



J. Brian Smith

March 23, 2026

J. Brian Smith, 82, passed away peacefully in his wife's arms on March 23, 2026, just days before his 83rd birthday. Born on March 25, 1943, Brian lived a full and vibrant life defined by devotion to his family, a passion for sports, and a deep connection to his community and faith.

Brian was the fifth of six children born to Edward Smith and Kathleen Molloy, both from Ireland. He remained deeply close with his siblings throughout his life. The bonds they shared were a source of strength, laughter, and lifelong companionship that he cherished dearly.

A devout Irish Catholic, Brian's faith was central to who he was. His beliefs guided his life, shaped his values, and were reflected in the way he treated others—with kindness, humility, and compassion.

Brian was devoted to his wife, Karen, and they shared a loving and enduring marriage of over 40 years. Together, they built a life centered on family, raising Christine, Kerri, Megan, Brian James, J. Brian Jr., and Scott who were the pride and joy of his life. He was a deeply proud Popple to 14 grandchildren, who brought him immense happiness and countless reasons to smile.

A gifted athlete, Brian excelled in football during his years at Hartford High School, where he was co-captain. He continued his athletic career at UConn,

where he was also football co-captain. Brian remained a loyal and enthusiastic UConn supporter throughout his life. His love for UConn athletics endured, and he could often be found cheering boisterously for his Huskies.

Beyond football, Brian was an avid golfer who cherished his time on the course. He was a member of the Hartford Golf Club and past president of Ellington Ridge Country Club, where he built lasting friendships and enjoyed countless rounds filled with camaraderie and competition. Brian was known for his booming laugh—unmistakable, infectious, and ever-present. He brought warmth and humor into every room, leaving a lasting impression on all who knew him.

Brian was also a successful entrepreneur. Alongside his brother, Bob Smith, he co-founded Smith Brothers Insurance in 1971, a business that grew steadily over the years into a thriving company employing nearly 300 people. His leadership, integrity, and work ethic were the foundation of its success, and his legacy continues through the many lives he impacted both professionally and personally. As recognition of his athletic ability and service to the business community, Brian was the recipient of the UConn Club's Red O'Neill award.

Brian is predeceased by his brothers, Edward, Robert, and William, his sister-in-law Diane, his son Brian James Griffin, and his first wife, Patricia Zematic. He is survived by his brother Raymond and his wife Irene, his sister Kem Calio and her husband Richard, and sisters-in-law Susan and Alicia. His legacy of laughter, faith, love, and loyalty will live on in the hearts of his family and all who had the privilege of knowing him. He will be deeply missed and forever remembered.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Friday, (March 27) at 11:00 a.m. at St. Peter Claver Church, 47 Pleasant St., West Hartford. In lieu of

flowers donations in his memory may be made to St. Jude's at www.stjude.org
or Tunnel 2 Towers at www.T2T.org.

Previous Events

Mass of Christian Burial

MAR 27. 11:00 AM (ET)

Parish Center St. Peter Claver Church
47 Pleasant St
West Hartford, CT 06107-1600
(860) 561-4235

Tribute Wall



“ Molloy Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of J. Brian Smith



Molloy Funeral Home - March 26 at 12:33 PM

LA

“ To Karen and the entire Smith Clan.
Suz and I want to express our deepest condolences for your loss. I know however the so many great memories of Brian as a husband Dad Poppie brother sister or friend will help in those difficult days. I have so many great memories of Brian at UCONN GAMES OR GOLF OUTINGS. His smile and laugh were second to none. One of my first memories of Brian and Karen was getting me up parasailing on Lake George as they laughed their asses off and I wondered how I was going to get down! I just found out today of Brian's passing as Suz and I were returning from Florida. We were having dinner tonight and I had my UCONN Football pullover on I said to her I wonder how my buddy Brian was doing. I saw this site and although I know Brian had a couple of difficult health years. I was not ready to accept his passing. He was truly a wonderful friend and although I never got to seem him as much as I would have liked he was one of the best friends you could have! Cheers Brian. You will not be forgotten and your smile/laugh will continue thru your children and Grandchildren! All the best my friend Lou and Suz Abare

