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James Gerald Nichols

Jul 3, 2022



James Gerald Nichols Photo

CHAMPAIGN — James Gerald (Jerry) Nichols, 88, of Champaign passed away peacefully Wednesday (June 29, 2022) at Carle Foundation Hospital, Urbana.

He was born May 10, 1934, in Scottsburg, Ind., to James Doyle Nichols and Ruby Ethel Arteberry, attended Watseka Community High School and lived in central Illinois most of his life.

When Jerry attended Watseka Community High School, he was a winning mile runner. He attended Blackburn College for two years, where he also worked as a handyman. Then he attended two years at Millikin University before enrolling in the biblical seminary in Evanston.

Jerry served as pastor and co-pastor of several United Methodist churches throughout central Illinois. He began in Latham, then went on to Clifton, Ashkum, Galesburg, Alpha, Milan, Champaign, Manteno, Danville, 13 years in Springfield and 15 years in Bondville. He was the chaplain on staff at Presence Hospital (now OSF Heart of Mary Medical Center) in Urbana until his retirement in 2015.

Jerry's liberal and progressive leanings both politically and theologically caused consternation in some but brought considerable comfort to many. 1 John 4:12 speaks to the heart of his faith: "No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us."

He loved his family and the many friends he accumulated between 1952 and the day he passed from this earthly realm.

Jerry had multiple interests, ranging from World War II history, airplanes of any kind and animals (especially snakes).

He is survived by two brothers, Charles Glen (Sue) Nichols and Lee (Julie) Arthur Nichols; a sister, Valerie Nichols (Taylor); two children, Julie Kay Nichols (Kempe) and Cynthia Jane Nichols (Applegate); two grandchildren, Rachael Violet Barga (Pope) and Matthew James Barga; and one great-grandson, Jayden Matthew Burton.

He was preceded in death by his spouse, Nancy Nichols; his parents, Ruby Ethel Arteberry and James Doyle Nichols; and two brothers, Michael Roy Nichols and Ricky Doyle Nichols.

There will be a service open to everyone at 2 p.m. Thursday, July 7, at Champaign First United Methodist Church, 210 W. Church St., downtown Champaign.

The family requests that monetary donations be made to either Champaign First United Methodist Church or Bondville United Methodist Church.

If you wish to leave condolences for the family or share about Jerry, please visit morganmemorialhome.com.