

James W. Thuente has been a member of the Nativity Men's Club Board for over 22 years (elected June 12, 1986). He served as Vice-President (1989-90), President (1990-91) and Past-President (1991-92). He helped run the Raffle, the Grande Ole Days Beer booth, the Father/Son and Mother/Daughter Breakfasts, the Dues Committee and with great enthusiasm, the Cribbage Tournament. With the Murray's, Casper's, O'Connell's, Foley's and White's he and Colleen helped run the Parish Dance back in the 80's and 90's. He has been the cook for the President's party, the Stag, the fall and spring meetings and for any of the occasions the Parish or School has asked the Men's Club to provide grillers. Jim and Colleen have offered up their lake home more than once for the annual Summer Retreat. It was the location of one of the Men's Club's most famous events, Fr. Kelley's hex on Dan Murray. Don't sit too close to him now. And of course, Jim has been a member of Nativity I softball for as long as Dan Murray can remember...over 20+ years.

Jim and Colleen also co-Chaired the Roger Boland Nativity Couples Golf Outing with the Murray's, Garvey's and Bray's. The following entry comes from the June 11, 1998 Minutes:

PROJECT STATUS . . .

Golf Outing - After urging me to "get this in the minutes", Dan Murray switched into his teaching mode, and gave this moving soliloquy on the history of his and Jim Thuente's involvement with the golf tournament: "About six years ago, after drinking 43 Beck's Darks in an hour and a half, Jim said to me, let's run the golf tournament. As I had been keeping up beer for beer with Jim, I immediately volunteered with my wife (who was not within earshot) to run the tournament the following year. Later, Fr. Pat who was also trying his best to keep up with Jim, announced that the Thuente's and Murrays would run the golf tournament for the next 25 years or until their livers gave out, whichever came first. The rest is history."

Jim was a leader who volunteered for whatever needed to get done. Jim was the guy that showed-up; which is a much valued trait. If we needed a Parish Dance ticket taker or bartender, a Tree Lot tree unloader, stacker or seller, a new board member welcomer, a Board Meeting cigar-procurer, an ambassador, a Raffle caller, a Stag dishwasher, a Donut Sunday deliverer, Jim was there. He was always one of the first to step up when the call went out for volunteers, the first to show up and the last to leave. Even, this last year, with the help of family, Jim was the biggest salesman at the Tree Lot. Over the past decade, his experience, knowledge, and wisdom helped our Board tackle many procedural and mission related issues. He was extremely passionate about and protective of the mission of the Men's Club. He would debate to the end to protect and preserve what he felt was the right thing to do. With a volunteer Board that changes over the years, Jim provided the stability which helped make this organization great. During some contentious times in the late 90's Jim along with other "past presidents" were the backbone of the Nativity Men's Club and help steer it back on course.

Lest we forget, Jim and Colleen were also the Co-Chairs of the vast Thuente Wreath Empire in which their urchins sold record numbers of wreaths, swags and garland. They taught their children the valuable lesson of combining of service and fun. And a little lesson on salesmanship.

One thing that is not well known about Jim was his strong relationship with both Fr. Lannan and Fr. Kelley. Jim and Fr. Lannan used to eat breakfast all the time at the rectory and had a natural friendship. Fr. Lannan and Jim frequently talked about the Church and school and they kept the pulse on the Parish. Jim also had a very close and positive relationship with Fr. Kelley. When Fr. Kelley was getting his first and second rounds of chemo treatments Jim would go and play cribbage with him to help pass the time and give support. Later, as his health was failing, the visits continued to the end.

Jim and Colleen's service to Nativity did not end at the Men's Club. They also served as steering committee members and Chairs of the County Fair, mentors to seminarian deacons prior to priesthood and Colleen's was President of the Gal's Club. This is just a small listing of all the volunteer work Jim and Colleen have and are doing for Nativity.

Everything you need to know about Jim is summarized in the April 13, 1989 Board Meeting Minutes. When Jim's was nominated for the position of Men's Club Vice-President the vote was 12-1. The only "no" vote was Jim's. And yet, in humility, he served as Vice-President, President and served the Men's Club for 19 more years.

Jim's induction into the Tree Lot Hall of Fame does not seem equal to all that Jim has meant to the Men's Club, but, it's all we got. In a sense though, the Tree Lot represents our biggest, most visible, most fun, most work, most workers needed, and family friendliest event we have. In that sense, it perfectly symbolizes what Jim has meant to the Men's Club. A Toast to Jim Thunte.