

Rev. James Walker Evans

Born: 1930, St Louis

Died: 2/6/2013 in
Buffalo

Period of Service Korea
Army

Sources: Obituary,
Cemetery

His parents were Alma Fenn and Charles DeFrance Evans. He married Margaret Bolsterli, and they had two children, Dr. Stephen Evans, and Dr. Elizabeth Evans Sachs, both of whom live in Buffalo with their families.

He attended Princeton University where sang in the Chapel choir and in various musical groups, but graduated from the University of Missouri where he had been in Naval ROTC. Following graduation he enlisted in the Army.

After his Army tour he attended the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, California. His first church post was in rural eastern Missouri. In 1961 he entered the civil rights fray as a Freedom Rider, for which he was jailed for several days in Jackson, Mississippi. He and his fellow Freedom Riders were a group of Episcopal priests, which got national coverage in newsmagazines, thereby illustrating how "mainline" the civil rights movement had become. It forced the Kennedy Administration's Justice Department to enforce existing federal laws banning segregation on interstate buses.

He later served at parishes in St. Louis, including Christ Church cathedral, and Champaign, IL.

He first visited the island in 1942 from a sailing trip down Door County from Strawberry Island. His parents were friends with Dr. Rutledge who moved to the Island from St. Louis in the early 60's, and they rented the Rutledge cottage on Detroit Harbor. In 1962, his parents and he and wife Margaret bought the Jess cottage on Detroit Harbor, and came up every summer to enjoy the Island. With Margaret, Jim founded Kirkevik, an arts-based retreat center on the Island which gave the Island a chance to hear noted musicians. Eventually he and his wife moved to the Island where they spent several years as year round residents. To be close to their children they moved to Buffalo several years ago.