

Sunny Jim Goes Home To Sheepshead Bay

NEW YORK — (AP) — The body of James E. (Sunny Jim) Fitzsimmons was returned Saturday to the Sheepshead Bay area of Brooklyn where he was born and rose to prominence as one of America's most successful trainers of race horses.

Mr. Fitz, who would have been 92 July 23, died Friday morning at the Cedars of Lebanon Hospital in Miami where he was taken last Saturday for a physical examination.

A High Requiem Mass for the Grand Old Man of horse racing will be sung Tuesday at the St. Marks Roman Catholic Church in Brooklyn, not far from where he was born in 1874 and started a 75-year career of riding and training horses.

His career as a jockey lasted only 10 years when he had to put on too much weight.

From the leaky roof half-mile tracks of racing he grad-

uated to handling the horses of what he once called "the best people in the world" — the late William Woodward and his son William Woodward Jr.; former Secretary of the Treasury Ogden Mills; Ogden Phipps and his mother Mrs. H. C. Phipps, owner of the Wheatley Stable, and Ogden Mills Phipps.

When Mr. Fitz retired nearly three years ago he looked back on 2,275 winners, including such great ones as Gallant Fox, Omaha, Johnstown, Nashua and Bold Ruler.

They said this stooped shoulder man, with a twinkle in his blue eyes, didn't have an enemy in the world. His family also was large — five sons, one dead, a daughter and 62 grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

For years as many as possible gathered for a family reunion at Saratoga Springs, N.Y., in August. Friends also were invited until last year

when the job of personally supervising the festivities became too much for the failing Mr. Fitz.

From Ogden Phipps, owner of the famed Buckpasser, came these words:

"Mr. Fitz, who had trained three generations of Phipps family horses, was more than just a trainer. He was a fine person who was very close to all of us."

"I knew him since 1900," said Bert Mulholland, trainer for George D. Widener and a long-time friend. "He stood out as a trainer and man. He was everybody's friend and tried to help everybody he could."

Perhaps Edward T. Dickinson, president of the NYRA, said it best.

"When I came to thoroughbred racing he went out of his way over home-cooked breakfasts at Belmont Park and Saratoga to instruct and guide me in the tradition and history of the sport. Like all those he befriended I shall miss him greatly."