



Worthy State Deputy and Worth State Program Director, I, Gregory Kapraun, as Grand Knight of Holy Spirit Council 11460 Rochester, MN submit to you for consideration for Minnesota Knight of the Year, **Worthy Brother Jim Decker** from Holy Spirit Council 11460.



Brother Jim exudes what it is all about to be a Knight of Columbus. He is currently our Financial Secretary which, as you know, is probably the most challenging of all council positions. Not only is Jim our current FS, but he has been our only FS since the start of our council nearly 15 years ago. Along with being our FS he is also the Faithful Comptroller for our 4<sup>th</sup> Degree Assembly 548. Jim executes the duties of both of these positions with utmost professionalism.

Brother Jim is now 71 years of age, retired from IBM after over 40 years of service, and remains one of our most active members. He has only been a Knight since the beginning of our council and was one of its founding members 14.5 years ago. Jim is also an Insurance member.

Brother Jim was voted as our 2008 Knight of the Year for Council #11460 and is the first member to have been awarded this honor for a second time. His first KOY award was in 1996 during the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of our council's existence. I'm sure Jim could have won this award nearly every year if we so chose.

Jim's activities are numerous both for the council and the assembly. One of his main contributions is that he is at every monthly Council and Officer's meeting and at every monthly Assembly meeting and dinner. As his Grand Knight, it is such a relief knowing that we have this type of dedicated Knight as our Financial Secretary and I know our Faithful Navigator feels the same way for the Assembly. The incoming Navigator said this quote: "My God, losing him would be like taking Michael Jordan out of our lineup." This hits the nail on the head of what type of Brother Knight Jim is.

### **Activities in 2008:**

**For the 4<sup>th</sup> Degree** - Brother Jim recruited **34 members personally** to join the 4<sup>th</sup> degree held in Rochester at the April 2008 Exemplification. I remember the Saturday evening when he pulled me aside after Church and told me he had something I needed to sign. It was the membership form for joining the 4<sup>th</sup> degree. In Jim's subtle (or not so subtle) way he had a hand in getting 22 members of council 11460 to take their 4<sup>th</sup> degree. He was also a Co-Chair of the Exemplification host committee that put on the April, 2008 Exemplification. Brother Berry Hobbs indicated that Jim set up several meetings, kept a set of excellent notes on everything, collected fees and kept a perfect set of books. As Berry put it, "He did what leaders call the grunt work" and he did an excellent job of it.



**Church:** Jim (and his lovely wife Barb) is our Activity lead for our MN State Award winning Roses for Baptism program. He ensures that a Rose is at the Church and ready to be presented to the Parents of the newly baptized. Our Parish does some 70-80 baptisms a year, so it is practically every possible weekend throughout the year that Jim ensures we have a rose or sometimes 3 or 4 roses at church to present. To show the importance of this program to the Parish, last summer our Pastor shared with me that at one 4:30pm Mass no fellow Knight stepped forward to present the rose to the family and that family indicated their disappointment in not receiving their rose during Mass. Jim, of course, had made sure the rose was available, so we reinforced with our members the importance of presenting it to every family. Jim is also active in these additional Ministries at Holy Spirit Parish: Usher, Passing out Programs before Mass, Door Greeter, Working at Wine & Cheese Saturdays, and Delivering Food to Channel One.

**Community:** Jim's community service is outstanding. Jim lead the effort this year, as he has done for the past 9 years, to set up and operate what is called the "Used Toy Store" as part of the Rochester Christmas Anonymous <http://www.christmasanonymous.org> program. This program has grown over the years and helped 633 needy families in 2008 enjoy a better Christmas. It also delivered 374 food baskets to Seniors and helped 18 different group homes with Christmas needs. Jim also works all year and collects used bikes for this program that get fixed up by the Lions Club and provided to the families at the December 'store'. In addition Jim recruits several other Knights, including myself, each year to help volunteer during the week that it takes to run this program. From filling food baskets the weekend before, to sorting and setting up all the used toys, to working the day of the 'store' Jim does an amazing amount of volunteer work for this community program and gets 20 or more of our members to help work on the December Saturday that everything is distributed to the families.

Brother Jim volunteered this past fall to work at the Fall Bowling Classic in Inver Grove Heights. Jim was so touched by the athletes that he came back to our council meeting to tell everyone what an experience it was and that everyone should go back with him next year as he will certainly be volunteering to work at it again!

Jim's other community service is through his yearly summer garden. Last year Jim grew and donated several hundred pounds of produce to our local Food Shelf called Channel One. This includes, corn, peppers, cucumbers, beans, tomatoes, and squash. Channel One is grateful for Jim's generosity.

**Council:** Jim is on our First Degree team and plays the role of Financial Secretary. He works before each Degree to ensure that all the paperwork is properly filled out for each candidate and has them sign the roll. Our degree team is top notch with Brother Berry Hobbs as one of its members. Jim is also on a second degree team for the SE Minnesota area and again plays the role of Financial Secretary. Over the past year our Team has done 10 first and second degrees in SE Minnesota including special degrees to start up two new councils in the area and traveling to Owatonna when their degree team was no longer certified.



Brother Jim works at all our pancake breakfasts each year and ensures that we have a cash box ready at each one. Jim also works during our Tootsie Roll weekend and works at our annual golf tournament running the putting contest to collect extra dollars towards our charitable causes. Jim also supports many of our membership blitz activities including our Spring Open House pizza gathering focused on younger men in the Parish that was successful last year in getting three 18-19 year olds to join the council.

**Youth:** Jim ensures that we get our State Free Throw and Soccer Challenge packages and delivers them to our Youth Director. Many of our pancake breakfasts that he works at have the proceeds go to various Youth groups including the past year for, Youth Mission Trip to Tijuana, Mexico, Boy/Cub Scout troop 110, Girl Scouts, Youth Trip to National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC). Jim volunteered to lead a group of Youth that were doing service hours to spread the woodchips around the Holy Spirit school playground equipment this past summer. He provided wheel barrows, shovels and rakes for the Youth to use in spreading a large truckload of woodchips. He said it was quite a challenge to direct all the youthful 'enthusiasm' of the kids who helped.

**Family:** Jim helped with our February Light Night wine and cheese social by working the sign up table and helping all the guests get nametags and sign up for the door prizes.

While I could nearly list just about every activity our council does and point out some part that Jim plays in that activity either large or small, I think the above shows the kind of Knight that Jim is and why he was our overwhelming choice for being our first duplicate Knight of the Year award recipient for 2008. I am very proud that Jim is a member of Holy Spirit Council 11460 Rochester and I respectfully submit this entry for your consideration of **Brother Jim Decker** to be the **MN State Knight of the Year**.

Vivat Jesus!

Gregory Kapraun, Grand Knight 11460