



James Michael Merfeld

February 6, 1955 - May 12, 2020

James Michael Merfeld, of Bellingham, Washington, passed away May 12, 2020, of ampullary cancer. He is survived by his wife, Sidney Anderson; son, Noel Merfeld, daughter, Kara Merfeld; siblings Joan Roberts, Jan Merfeld, Tom Merfeld, Pat MacDonald, Mark Merfeld and Ellen Morrow; and numerous cousins, nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles and dear friends. He was preceded in death by his parents.

Jim was born February 6, 1955, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to Mike and Kathleen [McDonnell] Merfeld. Jim attended All Saints Elementary School and Regis High School, graduating in 1973. At Regis, he played football, basketball and baseball and was an all-state football player.

Jim's mechanical engineering aptitude was apparent at a young age through his endless experimenting. In so doing, Jim learned carpentry, mechanical and electrical repair, and creative problem solving. In high school, Jim worked constantly on his Willys jeep, learning how things work. In 1977, Jim graduated from Iowa State University with a degree in mechanical engineering.

Drawn to the Pacific Northwest, Jim settled in Seattle right after college to work for Boeing as an engineer, and met the love of his life, Sidney Anderson, originally from Fargo, North Dakota. They married September 3, 1983, and

had their two children, Noel and Kara. After leaving Boeing and working for a mechanical contractor, in 1990 he started his own company, United Energy Engineers, with his partner Glenn Wallace. Though successful there, Jim hoped to live in a smaller city where he could easily go riding on quiet country roads or hike in the mountains.

Jim opened the Bellingham office of UEE, focusing on HVAC controls design and installation, when the family moved here in 1994, and he later bought out Glenn's shares in the company. Jim was known for his fair prices, customer service and profit-sharing with employees. He had a wealth of technical information on the tip of his tongue, and yet he was friendly and engaged with everyone on the job. Over time, Jordan Beaudin and Dave Gallant joined him as owners.

Jim pursued multiple hobbies, each with zeal, mostly outside, and always on the move. He loved to travel and explored much of the world with Sidney; boated in the San Juan Islands; and helped develop the neighborhood beach. For years he took a kayak trip in September with men friends who would head north to distant shores for paddling, stories and braving the elements. He was an avid mountain biker. Well known on Galbraith Mountain, he supported the Whatcom Mountain Bike Coalition financially and installed plaques along the trails that say, simply, "Life Is Good." Jim was a fixture at the early morning YMCA basketball games and was instrumental in creating a friendly, welcoming, competitive atmosphere. Camaraderie was a driving force for him, so he created that for himself and others.

Jim was an amazing husband, always supportive of Sidney's dancing and in her career. Sidney relied on his love, good judgment and companionship as well as his ability to fix just about anything. He also did most of the cooking—what a guy!

Jim loved family adventures. The kids grew up outdoors, on the water and in the woods. He was a devoted father, deeply involved in their day-to-day life and family traditions.

Jim was a friend to all. His rambunctious, mischievous humor and storytelling brightened everyone's day. More than anything, he lived a conviction that each moment held meaning and an abundance of possibility.

Jim was diagnosed with cancer in early 2018. He endured treatment with determination and grace. He lived life fully to the very end.

Donations may be made in Jim's name to the YMCA, https://operations.daxko.com/online/4036/OnlineGiving/Donation.mvc?campaign_id=7646

Tribute Wall



“ *I am so deeply sorry to hear of the loss of your incredible Husband and Father! The last time I spoke with Jim was at the Y, just before covid. He was so focused on fighting this cancer and doing Everything in his power to prevail.*

Jim lead an extraordinary Life. I feel Blessed to have been at least on the perimeter. Peace be with each of his Family members who are part of him and carry on his beautiful Legacy in our World.

Claudia Callahan - July 06, 2021 at 12:00 AM