud of the bragging rights he earned when temperatures dipped to minus 20 and would come home with a warming mask covered with icicles. He and his father-in-law and good friends thoroughly enjoyed their regular rounds of golf at the Highland View Golf Course which they played nearly every day during golf season.

Jim was very proud of his Irish heritage. He loved Notre Dame football, making numerous trips to South Bend to cheer on the fighting Irish with his brother John. Jim was a strong patriot, and firmly believed in unions as a member of the American Federation of Teachers and the Communications Workers of America and standing up for the working class.

He was predeceased in death by his parents and his brother Fr. Edward Courtney, in-laws John and Mary Mullany and numerous aunts, uncles and cousins. His survivors include his wife Ann Marie, sons John and Marcus, daughters-in-law Valerie Courtney and Monique Thormann; sister-in-law and brother-in-law Carol and Dave Nevin, grandchildren Kevin and Ben Courtney; brothers and sister-in-law; Mike Courtney and John and Agnes Courtney, nieces Cindy Courtney, Ginger Courtney, Courtney Petche, Stacy Bruce, Caitlin Cook, Elouise Cook; nephews Alec Petsche, Spencer Browning and Zane See. After hosting a German high school student, Christian Doerner for an academic year in 1997, a strong bond developed between the Courtney and Doerner families that extended to Christian's parents Brigitte and Heinz and Christian's family Katija Lenzing and sons Anton and Johann.

Visitation will begin at 10:00 a.m. followed by mass at 11:00 a.m. at St. Ann's Parish on Friday September 29. Interment will be at the Holy Cross cemetery. In lieu of flowers please send donations to the James R. Courtney Endowed Scholarship at Carroll College 1601 North Benton, Helena, MT 59625; Big

Brothers Big Sisters, PO Box 62 Butte, MT 59703; or Butte Historical Society,  
PO Box 3913 Butte, MT 59701. Express condolences at [www.wayrynen-richards.com](http://www.wayrynen-richards.com).

# Cemetery Details

## Holy Cross Cemetery

4700 Harrison Avenue  
Butte, MT 59701

# Previous Events

## Visitation

SEP **29**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (MT)

St Ann's Catholic Church  
2100 Farragut Ave  
Butte, MT 59701-6102  
(406) 723-4303

## Funeral Mass

SEP **29**. 11:00 AM (MT)

St. Ann's Catholic Church  
2100 Farragut Avenue  
Butte, MT 59701

# Tribute Wall



“ Wayrynen-Richards Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of James Robert "Jim" Courtney



Wayrynen-Richards Funeral Home - September 29, 2023 at 04:32 PM



“ Ann and family, Sending condolences. Father Haffey told me this morning about the passing of James. I feel it deeply. I'm sorry I missed the service.

Charlotte Moran - October 01, 2023 at 08:07 PM



“ 43 files added to the album Life Tributes



Wayrynen-Richards Funeral Home - September 28, 2023 at 01:09 PM



“ *Ron and I send words of comfort to you all. Wonderful person.  
Friends Ron and Joyce Kuecks*

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**Joyce Kuecks** - September 28, 2023 at 12:00 PM



“ *Ann and family. I'm so sorry to learn of Jim's passing. This is not an  
easy time for all of you. My thoughts and prayers are with you. He  
was a good teacher and I enjoyed his classes and especially visiting  
with him in later years. May he rest in peace. Alana LaRock*

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**Alana LaRock** - September 28, 2023 at 09:26 AM