

James Cragan



James G. Cragan, 74 ROCKFORD - James G. Cragan, 74, died Friday, Aug. 20, 2010, at his home in Orlando, Fla., after a lengthy battle with meta-static cancer.

Born Oct. 2, 1935, to Clarence G. and Florence McDonnell Cragan, the Rockford native married Angela Frankovich on May 14, 1960, in St. Patrick Catholic Church. After graduating from St. Thomas High School in 1953, he spent three years in the U.S. Marine Corps. On Oct. 1, 1957, he joined the Rockford Fire Department, where he served for 24 years. After eight years as chief of the department, he retired upon appointment as the founding chief of Orange County Fire Rescue in Orlando.

His desire for knowledge and learning pushed him beyond his education at Rock Valley College to earn B.S. and M.S. degrees in business education from Northern Illinois University. He was the first active Rockford firefighter to receive a bachelor's degree.

After five years with Orange County, he devoted the end of his professional career to his true passion: teaching. He enriched fire-safety education for eight years as the fire science coordinator for Chippewa Valley Technical College in Eau Claire, Wis.

Survivors include his wife, Angela; children, Michael G. (Michelle), Colleen M. and Patrick M. (Laurie); grandchildren, Jessica Polk, Thomas, Anna and Christopher Cragan and Allison Huss.

Also survived by his siblings, June E. (Charles) Bratina of Winnebago, John F. (Elizabeth) Cragan of Minneapolis, Joseph M. (Barbara) Cragan of Barrington, Mary L. (Dennis) Arnold of Rockford; beloved aunt, Georgia McDonnell Caccia; and extended family and friends.

Predeceased by his parents; and daughter, Maureen. A memorial Mass will be at 11 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 18, in the Cathedral of St. Peter, with the Rev. William R. Wentink officiating.

The family was assisted by Fitzgerald Funeral Home & Crematory, Riverside Chapel, 3910 N. Rockton Ave. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Florida Hospital Cancer Institute, 2501 N. Orange Ave., Orlando, FL 32804; or Illinois Fire Chiefs Educational and Research Foundation, P.O. Box 7, Skokie, IL 60076.

Express condolences or share memories at www.fitzgeraldfh.com.
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See more at: <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/rrstar/obituary.aspx?n=james-cragan&pid=145246564#sthash.rEU5ECSQ.dpuf>