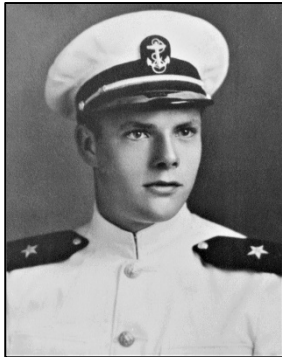


Dr. James J. Abeler, Sr.

October 27, 1924 – November 11, 2021



Dr. James Joseph Abeler, Sr., 97, completed his earthly mission at 0710 on Veteran's Day 2021. The World War II Navy pilot reported to his Commander-In-Chief in heaven on November 11, passing away peacefully at his home in Coon Rapids, Minnesota immersed in the love and care of family and friends.

Jim was born in St. Paul, MN on October 27, 1924, to George and Margaret (Marien) Abeler. His youthful interests included violin and iceboating, for which he built his own craft. He graduated from St. Paul Harding High School in 1942 and upon turning eighteen enlisted into the Navy. Lieutenant "Sunny Jim" Abeler served for 32 months, flying fighters off the USS Randolph in support of naval campaigns over Okinawa, Iwo Jima, and Tokyo.

Jim's next mission took him to Logan Chiropractic College in St. Louis, Missouri and then back to Minnesota in 1949. Two years later he opened the Abeler Chiropractic Clinic in Anoka in an upstairs office of the theater building. Soon afterwards a young and handsome "Dr. Abeler" met a young and vivacious school teacher named Vivian Sanderson. Jim and "Sandy" were married on May 23, 1953, and over the next eight years were blessed with a daughter and five sons.

In addition to restoring the health of thousands as a pioneer chiropractor, Jim was a faithful provider for his family in their home on the Mississippi River. Jim encouraged his children as a Scoutmaster, sailor, and ski boat operator, helping them launch through assistance with tuition, first cars, and hands-on-help on numerous building projects. He also led family excursions to a VFW resort on Lake Minnetonka's Big Island, family camps at Camp Lebanon, and to southwest Florida, where in 1985 they moved into a seasonal home in Cape Coral. Jim's passion for flight never waned, inspiring ownership in a Beechcraft Sundowner and a final trip back to Pensacola Naval Base in 2019 for a special meeting with the Blue Angels.

Though raised in devout, God-fearing homes, it was not until 1964 that both Jim and Sandy realized the joy of unmerited salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. Before long Jim was active in his faith teaching Sunday School and distributing Bibles for Gideons International. He also became a valued volunteer at Camp Lebanon, where in 2017 he was honored as a "Camp Legend" for his tireless work installing irrigation, screeding concrete, and rocking fireplaces.

Wonderful memories of this devoted husband, kind father, and generous friend will be forever cherished by Sandy, his wife of sixty-eight-and-a-half years; six children: Jim II (Barb) of Anoka, Jon (Masumi) of Roseville, Liz (John) Blaylock of Coon Rapids, Bill (Lisa) of Burtrum, Steve (Kimla) of Anoka, and Dave (Brenda) of Coon Rapids; twenty-four grandchildren; twelve great-grandchildren; foster daughter Dorothy Gilk and three foster grands; and countless friends. Jim was preceded in death by his parents, sister Betty Stodola, in-laws Monte and Lily Sanderson, and grandson Josiah Abeler.

Friends and family are invited to celebrate Jim's life on Saturday, December 4, 2021, at First Baptist Church in Anoka with visitation at 1 PM and memorial service at 2 PM. In lieu of flowers, please direct memorials to Camp Lebanon by mail (1205 Acorn Road, Burtrum, MN 56318) or online at www.camplebanon.org/donate.

Special thanks to grandson Jude, in-home caregivers Patti and Karen, and to the many family and friends who lovingly cared for Jim in his final year. Thank you, too, to grandson Matthew for capturing Jim's life, voice, and Navy history in a 30-minute video interview that can be viewed online at this link: <https://youtu.be/iaswzCuGbY8>.