

# JAMES LEE GODKINS



"Everybody liked Jim." James Lee Godkins passed away on November 5, 2023, after a lengthy decline due to Alzheimer's. Jim was born on April 29, 1946, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to Ellen (King) Godkins and Thomas Regis Godkins.

Jim graduated from Avonworth High School and Knox College in Galesburg IL, where he was the historian of the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity. His educational

path continued and in 1970 Jim graduated from Washington University in St. Louis MO with an MBA in Finance. Jim began his professional career in Pittsburgh as an auditor for Arthur Young & Co. and went on to become corporate Vice President of Financial Services for Bradford Schools, Inc.

In 1980, Jim and a business partner seized the opportunity to purchase Stone School in New Haven, CT. After five successful years at the helm, Macmillan Publishing of New York made a purchase offer that was "too good to refuse". In 1986, Jim returned to Bradford Schools as the President of Hickey School in St. Louis, MO. The latter part of his career led Jim to Boston in 1989 as the CFO of Educational Management Corporation (EMC). Jim also served as a board member and President of the Mass Bay Community College. Jim later accepted a position with Hesser College in New Hampshire then finished his career in the non-profit realm working for The Jason Foundation for Education in Newton, MA and lastly the New England Energy Partnerships in Lexington, MA.

Jim's leadership style stood out for building exceptional relationships with his professional colleagues, working collaboratively with mutual respect and admiration.

In his personal life, while a student at Knox College, Jim met and later married Donna (Roberts) Godkins in August of 1968. Jim and Donna had three children, Christi, Catie, and Jimmy. The family resided in Pittsburgh's North Hills area.

In 1982, Jim married Carol (Cvetetic) Godkins. Jim's career took them to Connecticut, Missouri and in 1989 Jim and Carol moved to Natick, MA where they lived for 22 years... they barely tolerated the basketball, baseball, hockey, and football championships of the local pro teams, and very much missed their hometown teams and extraordinary fried fish sandwiches of Pittsburgh. Jim loved sports; he played football, basketball and baseball in high school and later enjoyed tennis, running, softball, working out and hot yoga. In 1994, Jim lived the life of a Pittsburgh Pirate during the Pirates' Fantasy Camp at their spring training facilities in Bradenton Florida. Jim played second base, coached by Bill Mazeroski himself! The experience was a lifelong favorite memory.

In 2011, Jim and Carol retired to Pittsburgh. Two of his pleasures in retirement were sleeping until he woke up in the morning and going to LA Fitness almost every day. Jim also enjoyed movies, dining out, traveling, and sitting on the back deck watching the birds. Jim was a terrific grill master serving up grilled meats, seafood, and vegetables. His indoor culinary skills produced the tastiest, juiciest Thanksgiving turkeys. During their life together, Jim and Carol were loving pet parents to Charlie, Austin, Syma, Dexter, Weegie, Louie, and currently Wally. Both Jim and Carol supported cruelty-free animal causes and were proponents of pet adoption.

Equally important to Jim was maintaining communication with lifelong friends. Jim was known to be quick-witted. He was a patient listener, dropping an apt one-liner whenever possible, and enjoyed sharing in a good laugh.

Jim's parents and brother Tom Godkins preceded him in death. Jim is survived by wife Carol (Cvetetic) Godkins; his former wife, Donna (Roberts) Godkins; daughter Christin Godkins, grandson Anthony Moore Jr., son-in-law Samuel Nicastri; daughter Catherine (Godkins) Potter, son-in-law Richard Potter; son James Lee Godkins, Jr., grandson James Lee Godkins III, daughter-in-law Kerry Godkins; sister-in-law Lois (Godkins) Ronsse, brother-in-law Frank (Bud) Ronsse; niece Heather (Godkins) McDonnell, her husband Steve and their sons Vincent and Leo; nephew Scott Godkins and his daughters Addison and Gabrielle; brother-in-law Richard Cvetetic and his life partner Virginia Mertz, and many cousins.

Jim will be laid to rest at 2 p.m. Tuesday, November 7th at Holy Savior Cemetery in the Saint Francis of Assisi Green Burial Section, 4629 Bakerstown Road, Gibsonia, PA 15044 with funeral services provided by **SHELLHAAS & SONS OF FRANKLIN PARK**.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation in Jim's name to Animal Friends ([www.thinkingoutsidethecage.org](http://www.thinkingoutsidethecage.org)) or University of Pittsburgh Alzheimer's Disease Research Center ([www.adrc.pitt.edu](http://www.adrc.pitt.edu)).

Please leave all condolences at [www.schellhaasfh.com](http://www.schellhaasfh.com).

Send condolences [post-gazette.com/gb](http://post-gazette.com/gb)