



## Joseph James Stonitsch

July 26, 1952 - January 5, 2025

Joseph James Stonitsch passed away on January 5, 2025 after a long series of health difficulties. Joseph was born on July 26, 1952, in Orlando, Florida, to Josephine T. Stonitsch and Harold John Stonitsch, both of whom are deceased.

Joseph, known as Jay to his family and as Joe to his many friends, will be dearly missed. He is predeceased by his older brother Harold (Skip) Stonitsch, and survived by three loving sisters, Mary Jo Zkiab, Clenise White, and Rita Lepinskie. Also surviving are many cousins, nieces, and nephews, including Harold "Hiro" Stonitsch, with whom Joseph had an especially close relationship.

As both child and adult, Joseph lived for years in the Coletta Drive house his father built for the family in Orlando. He attended Bishop Moore Catholic High School in Orlando and the University of Florida in Gainesville, where he majored in English. He also pursued graduate work in literature and writing and in seminary studies. As an active, dedicated member of the Good Shepherd Catholic Church in Orlando, Joseph shared his faith with other life-long members and Bible-study parishioners.

Joseph's working career included a stint on the sales floor of the local Peaches record store, where he made several friends and developed his love

of contemporary—often esoteric—music. He especially enjoyed the music of The Beatles, Kate Bush, and the band XTC, whom he once met at Peaches. Longer term, he worked for the Orange County Tax Collector, where he helped the office manage new processes and technologies.

Joseph was a kind and loving son, brother, uncle, cousin, and friend. He was also a man of rare talents, possessing a brilliant intellect, a wry sense of humor, and bold creative writing skills. As a young adult, Joseph spent many hours with his friend Frank, inventing strange stories and outrageous sketches, and the two men remained close companions, spending countless hours exercising, watching movies, and conversing side by side on the sidewalks of downtown Orlando and on the bike trails of Central Florida. Joseph made frequent weekend trips to Crystal River to visit his Dad and Mom, and then after his Dad's death, he continued to bring comfort and treats to his Mom until her move to Virginia in 2010. A man of compassion and kindness, Joseph also regularly visited several aunts in Orlando in their dying later years. His weekly visits also with his close friend Mike were treasured and continued even as Joseph's health declined. His sister Mary Jo and his cousin Mary Chris remained close to Joseph in their dedicated prayers throughout the years as did many other family members and friends.

Joseph had diverse interests and passions. He was a long-time Orlando Magic season ticket holder and a collector of music, movies, and various memorabilia. He was an excellent photographer, performing professional work as a wedding photographer. He was even the officiator of several weddings for friends and colleagues.

Joseph enjoyed very close, long friendships with Patty, Carol, Chris, Bill, Dee, Doug, David, Kevin, Glenn, and Frank's wife, Jeanne. And he loved beyond measure visits from out-of-state with his sister Rita, as well as long conversations with his sister Glenise. In his later years and in ill health,

Joseph was so grateful for help and care from friends Lori, Julie, and Tara and from the staff of Windsor Place, The Commons, and Cornerstone Hospice in downtown Orlando.

Joe, or Jay, will hold a special, enduring place in the memories of family and friends both near and far.

A Memorial Mass and interment is planned in Wyoming at a later date.

# Tribute Wall

JH

“ I remember meeting Rita’s brother. he was quite an interesting individual. I’ve spoken to him many times through the years and he always had something interesting going on.

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**john honer** - January 07, 2025 at 10:16 PM

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*It's difficult to realize that our friend, Jay, has departed this life for a heavenly one. His folks, Harold and Jo Stonitsch were some of the first parishioners of Good Shepherd Parish we met after moving to Orlando in 1975. They were such dear people - and not long after that we met some other family members - Rita and Jay. Rita soon moved, but Jay continued living in Orlando. He was an active member of the Horizon Young Adult Group at Church which I led back in the day. We kept in touch through the years, and I was heartbroken to hear of Jay's declining health. Once you met Jay, you couldn't forget him. He was brilliant, witty, caring, and a forever friend. Jay's memory will continue to linger on in the minds and hearts of so many people. Bob & Carol Schonefeld*

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**Carol Schonefeld** - January 11, 2025 at 05:29 PM