**Friends of Jim Belles Memorial Scholarship**

Kind, caring, always neatly dressed and always ready or eager to help a student or fellow teachers especially with questions about computers. He was a whiz at that. He loved his work and only missed one sick day ever as a teacher.

Sadly he died on Monday, September 26, 2022 of cancer after a very short battle with that dreaded disease.  Several of Jim’s friends decided to honor him with a scholarship with the help of his nephew Charles Belles Jr. and his wife Lisa.

Jim worked at Wyoming Area as a math, computer and business teacher for 27.5 years. Before Wyoming Area Jim was a vice president at First Eastern Bank. He began working at Wyoming Area in 1992 and after 27.5 years he retired in 2018. Jim had a very close relationship with his students. Jim served as the advisor to the National Honor Society for several years. He also looked forward to attending the various proms as a chaperone. Mrs.Touw commented about how the students would always enjoy watching them fast dance together. He would make a power point of pictures from each prom and share it with his classes soon after. He wore a tie and jacket almost every day of school. You knew when Halloween was near by the decorations in his room and for Christmas he always had a very neatly decorated Christmas tree in his classroom.

He was gentleman; a convert to Catholicism and a daily communicant for the past 50 years. He attended Mass daily. His Catholic faith was the most important aspect of his life. Jim usually arrived at school early and was ready for his students when they began to arrive for class. He was always well prepared and eager to see his students learn and thrive in his classroom.

Jim graduated from Coughlin High School in 1966 and received BS and MS degrees in Business Administration from Wilkes College.

Jim loved and was proud of his nephew, nieces and his great-nephews and great-nieces. He also loved his cats and always had stories about his cats especially Gizmo and Snickers.

In retirement, he was proud of his 500+ consecutive day streak in the Diamond Club level of achievement for Duolingo (Spanish language). He enjoyed learning many languages including Spanish, French, Italian and Latin. He liked visiting many places in the United States, Mexico. Spain, and Italy – often times with specific religious destinations in mind.

Jim enjoyed dining out with family and friends - some favorites included Sabatini's Pizza in Exeter and Amber Indian Restaurant in Moosic.

This scholarship is being funded by donations received from fellow teachers, support staff, friends, and relatives.

**Criteria:**Applicant must be a Wyoming Area graduating senior who has been accepted to a trade, a technical school, a community college or a 2 or 4 year college or university. Preference will be given to those who will be studying business, foreign language(s) or a related area. HOWEVER, other majors will be considered.

 **Essay Required:**  In a solid essay of at least 500 words, write an essay from **one** of the following prompts: Indicate in the first sentence of your essay which prompt you selected.

1. Tell us about person in your life who reminds you of Jim Belles and who has had a positive influence in your life.  Tell us about that influence.
2. Like Jim I am kind, caring and work hard to maintain my grades. What or who motivated you to be like this?
3. Jim loved and was kind to animals, especially cats.  Do you have a pet and how has that pet influenced any part of your life?
4. Kindness is an outstanding character trait of Jim’s. Tell us when you were kind to someone and the outcome of that kindness.
5. If you are a person of faith, how has your faith made a positive impact on your life or others.