

We are happy to name Jim Rasmussen as the 58th inductee in the Marshfield's 150: Heroes and Leaders, Past and Present register. Jim was nominated by his son, Rick Rasmussen.

James Albert (Jim) Rasmussen was born October 24, 1925 to Albert James and B. Eunice (Drollinger) Rasmussen in Marshfield. He was educated in the Marshfield schools, excelling in band, and graduated in 1943. Following graduation he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Forces as an Airman Cadet. In June 1945, near the end of his training, he married Iris Hederer, his high school sweetheart. Iris moved to Amarillo and worked on the base where Jim was stationed. A few months later in September 1945 the war came to an end. Jim was honorably discharged from service and he and Iris moved to Madison, where they settled into civilian life.



Jim attended the UW-Madison School of Engineering. After two years, he transferred and graduated from the Wisconsin Electronics Institute. The couple and their two-year-old son, Jim, moved back to Marshfield in June of 1950. Here he began Rasmussen Electronics, specializing in television service. I came into the picture in 1953. I'm the younger son, Rick.

In the 50's, Jim and Iris joined the city band, with Iris playing the clarinet and Dad playing the flute and baritone saxophone. At this time the band was known as the Civil Air Patrol Band. This was a later version of the band that Jim's father, A. J. Rasmussen, had directed from 1925 through 1941. Back then it was called the 135th Medical Regiment Band of the Wisconsin National Guard. The band retained its military connection under a variety of names until 1961, when the Marshfield Civil Air Patrol Band became the Marshfield Civic Band. Lt. Anton Kraemer directed the band for many years until his retirement in 1963. The baton was passed to Jim, who then directed the band until 2003. His 40-year tenure with the band was the longest of any director going back to the band's beginning in 1895.

All were welcome in the volunteer band. Jim pushed the band to always be better but also to be fun. In addition to the summer concerts in the park, the band was a part of the

Memorial Day commemorations, Mad Market Days, the Central Wisconsin State Fair, and the season finale concerts in Wildwood Park. Jim poured his heart and soul into making it an enjoyable time for all, band members and audience alike. The “regulars” of the audience enjoyed the concerts so much they would never miss a show. For one brief hour each week, they set aside their daily cares and let the music sweep them away.

Aside from the band, another great joy for Jim was building and flying radio-controlled (RC) model airplanes. He was an avid builder of large-scale models and often built models for other flyers. During the winter months, you could find him downstairs in his shop building models for the upcoming summer flying season. Initially, it was a small group of guys out at the airport at one end of a non-active runway flying their planes a few times per week. They would often draw a crowd of people curious about what was making all the noise or what was flying around in the sky. Many of these onlookers became modelers themselves and the group grew. When they wanted to form a flying club, Jim was there at the beginning of the Mid-State Aeroguidance Club. He put the charter together to be recognized by the Academy of Model Aeronautics. Friends for life were made within that activity – friendships that never would have happened had it not been for their common love of building and flying these models.

Jim played a vital role in keeping both of these organizations going. When city budget cuts threatened to put an end to the band concerts, he lobbied hard with the city council and won them over, ultimately securing the funds to continue the concerts. And when, for liability and safety reasons, they could no longer fly models at the airport, he helped secure some land for the club to use.

As we celebrate Marshfield’s 150: Honoring Heroes and Leaders, Past and Present, Jim would be the first to say he did nothing to qualify as being a hero. But he was a definite leader. He spent a lot of time helping people work through a tough section of music or figuring out a model build. He spent countless hours mentoring and teaching whoever would listen to tips and tricks he had accumulated over decades of personal experience.

He was someone who did what he did because he truly loved doing it and inspired others to join in and take over where he left off. He taught his children, by example, to be respectful and kind to anyone who crossed their path. And mostly to find something you love doing and pour your heart into it.

Jim Rasmussen passed away peacefully on October 2, 2021 at the age of 95. His life and dedication made an impact both on the people he knew and the city that he loved.