



James "Rico" Synowiec

December 16, 1947 - January 22, 2024

IN MEMORY OF:

James "Rico" Synowiec

Serving Location:

CRAIN FUNERAL HOME – ANNA

135 West Vienna Street, Anna, Illinois

James "Rico" Synowiec, 76, of Lick Creek, Illinois, passed away suddenly on January 22, 2024. James was a son, brother, uncle and friend who left an indelible mark on the hearts of those who knew him. He was born on December 16, 1947, to loving parents Walter J. and Rosalie (Pawlicki) Synowiec in Chicago.

He is survived by his devoted brother, Marion (Ann) Synowiec, who held a special place in his heart. In addition to the cherished memories they created together, James leaves behind three adoring nieces, Kelly Ann (Bill) Moroney, Amy Catherine Synowiec, and Gayle Marie (Kevin) Peneschi, who brought immense joy and love into his life. He also was the proud Great Uncle to Chloe, Liam, Evan and Virginia.

His mother raised both him and his brother as a single mother after the sudden passing of their father in 1959. James attended Lane Tech High

School, college at Southern Illinois University (SIU), was drafted and honorably discharged from the Army, and later earned his Master's Degree in Sociology. Drawn to the quietude and simplicity of nature, James chose to make Southern Illinois his permanent home and eventually even returned to the SIU campus to complete a fulfilling career for 20 years as a Union painter.

He chose to live his life surrounded by the serene beauty of the Shawnee National Forest that he so dearly cherished. James was a man of diverse interests and experiences. He spent his free time turkey hunting, working on the Hall farm with friends, and creating lasting memories with his family. He was a renowned turkey hunter and was featured multiple times in newspapers for his hunting skills. James also enjoyed traveling, making memories and friends wherever he went. James was additionally a true animal enthusiast, later in life known for always keeping dog biscuits handy for any cherished puppy dogs he encountered. His beloved animal companions were never without their cherished treats.

Known for his captivating storytelling, James had a unique talent for narrating tales in various voices, leaving his audience captivated and entertained. He faced life with resilience, acknowledging his past decisions but never letting them define him. James was a pillar of support for his family, always willing to lend a helping hand and fostering deep connections with friends who became his extended family.

Despite living alone within the embrace of the Shawnee National forest, James sought the company of others while always cherishing his solitude. Technology might have posed a challenge for him, but his ability to connect on a personal level was unparalleled. He was extremely fortunate to have two families that loved him. He had an immediate blood family in Chicago and his second family in Southern Illinois that knew him as Rico since 1967. He maintained a close bond with his only brother, speaking with him weekly, and

held onto the values instilled by his mother and his Polish heritage. He was proud of his family and would defend his friends beyond measure.

In honoring the memory of James, let us celebrate a life well-lived—a life marked by love, resilience, and a profound connection with nature. May his spirit find eternal peace in the vast landscapes he so dearly adored.

Remembering James with a heart full of gratitude for the moments we shared. May the essence of his being linger in our hearts, guiding us toward a life filled with purpose and love.

A family hosted Celebration of Life in Southern Illinois will be held on Saturday February 10th at 5:00 PM at The Great Boars of Fire.

Inurnment will take place at Saint Adalbert Cemetery in Niles, Illinois on Saturday March 30th at 11:00 AM with a Celebration of Life to follow.

Crain Funeral Home, Anna, Illinois is in charge of funeral arrangements.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

FEB **10**. 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM (CT)

Great Boars of Fire
Cobden, IL

Inurnment

MAR **30**. 11:00 AM - 11:30 PM (cst)

Saint Adalbert Cemetery
Niles, IL

Inurnment Followed By Celebration of Life

MAR **30**. 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM (cst)

Saint Adalbert Cemetery
Niles, IL

Tribute Wall

RG

“ Jimmy and I first met in 1967 at the Pyramids, a SIU student residence. We became roommates there and again at Linda Vista apartments on the east side of Carbondale. Born and raised in southern Illinois, I was an ardent hunter and fisherman and shared many of my old haunts with Jimmy where we hunted geese, ducks, quail and doves. The wild turkeys Jimmy loved to hunt were not reintroduced to the Shawnee Forest until years after we graduated. On weekends we would often visit my grandmother in Buckner, Illinois and sometimes shoot pigeons (“Buckner grouse” Jimmy called them) around the abandoned coal mines east of town. We were both snatched away by the US Army soon after graduating, but kept in touch after leaving the military. Our mutual love of the outdoors led us on many adventures afield down through the years. And when the ducks weren’t flying, Jimmy, in true raconteur form, would entertain all present with his humorous anecdotes about life and the characters he met along the way. He was more like a brother than a friend, a close bond developed through many shared experiences during our lifetime. His boundless sense of humor and talented storytelling gave me great joy. To say that I will miss him is an understatement. Godspeed my brother, and keep the campfire burning and the coffee hot, I’ll be along soon enough to join you in the Happy Hunting Grounds. Richard Grozik, Kalispell, Montana

Richard Grozik - February 24, 2024 at 03:15 PM

TB

“ My cousin Rico was one of those larger than life people who come along very rarely in life. His happy go lucky attitude, charm and storytelling ability made many a day brighter-and made mundane days memorable.

Way back when, he got me into John Prine and Bob Dylan, taught my brother and me to duck, goose , turkey and pheasant hunt, and served me my first legal public drink at Jay’s on Rush Street.

One of my best memories is sitting my first time in a duck blind with him and my brother Tim watching the sunrise turn the sky a most glorious color....

They say that you get to choose your friends, but not your family I was blessed with brothers and cousins I would have chosen anytime to be family, and Jimmy was one of my cousins who were more like brothers.

Godspeed cousin brother, I hope you’re reunited with the whole family, and that there are plenty of turkeys in the woods of heaven. Gonna miss you....

Tom “Caesar” Brindisi - February 08, 2024 at 11:40 AM

TI

“ Dearest cousin
Buddy friend and most integral part of my life
Cousin Tim

Tim - February 05, 2024 at 12:50 AM

LW

“ Jim was our best man at our wedding 55 years ago Lou went to grammar school through some college with him. Also did pheasant hunting in southern Illinois. Great guy and friend. RIP Jim. ❤️❤️🙏



Lynn Waycuilis - February 03, 2024 at 02:50 PM

SV

“ Stephen V. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James "Rico" Synowiec.

Stephen V. - February 03, 2024 at 10:19 AM