



## James O'Brien

November 21, 2021

Age 62

After a two-week futile battle with @Legionella James O'Brien succumbed to the disease Trillium Health Partners on November 21, 2021

It is rare that Legionella affects a single person. The family asks that people living in the Port Credit Mississauga area be cautious. Improperly maintain HVAC systems and stagnant water are often the source of Legionella outbreaks. (AKA as Legionnaires Diseases)

James was a scéalaí or seanchaí (storyteller) He was the 4th child of John and Kathleen O'Brien. Both deceased. He had 6 siblings. Michael (deceased Feb 2021) Margaret, John, Noreen, Eileen, and Mary Pat. He will be greatly missed by his lady friend, Wilma Jenkins. He was loved by many nieces and nephews.

He grew up in the East End of Toronto, at Broadview and Danforth. But spent his last 20 years in the Mississauga/Port Credit area. He loved stopping by the local pubs to listen to music and shoot the breeze.

James had a varied work life. A few careers and many jobs. As a younger man, he held jobs that would allow him to go to auditions and rehearsals. Though he was not a hugely commercially successful actor, he loved it with all his heart. He was a taxi driver, a bingo caller, and a salesman that never sold big ticket items. The sisters laughed recalling he was a carnival barker selling ginzo knives. He traveled across Canada selling those knives. What he did not earn in commission, he more than made up with experiences and stories.

He taught himself the securities game, sat and passed the required exams and eventually became a Licensed Stockbroker. He worked in that industry for over a decade.

He volunteered for years at a local community center assisting seniors, low income, and

new Canadians with their taxes. As a young man he was a member of the Knights of Columbus. He and his fellow knights would show up as volunteers when asked. Plus, he enjoyed having a pint at the bar of the historic mansion on Sherbourne St (Now Luxury Condos) and a poker game or two.

His love for acting and theatre continued through his life. Most recently he would volunteer as an actor for the film students at Ryerson University, his alma mater. Theatre was his first love. He rarely, if ever missed a performance of The Toronto Irish Players. He had a soft spot for the group, as he had the leading role in Sean O'Casey's play, "Red Roses for Me". Playing Ayamonn Breydon. A labour activist 1913 Dublin.

There will not be a funeral. A celebration of life will happen in the spring.

# Legionnairesdisease #publichealthmatters #legionellatesting #waterhygiene #legionella

# Comments

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“ My condolences to all the family. I have great memories of our childhood visits to the O'Briens... as a house of two, we found it really fun to be in a house of so many children... and as two girls, having boys around was very different. Johnny and Jimmy were our “sort of” brothers... although we were never sure if we actually wanted brothers. I did know Jimmy as an adult. Looks like I missed a great man.

**Marie Muldowney** - December 10, 2021 at 07:35 AM



“ Marie, your comments were of great comfort to my sisters and I. Thank you so much xo

**Margaret** - January 03 at 02:10 PM

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“ Margaret's Mother and my Mother were close having arrived in Canada on the same ship. When we were young, we often visited the O'Briens. My sister and I did not have brothers. So our visits were also about borrowing brothers we did not have - Johnny and Jimmy. As boys, they were rambunctious. We were not sure if we really wanted brothers, but visiting them was always exciting. These were times I will never forget. My condolences to all the family. I missed the opportunity to know Jimmy as a grown man. A missed opportunity indeed.

**Marie Muldowney** - December 09, 2021 at 08:41 PM

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“ My deepest condolences to the family and may his memory be a blessing. My life is certainly richer for having known James and my trivia game is definitely sharper. He introduced me to the Rex where we often enjoyed some jazz after a matinee at the Canadian Stage. Lots of happy memories to cherish.

**Wilma Jenkins** - December 04, 2021 at 05:28 PM



“ Thank you so much Wilma; let's go to The Rex soon xo

**Margaret Giles** - December 05, 2021 at 05:12 PM

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“ It was with much sadness that I read that James had passed away - much too young. I worked with James for many years at E\*Trade Canada. I enjoyed James professionalism, inquiring mind and good nature. He was a nice person to be around.

My sincerest condolences.

Ron White

**Ron White** - December 04, 2021 at 09:14 AM



“ Thank you so much Ron

**Margaret Giles** - December 04, 2021 at 03:36 PM

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“ My brother James (I called him Jimmy) was quite the character. He had a brilliant sense of humor and was never without a story or a joke. He cherished my sons and they, in kind, cherished him. He carved many a turkey over the years in our home. He was an avid theatre man and rarely missed a performance of The Toronto Irish Players. He had acting in his bones. He didn't reach the heights of the acting world but that was fine. He loved it. I remember attending many a concert with him; Joan Armatrading, Blue Rodeo and an Irish band called Horslips, to name a few. I am truly blessed to have known him and to call him my brother.

**Margaret Giles** - December 03, 2021 at 11:58 PM



“ I fondly remember interesting conversations with James around the Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner table over a delicious turkey feast at Maggie and Michael's. He indeed was a consummate storyteller enthralling his listeners and soliciting chuckles. Rest in peace James. Taken too soon.