Lou L. Abare - April 28 at 10:21 PM

BK

“ *My sincere condolences to the Smith family on the passing of Brian. I was a few years behind Brian in school but didn't have a chance to follow in his footsteps playing football for HPHS because a new high school opened and off I went. May he rest in peace .Brendan Kennedy*

Brendan Kennedy - April 08 at 09:35 AM

LC

“ *Karen, I am so sorry for your loss. Sending you love and strength.*
Laura Coviello

Laura Coviello - April 03 at 02:53 PM

CM

“ *It seems like the end of an era...those days at the old brownstone HPHS on Hopkins and Broad Streets. As if it were yesterday, I remember the glory days of Hartford High sports, where Brian played football and Pat Z was a cheerleader...when true success included beating Bulkeley and Weaver High Schools at Dillon Stadium...then came Brian and Patty's marriage, children, and the loss of Patty...How fortunate that Brian found Karen. Brian lived a full life filled with countless memories for all who knew him.*

Cynthia Fleet Magaldi

Cynthia Magaldi - March 26 at 03:56 PM

TC

“ *Tommy, Sheila, Ryan & Collin purchased the Sweet Tranquility Basket for the family of J. Brian Smith.*



Tommy, Sheila, Ryan & Collin - March 26 at 01:22 PM

TC

“ Tommy, Sheila, Ryan & Collin planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of J. Brian Smith.

Tommy, Sheila, Ryan & Collin - March 26 at 01:22 PM

LF

“ Love, The Meadows & Treviso Families purchased the Lavender Reflections Spray for the family of J. Brian Smith.



Love, The Meadows & Treviso Families - March 26 at 10:29 AM

DS

“ Desiree Samide purchased the Simply Elegant S pathiphyllum for the family of J. Brian Smith.



Desiree Samide - March 26 at 10:27 AM

DS

“ Desiree Samide planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of J. Brian Smith.

Desiree Samide - March 26 at 10:27 AM

FM

“ From Jeff and Mary purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of J. Brian Smith.



From Jeff and Mary - March 26 at 10:12 AM

FM

“ From Jeff and Mary planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of J. Brian Smith.

From Jeff and Mary - March 26 at 10:12 AM

AC

“ Andrea Camoin purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of J. Brian Smith.



Andrea Camoin - March 25 at 03:38 PM

AC

“ Andrea Camoin planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of J. Brian Smith.

Andrea Camoin - March 25 at 03:38 PM

SC

“ He was simply the best. Always positive and always bringing fun to all. The trips to The Foot were memorable. Rest in peace my friend. Sincerest Condolences - Steve and Denise Chuck

Steve Chuck - March 25 at 03:17 PM

MB

“ *Larger than life.
Will never forget his happiness and his laugh.
The warmth and friendliness to his new, (old) neighbors will never
be forgotten. And neither will he .
May his memory be a blessing.
ALL the Baums*

Mike Baum - March 25 at 02:54 PM

BG

“ *Brenda Greatorex lit a candle in memory of J.
Brian Smith*



Brenda Greatorex - March 25 at 01:06 PM

BG

*So very sorry for your loss. My thoughts and prayers go out to you and
your family Brian.*

Brenda Greatorex - March 25 at 01:08 PM

KS

“ *Kimberley S. purchased the Loving Lilies and Ro
ses Bouquet for the family of J. Brian Smith.*



Kimberley S. - March 25 at 10:31 AM

KS

“ Kimberley S. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of J. Brian Smith.

Kimberley S. - March 25 at 10:31 AM

SH

“ Sue and Bill Haberern purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of J. Brian Smith.



Sue and Bill Haberern - March 24 at 10:32 PM



“ Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of J. Brian Smith.



March 24 at 07:00 PM

RD

“ Ray & Irene, Kim & Dick purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of J. Brian Smith.



Ray & Irene, Kim & Dick - March 24 at 04:24 PM