

**James Broda, 74**  
**Sauk Rapids, MN**  
**Sept. 20, 1941 - April 16, 2016**



Jim Broda, 74, died at Quiet Oaks Hospice House, St. Augusta, on April 16, 2016, after a long battle with Cortical Basal Degeneration, a rare neurodegenerative brain disease.

Jim was born in Brockway Township, Stearns County, to Exzilda (Cekalla) and Joseph Broda on Sept. 20, 1941. He grew up in Opole, where he spent many years helping his parents operate The Broda General Store.

Jim graduated from Holdingford High School in 1959. He later obtained a B.A. degree from St. John's University and a Master of Social Work Degree from the University of Minnesota

Jim married Diane Schmidt in 1961. The marriage later ended in divorce. In 1982 Jim married Karen (Belinski) Petron. Jim and Karen shared a special relationship for many years, which eventually resulted in Karen becoming Jim's loving caregiver. Karen and Jim made their home in Sauk Rapids where they lived in the house built by Karen's grandfather.

Jim spent his entire career at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center where he worked as a nursing assistant, patient advocate, and social worker. After 41 years of service, Jim retired in 2002 as the Chief of Social Work Service. Jim was very dedicated to his work with veterans. He was well liked and respected by both his veteran clients and his co-workers.

In his healthier years Jim participated in amateur baseball, softball, golf, bowling, and hunting. He was one of ten friends who created the Pine Edge Sportsman, Inc., a softball complex north of Sartell that con-

tinues in operation. Together Jim and Karen enjoyed daily walks and visits to the coffee shop. They also enjoyed antiquing and filling their home with their treasures. After retirement they traveled around the country making annual winter trips to visit family members in San Diego and Florida. Road trips were always a favorite activity whether it was a day trip or a ten-week trip from coast to coast.

Jim was a kind, gentle, and caring person who displayed a great deal of compassion for others. He was never in a hurry and found enjoyment in the simple pleasures of life. Jim lived graciously with his illness never complaining and always appreciative of the assistance of others. There are special people in this world chosen to be teachers to the rest of us through their journey. Jim Broda was one of those special people who taught us how to live with dignity and grace in the face of adversity.

Jim is survived by his loving wife and caregiver, Karen Petron-Broda, Sauk Rapids; children Tim (Jane) Broda of Sartell, Debi (Steve) Laakso, Sauk Rapids, and Craig (Cheryl) Broda, South Haven; stepson Sean (Rebekah) Mitsein, Lafayette, Ind.; grandchildren Alysha, Taryn, Amanda, Michael, Selah, Baylee and Jozie; great-grandchildren Aubrey, Miya, Mason, Madison, Theodore, and Loretta; sister Joann (Andy) Heinen, Sartell; brothers and sisters-in-law, John, Sharon, Kurt, and Sarah Belinski; nephews and nieces; and all the Cekalla cousins.

Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 2 p.m. on Fri., April 22, 2016, at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Opole. Father Tony Kroll will officiate. Burial will be in the church cemetery. Visitation will be on Wednesday from 4-8 p.m. at the Williams Dingmann Family Funeral Home in Sauk Rapids and one hour prior to the service at the church on Friday.

Memorials are preferred in lieu of flowers. Please consider a donation to the Quiet Oaks Hospice House where staff and volunteers lovingly cared for both Jim and Karen through the final stage of Jim's journey here on earth. Jim's final gift to the world is the donation of his brain tissue to the Brain Support Network in hopes of gaining knowledge and finding a cure for the devastating disease he so graciously endured.

Obituary and guestbook available online: [www.williamsdingmann.com](http://www.williamsdingmann.com).