



## James Fitzgerald Hirsch

February 14, 1930 - April 26, 2021

James Fitzgerald Hirsch passed away peacefully Monday, April 26, 2021, at Community Hospice, Baptist South Medical Center in Jacksonville, Florida, at the age of 91, with his family by his side.

Born on Valentine's Day 1930, he was the son of Oscar Christian and Geraldine Fitzgerald Hirsch.

He was a graduate of Cape Girardeau Central High School and was editor of the Tiger school newspaper. He earned a degree in political science and another in electrical engineering from Washington University in St. Louis. In college, he was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon and lettered on the tennis team.

He joined the Air Force and served the country for four years. He was a pilot of multi-engine planes and worked as a specialist in the intelligence unit. He served both stateside and in Korea.

After his military service, IBM in Kingston, New York, hired him to design circuitry, which would become the components of early computers.

He met his wife when he went to Kiel Auditorium in St. Louis to hear a 1,000-voice choir perform. From his vantage point in the audience, he spotted a young woman on stage. He said to his friend with him, "Do you know who that is? She's pretty." God is quite the matchmaker because his friend knew only one person in the enormous choir - Beverly Stukenbroeker.

They fell in love and were married on June 16, 1956, in St. Charles, Missouri. This June would mark 65 years of marriage.

They married while he was still in engineering school and Beverly was teaching music in the Ladue, Missouri, school system in St. Louis county. Daughter Jeannie was born in Kingston. Their daddy-daughter relationship was more special than words could express. As Mom and Dad, James and Beverly always said their "greatest blessing from God" was their daughter. James came back to Cape in 1960 to join his father and brother, Bob, in the Hirsch Broadcasting Company, KFVS Radio and KFVS-TV, a CBS Affiliate. A lifelong member of First Presbyterian Church in Cape, he served as an elder.

He was elected to the Cape Girardeau School Board and served 14 years. He was board president in 1980. He joined the Cape Girardeau Lions Club and was elected president in 1983. Lions Club International gave him the Melvin Jones Fellow Award for humanitarian services. He always came home from meetings enthusiastic about the informative programs and the fellowship with other Lions.

He also served for many years on the Cape Girardeau Park Board and the Cape Girardeau Country Club Board.

He was proud of his many community responsibilities, but his pride and joy was always his family life.

To his family, he was an amazing husband, Dad and Grandpa, who taught his family to love learning and to be in constant awe of God's creations.

Perhaps his favorite place on the planet was Sequoia National Park in California. He ran the math to show his family how one branch of General Sherman was wider in diameter than some of the largest tree trunks in Missouri.

His love of trees and nature came from passionate self-study. He could recognize just about any type of tree from its bark pattern or leaf shape. He collected acorns from around the country and planted them at home. A majestic Shumard oak stands tall now in front of his former home in Cape. With his engineering skills, he built a large greenhouse for his bonsai trees, tropical plants and collection of hundreds of orchids. (His orchid collection and

other plants were donated in 2018 to the Southeast Missouri State University Department of Agriculture.)

His family treasures the times they'd get up in the wee hours to see the exotic night blooming cereus show off a rare bloom.

He was a master at woodworking. He carved an entire chess set, every pawn smooth as satin.

His granddaughter, Katie, says, "Grandpa taught me that's it's all in the details...in life and in woodworking. He would get out his ruler and measure down to 1/16th of inch, making every project perfect. He taught me to enjoy the beautiful, tiny details of an orchid flower and the rich grain of different hardwoods. I can still hear him patiently explaining to me the differences between a series and a parallel circuit. I still go back to his detailed explanations. Grandpa also instilled in me the value of family. He spent so much time loving us and he was always there cheering us on. Thank you, Grandpa, for being so invaluable to my life."

With his grandson, Carson, he loved building and flying model rockets. Carson says, "Anyone who knew Grandpa knew he had a never-ending curiosity for, well, everything. While I was growing up, he was 100 into whatever it may be that I was doing, from rocket flying to golf. He was just as likely to explain how plant pollination worked as he was to diagram out an electrical circuit for a 10-year-old me, who had no idea what was going on but was just happy to be there. He'd get this brightness in his eyes when he got going, and that's something I'll always value. That playful inquisitiveness is something I like to pride myself on, and I know exactly where it came from. Grandpa will always be with me."

His hobbies also included photography, tennis and golf. He loved playing golf for years in the Tuesday Round Robin at the Cape Girardeau Country Club with his great friends. And he was quite proud of his hole-in-one!

To his friends he was always uplifting, praising them with kind words and treating everyone with a gentle spirit.

He is survived by his wife, Beverly Hirsch, and his daughter, Jeanne Hirsch Blaylock (William Jr.) Lyle; twin grandchildren, Anna Katherine Blaylock and Carson Michael Blaylock; stepgranddaughter, Erika McCord; sister, Marjorie Hirsch (Keith) Deimund; sisters-in-law, Marianna W. Stukenbroeker and Claralee Hawn Hirsch; and many loving nieces, nephews and cousins. He was preceded in death by his parents and his brother, Robert Oscar Hirsch.

James' family is grateful for his faith in Christ because they know - without a doubt - he is in Heaven now. They will see him again, and then they will be together forever.

Visitation will be from 10 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Thursday at First Presbyterian Church in Cape Girardeau.

A celebration of life service will be at 11 a.m. at the church with Rev. Ellen Gurnon officiating.

Memorial gifts may be sent to First Presbyterian Church, P.O. Box 477, Cape Girardeau, MO 63702.

Ford and Sons Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Online condolences can be made at [fordandsonsfuneralhome.com](http://fordandsonsfuneralhome.com).

# Cemetery Details

**Cape County Memorial Park**

## Previous Events

### Visitation

MAY **20**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

First Presbyterian Church  
PO Box 477  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63702

### Funeral Service

MAY **20**. 11:00 AM (CT)

First Presbyterian Church  
PO Box 477  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63702

# Tribute Wall

LH

“ Beverly & Jeanne so sorry for your loss. He was such a wonderful man. He will be missed by many. Prayers & Hugs LaDonna Hengst(FamousBarr)

LaDonna Hengst - May 25, 2021 at 05:43 PM

RH

“ I first got to know Jim when we were partners in the men's Tuesday Round Robin at the Cape Girardeau Country Club. He took me as his guest to the PGA Golf Tournament in St Louis that year. As the years passed, he and Gus Birk were always formidable foes as golf partners. Everyone was amazed at Jim's putting style and success. Later, I had the privilege of joining Jim and others as a part of the "Little Men Thursday Lunch group at the Country Club. He was a delight to know and be with at all times. My prayers are with all of you in your loss. Ron Hahs

Ron Hahs - May 20, 2021 at 11:43 AM



“ Divine Light was purchased for the family of James Fitzgerald Hirsch.



May 19, 2021 at 09:44 AM

DA

“ I worked for this beautiful family as bookkeeper for KGIR from '79 to '85 and loved them all. Jim was always smiling when he came by the station and had such a kind and gentle spirit. I have wonderful memories from my time with the Hirsch family. He will be missed. Prayers for the family.

*Debbie (Sanders) Anderson*

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**Deborah Anderson** - May 18, 2021 at 09:07 AM

FH

“ Jim was always kind and pleasant, even when equipment at the station didn't work as expected. May he rest in peace and you all be comforted. Prayerfully,  
*Rev. John Harth, KFVS-TV and radio reporter/anchor, 1974-'81*

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**Fr. John Harth** - May 15, 2021 at 02:45 PM