



James Altounian

February 14, 1937 - September 27, 2024

James Altounian, 87, who ran his eponymous building firm for decades and who balanced hard work with a passion for Chicago sports and restoring antique wooden boats, died on September 27, 2024 in Lake Forest, his home since 1963.

After graduating from Augustana College in 1959, he went to work for Peterson Brothers Builders as a carpenter before moving into an office management role. He became a partner in 1970, and the firm was renamed Peterson Altounian Builders. When Bill Peterson retired a decade later, Altounian took over the company, which became Altounian Builders. All four of his children worked with him there.

“He was proud of what he achieved through hard work, and he stressed that we all needed to do the same,” said his son Todd Altounian. “He loved what he did, and we all wanted to be a part of what he created.”

“He led us and taught us by his example,” added his son Jamie Altounian. “All of his clients adored and respected him because they weren't just customers to him. He genuinely loved getting to know them and working with them.”

Altounian was strongly committed to civic works in Lake Forest. A two-term alderman, he served as chairman of the Forest Park Beach Shoreline

Restoration project, which brought about a much-improved beach for residents in 1987. He worked on the Plan Commission and even spent time as a volunteer firefighter. Altounian was also a board member at Northwestern Lake Forest Hospital and Lake Forest Country Day School.

A passionate sports fan, Altounian was one of the longest-living season-ticket holders of the Chicago Bears, even watching the team back in its Wrigley Field days. His top sports memory was watching the Bears' Super Bowl victory in New Orleans with his wife, Audrey, in 1986.

Applying his craftsman's skills to a hobby, Altounian restored nearly a dozen antique wooden boats by hand. His passion for building boats started in 1960, when he constructed one out of a kit; it ended up so big that he couldn't get it out of the Garfield Park Boathouse in Chicago. He loved hosting antique boat clubs as well as driving to boat shows to display his wares.

In Lake Forest, he could be found just about any morning at Egg Harbor Café, swapping stories and playing cards with longtime friends. He also enjoyed any time spent with his 11 grandchildren, all of whom grew up in Lake Forest. They were captivated by his stories of his boyhood in Chicago, his sense of humor and his ability to make quarters appear magically from behind his ears.

He was married for 63 years to Audrey Schaubert Altounian, who survives him, along with his children Jennifer Altounian Bianchi (Peter Bianchi), Todd Everett Altounian (Claudia), Nicole Marie Altounian (Thomas Carrabine) and James Altounian II (Jennifer), and 11 grandchildren. He is preceded in death by his sister, Beverly Tunney, who died in 2002.

A Memorial Service will be held on Friday, October 4, 2024 at 1 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church of Lake Forest, 700 N. Sheridan Road, Lake Forest, Illinois. The service will be livestreamed at <https://firstchurchlf.online.church/> .

Interment will be private.

Donations in his honor can be made to Northwestern Memorial Foundation
Lake Forest Hospital 1000 N. Westmorland Drive, Lake Forest, IL 60045 or
City of Lake Forest Paramedic Fund c/o Lake Forest Fire Dept. 255 W.
Deerpath, Lake Forest IL 60045.

For more information – Reuland & Turnbough Funeral Directors of Lake
Forest, (847) 234-9649 or www.RTfunerals.com.

Cemetery Details

Lake Forest Cemetery

1525 North Lake Road
Lake Forest, IL 60045

Previous Events

Memorial Service

OCT 4. 1:00 PM (CT)

First Presbyterian Church of Lake Forest
700 North Sheridan Road
Lake Forest, IL 60045

Tribute Wall



“ *Reuland & Turnbough Funeral Home created a Service Livestream in memory of James Altounian*



Reuland & Turnbough Funeral Directors of Lake Forest - October 01, 2024 at 11:12 AM

KA

“ *Much love* ❤️



Kari Amundson - October 22, 2024 at 06:59 AM

KA

“ *To Audrey and family, Jim was a Lake Forest treasure. I loved seeing him every morning chatting with his buddies about business. He truly loved his craft, his wife, family and community. I will miss seeing his cheerful demeanor in town. Much love & hugs to all. He was a treasure* ❤️

Kari Amundson - October 22, 2024 at 06:57 AM

SS

“ *Wonderful person who was loved by all*

sam skinner - October 04, 2024 at 11:45 AM

KC

“ *The fun began when the Altounians moved down the street on Westminster. Tennis and dancing were staples at the Altounians. Jim was always going going going! One year, Jim and Audrey invited me to join them in Montego Bay! It was picture perfect! I vividly remember Jim being in the infinity pool overlooking the bay, soaking up the sun and solitude. It was so peaceful! Thank you Jim for all of the memories over the decades! You will be missed! xoxo*
Kathy Carney

Kathy Carney - September 30, 2024 at 10:55 PM