



## Gerry L. Jones

September 13, 1942 - April 17, 2019

The nucleus of our family split Wednesday, April 17th, 2019, as at age 76, Gerry Lew Jones, our beloved Father, Grandfather, Brother, Uncle, Nephew, Cousin, Confidant, Friend, Neighbor, etcetera, departed our earthly realm from Pocatello, Idaho, due to complications from cardiac bypass surgery.

He was born on September 13th, 1942, in Cortland, New York, to Ruth (Harvey) and Floyd Jones. It was a Friday, which some believe immunized him against bad luck, at least on Friday the 13th. He grew up in Texas Valley, New York, just over the hill from Marathon. He was surrounded by rolling hills, maple trees, and cows, as his relatives owned and operated multiple dairies in the valley. He was a middle child, and was close to his siblings: Carol, Donna, Rhoda, Frank (Spike), and Dave. They had wonderful adventures together, such as skipping church to play in the creek, ping pong tournaments in the barn in the winter, sledding down the hills and over barbed wire fences (usually!), and accidentally burning down the old chicken coup while trying to make their own maple syrup. He was athletic and loved sports, especially soccer and basketball, eventually playing on the University of Oklahoma (OU) soccer club team.

He graduated from Marathon Central School, class of 1960, and earned an Associate's degree in Engineering Physics at Broome Technical College in Binghamton, NY, before transferring to OU ('62). There he earned a Bachelor's of Science degree in Engineering Physics ('64), and Masters of Science in Nuclear Engineering ('66). This was also where he met his first wife, Mimi (Mary Fitzhugh) Francis, and they were married in January of '65, in Norman, OK. He took his new bride to Idaho where he got a job with Bettis Atomic Power Laboratory at the Naval Reactors Facility at the NRTS (National Reactor Testing Station). In Idaho Falls, they had their first son, David (Dave). Next, Bettis sent him to Pittsburgh, PA, to work on his doctorate at Carnegie Mellon University. While in Pittsburgh, their next two sons, Warren and Marshall, were born. Upon returning to Idaho, this time to Pocatello, they had their last son, Dwight.

Being a full-time nuclear engineer wasn't enough for Gerry, he also bought a dairy farm in '77 and ran it with the help of his youngest brother, Frank, and a childhood friend, Mark Daniels. Perhaps the constant demands of these two full-time careers was too much for one man, as he and Mimi divorced in December of '82. Afterwards, Gerry went to Sanford, Michigan and re-married to Pat (Patsy Jean) Handley (May, '83), becoming a Dad to Tammy and Larry, whom he loved as his own.

His career brought him back to Idaho in '86, when he took a job at the Department of Energy, Idaho Operations Office. He later transitioned back to INEL, and worked the rest of his career there supporting NRC work, the cleanup of transuranic Legacy waste buried on the INL, foreign technology transfer, and systems engineering for CWI, among other roles. He was methodical and practical, and was well respected by his peers. However, his greatest joy from work was in the friendships he made with his co-workers, who to his last days would greet him with enthusiasm whenever they met.

He had four great loves in his life. One was his pets. He always had a dog, sometimes cats, sometimes exotic birds, and he always had bird feeders in his yard. His canine buddies, including Snoop, Freeway, Sheeba, Kermit, Ben, and Daisy (to name a few), were always there to play ball with him. His birds, Apollo, Zulu, and Barney, would call and talk to him throughout the day, occasionally echoing his melodious, warbling whistle. His early desire to be a veterinarian was evidenced in his kindness and comforting demeanor to animals of all kinds. His second love was sports. He loved the Yankees and the Cleveland Browns. He loved hockey, too, having played in his youth. He would follow sports closely and could always tell you who was pitching hot and who was in a slump. He also loved the West. As a child he read all of Zane Grey's novels, and became enamored with the western wilderness, like his father. Once he had moved to Idaho, family vacations were spent touring and camping in the National Parks throughout the west; Bryce, Zion, Yosemite, Yellowstone, etc., ingraining a love and respect for the outdoors in his children. Above these, his greatest love was for his children, near or far, and we spent many happy hours with him playing games, golfing, watching sports, fishing, or just conversing over a hot cup of joe or over the telephone. He especially loved his grandchildren and would attend their special events whenever possible. One of his deepest regrets was the familial strain evoked by the distance between Idaho, South Carolina, and Michigan.

Shortly after retiring in 2012 after a 40-plus year career, his wife, Pat, had a stroke that confined her to a nursing home. For two years, Dad would spend mornings and evenings at the nursing home feeding her and keeping her company. She passed away peacefully in his presence in 2014. Afterwards, he found time to golf and bowl again, to play guitar and bass, and to rebuild his friendships with fellow retirees. His actions taught us all a lesson in dedication, and throughout it all, he remained a man of thoughtful humor, patience, wisdom, and constant kindness. All found comfort in his presence.

He was preceded in death by his father, Floyd; mother, Ruth; sister, Carol; and granddaughters, Alicia and Camille. He is survived by his sisters Donna (Joe) Helm of Binghamton, NY; and Rhoda Jones of Marathon, NY; his brothers, Frank, of Pocatello, ID, and Dave (Linda) of Medina, NY; and his sons, Dave (Leslie) of Shelley, ID; Warren (Pageant) of Idaho Falls; Larry (Angeca) Jolley of Pocatello; Marshall (Tammie) of Chapin, SC; and Dwight (Lisa) of Irmo, SC; and daughter Tammy Handley of Canton, MI; as well as six granddaughters: Kallie, Lacey, Phoebe, Brooke, Penelope, and Graycie, and four grandsons: Xavier, Parker, Riley, and Colt. All of whom will miss him every day of their lives.

Family and friends are invited to pay their respects at a remembrance service to be held Saturday, April 27th at Wilks funeral home, 211 W Chubbuck Rd, Chubbuck, Idaho at 2:00 PM. The family requests that you bring a favorite dessert to share. His ashes will be scattered in a private ceremony the following day at OK Ward Park, where a tree will be planted in his name. A portion of his ashes will be interred in the family cemetery plot in Marathon, NY, at a future date.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the American Diabetes Association in his name at <https://donations.diabetes.org>, then click 'Make a Memorial Donation.'

"I hope I have found myself, my work, my happiness - under the light of the western skies." - Zane Grey

Memories and condolences may be shared with the family under the "Tribute Wall" tab above.





# Comments

---



“ So sorry for your loss. Your family is in our thoughts and prayers.  
David Sargeant Family

Dave Sargeant family - April 29 at 12:27 PM

---



“ I worked with Gerry at the INL, he was one of the good guys, I am saddened to see he has passed. My condolences to all his loved ones.

Paula Olson - April 28 at 03:23 PM

---



“ Warren sorry to hear of your dads passing. I have lots of fond memories of traveling with your dad for work! He was a great guy and I am lucky to have been his friend!  
Prayers to you and your family!  
Fran

Fran - April 27 at 09:07 PM

---



“ 173 files added to the album LifeTributes



Wilks Funeral Home - April 26 at 11:37 AM

---



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Gerry L. Jones.



April 23 at 08:50 PM

---



“ Such a sweet person! Hugs and prayers for the family!

**Sunshine Gregory** - April 20 at 11:16 PM