**Nicole** - December 13, 2021 at 01:25 AM



“ Thank you so much Nics xo

**Margaret** - January 03 at 02:11 PM

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“ The passing of my brother James was so sudden. A true shock. There are so many memories. The mind jumps from one decade to another, and not in chronological order. Scattered brained usually means something else. But here, now that is what I am. With flashes as children, next to see us in San Francisco, then Texas, back to us as young adults.

A fond memory I have is a theatre experience. We were young. But adults. There was a girl from the neighbourhood named Brenda who worked for Ticket Masters or something similar. She could get her hands on comp tickets. There was a Theatre Festival happening. Brenda would get us free tickets. We went to one show. And had a ticket to spare. We gave it to some random person. I can't remember the play. It was not well attended. But it was free entertainment, and we were broke. The next night there was a LOT of activity at the theatre we went to. There was a line to buy the tickets. We had four. There was just the two of us. The line grew and grew. With our comped tickets we worried we might get busted, and Brenda might get into some trouble. (I think she did eventually. Giving away free tickets to regional theatre was not the same as giving away concert tickets to Super Tramp)

There was a couple behind us beginning to bicker about how they should have left sooner. James pipped in he had a couple of tickets if they wanted to buy them. The seats were 12 dollars, and we would sell them discounted 10 dollars. The guy looks at the tickets and saw the COMP on price. He pipes in that he is not going to pay 10 for comp tickets. The girl friend said it's a good deal, and that he would be saving money. As they continued to argue, a hand comes between the two of them with a 20-dollar bill. "I'll take those tickets for 20 bucks" A quick exchange was made. The first guy starts protesting. Saying he wanted the tickets, but not for 20 bucks. James just straightens up and said "Too late". At that point the theatre usher asks for ticket holders to form a new line. We happily joined the line. Along with the new ticket holders. People trying to buy their tickets queued in another. After about four purchases, the usher shouts "Tonight's performance is sold. Sold out everyone. Try again tomorrow, try Ticket Master"

The guy who refused to buy the COMP tickets scurried away with his girl friend calling him cheap. If high fives existed at the time, the new ticket holder and James certainly would have done it.

The play was loosely based on The Book of the Thousand and One Nights. It was brilliant. I have thought of that play often in the last forty years. I wish I could remember the name. James would remember. Alas I cannot ask him.

When the play ended, we went to the Brunswick House for a few beers. Then had Souvlaki on The Danforth. What a great evening.

**Noreen Hardwick** - December 03, 2021 at 01:15 PM



“ What a great story

**Margaret.giles30@yahoo.com** - December 03, 2021 at 11:50 PM

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“ James was indeed an enigma. I had many happy occasions to get together and they were always interesting and enjoyable. I particularly remember a discussion about “The Agony and the Ecstasy of Steve Jobs” James performed the monologue several times. When I went up to Toronto on business we always made it a point to get together for a beer. I remember once heading out on the Go train and spending the night at his condo. First and only time I took that train. His visit to Austin was another great time with James. He enjoyed all the sights we went to and was surprised how different the town was from what he had thought it was.

I truly enjoyed the time that we spent together and James will be sorely missed. May he rest in peace.

**Steve Hardwick** - December 03, 2021 at 11:46 AM

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“ Adventurer, Iconoclast, Slacker, Thesbian, Ham. There was always a story to be told by and about him.

His death is tragic, but in a way, fitting. Mystery, intrigue, exoticism, and tragic coincidence; it is more familiar on a stage than in life, if only because we'd like to pretend such things happen there more than our day to day.

Take care James, while your exit from the stage is painful, your performance was one for the ages.

**Chris Hardwick** - December 02, 2021 at 08:10 PM

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“ The family does not wish to receive flowers. Instead, if you are compelled to give, a donation to Crohn's and Colitis Canada in James O'Brien's name would be welcomed. <https://crohnsandcolitis.ca/Ways-to-Give>

**Noreen Hardwick** - December 02, 2021 at 03:17 PM

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**Mary Brown** - December 01, 2021 at 10:17 PM



“ Love this!

**Noreen** - December 02, 2021 at 03:13 PM

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**Noreen Hardwick** - December 01, 2021 at 01:19 PM

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**Noreen Hardwick** - December 01, 2021 at 12:21 PM



“ Tis himself

**Noreen** - December 01, 2021 at 12:44 PM

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Noreen Hardwick - December 01, 2021 at 12:21 PM

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Noreen Hardwick - December 01, 2021 at 12:18 PM

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Noreen Hardwick - December 01, 2021 at 12:17 PM

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**Noreen Hardwick** - December 01, 2021 at 12:16 PM



“ James was an incredible uncle to my sons. They loved his stories and jokes. We will miss him so much

**Margaret M Giles** - December 01, 2021 at 12:53 PM