

Helms Funeral Home

Jim Busta

(December 23, 1947 - July 24, 2024)

Jim Busta age 76, of Onalaska, WI, passed away on Wednesday, July 24, 2024, at his home surrounded by his family.



Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 10:30 a.m., Monday, July 29, 2024, at Our Lady of Seven Dolors Catholic Church in Festina, Iowa, with Rev. Henry Huber officiating. Burial will be in the church cemetery with full military rites.

Visitation will be from 2:00-6:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 28, 2024, at the Festina Community Center. There will be a scripture service starting at 6:00 p.m. following the visitation.

There will be no visitation prior to the service on Monday morning. A eulogy for Jim will begin at 10:10 a.m. before the mass. Attendees are asked to please come in and be seated before the Eulogy.

Sun, July 28, 2024, 2:00-6:00 visitation

Sun, July 28, 2024, 6:00 prayer service

Mon, July 29, 2024, 10:10 reading of the eulogy

Mon, July 29, 2024, 10:30 Funeral Mass

In lieu of flowers: the family requests monetary donations which will be paid forward to non-profit organizations of the family's wishes.

James "Jim" Busta was the 9th child born to Edward and Elizabeth (Heley) Busta on December 23, 1947. He was raised just south of Little Turkey, Iowa.

In the words of Jim, "I had a great family growing up - lots of love, food, faith, neighbors and friends. My family all enjoyed music, especially polka music. I really enjoyed going to the Inwood Ballroom."

He attended the local public school, graduated from Turkey Valley High School in 1966, and graduated with his bachelor's degree in education in 1970 from Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa. He later completed two master's degrees.

Upon signing a teaching contract with LaSalle High School in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Jim was drafted into the US Army, stationed at Ft. Leonard

Wood, Missouri in 1971. After serving in the Army, he was an active member of the American Legion.

After meeting the love of his life, Mary Lou Wenthold, at a dance at the Inwood Ballroom in Spillville, Iowa, they tied the knot on October 9, 1971, at Our Lady of Seven Dolors Catholic Church in Festina, Iowa.

Upon his discharge from the US Army in the fall of 1972, Jim and Mary Lou moved to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where Jim resumed his teaching position at LaSalle High School. He had various coaching positions at LaSalle: freshman football; freshmen boys basketball; sophomore football; wrestling; and varsity girls basketball (started the program in 1973). He was named "coach of the year" multiple times.

In 1978, Jim was hired as High School Principal for the Edgewood-Colesburg School District. Eight years later Jim took on the role of Superintendent of Schools in Spring Grove, MN, where he worked for 25 years.

Together Jim and Mary Lou raised a family of four children: Lisa, Chad, Mollie, and Jason. All of the children graduated from Spring Grove High School, while Jim was Superintendent.

Jim always had a love of music, and taught himself to play button accordion, then the concertina. This led to the formation of the "Jim Busta Band," which included several musicians in the 45 years of its existence. The family members all participated to some degree. The band performed in 13 states, in 4 countries, on cruise ships in the Caribbean, and on multiple national television shows. Additionally, Jim and Mary Lou danced on Clint Eastwood's Movie, "The Mule."

Jim and Mary Lou also started a small travel company leading groups to Europe several times from 2000-2018 and led many bus trips to Branson during the Christmas season.

In 2013, Jim and Mary Lou moved to Onalaska, Wisconsin to be near their grandchildren, Kennedy, Xavier, and Jayden. Jim enjoyed his retired life which included multiple hobbies - the band, woodworking, entertaining on polka cruises, and the building of his multi-level treehouse, to name a few.

Jim is survived by his wife, Mary Lou Busta of 52 years of Onalaska, WI; four children: Lisa Busta of Stewartville, MN; Chad (Amanda) Busta of Onalaska, WI; Mollie (Ted Lange) Busta of Tomah, WI; Jason (Jenni) Busta of Blaine, MN. Five grandchildren: Kennedy Busta, Xavier Busta, Jayden Busta, Josie Busta, Camryn Busta; step-granddaughter Alli Dean; sister, Darlene Gebel of New Hampton, IA; sisters-in-laws: Geraldine Busta, Angie Busta, Karen Busta, Sandy Busta, Shirely Bohr, Mary Ann Wenthold, Sandy Wenthold; brothers-in-laws: Terry Wenthold, LeRoy Bohr; and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents: Edward and Elizabeth Busta; four brothers, Edward Busta Jr., Walter Busta, Bernie Busta, Arnie Busta; three sisters: Lorraine Panos, Gladys Balik, Betty Busta; Father-in-Law Herbert Wenthold; Mother-in-Law Mildred (Einck) Wenthold; Step-

Mother-in-Law Helen (Sbiral); and Brothers-in-law: Larry Wentholt, Richard Balik, Frank Gebel, Ed Panos.

“For every tear that is shed today, I want to see two smiles.” - Jim Busta

“It’s a good day to be alive.” - Jim Busta