



## James Herman Sanderson Jr

October 4, 1951 - December 2, 2016

James Herman Sanderson Jr., age 65, passed away peacefully Friday, December 2, 2016 at his home in Bellingham, WA from complications associated with ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease). James was preceded in death by his father, James H. Sanderson, Sr. and by his mother, Armistice Lemon-Sanderson. He is survived by his sister, Donna Sanderson Davidson, his brothers, Michael, Danny and David Sanderson, and countless other family members and friends who loved him dearly.

James was born in Washington, D.C. and spent much of his childhood in Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina. At the age of 17, James enlisted in the Army. After boot camp, he was sent to Germany and then was deployed to Vietnam for 11 months, before returning to the United States. In 1976, James re-enlisted into the Navy, to serve his country for two more years.

Once back to civilian life, James explored numerous occupations, lending his intelligence and ethic for hard work to his employers, while always looking out for his co-workers and standing up for those who needed a strong voice. James took utmost pride in the work he did with Real Change, The Roy Street Shelter, and independently, as an advocate to end homelessness.

James had an unquenchable thirst for learning and was meticulous in the notes he kept and the research he did. He was an extremely talented and

creative man, always working to educate himself further on the ways of the changing world around him. He earned his Associates of Applied Science Degrees in multi-occupational trades, data processing, and real estate and also earned his certificate as a Journeyman Carpenter.

James traveled throughout the United States- by motorcycle, by bus, by truck and later, by suped-up wheelchair- never losing his passion for adventure. James thrilled his friends with stories of taking his hot rod (i.e. the suped up wheelchair) up the trails to the Arboretum, out the interurban, and even on a trip to Boe-Edison via Chukanut Drive, grinning from ear to ear as he spoke of cars honking and waving to him as they passed.

James' generosity, hospitality and kindness of spirit were unrivaled. He always had a cool drink, hot tea and chocolates available to offer to his human guests, and he thrilled his furry friends by never forgetting to offer them a treat. James had a propensity to make everyone around him feel special and included. He loved to celebrate others and the childlike joy that would spread upon his face when he pulled off a good surprise, gave the perfect gift, or unexpectedly showed up at someone's place of business bearing flowers, was a wonder to behold.

James always spoke affectionately, and with the utmost respect, about his family members. He often told stories about his grandparents farm, spoke about the bond that he had with his siblings that crossed time and space, and shared wonderful memories of goofing around with his nieces and nephews.

Throughout his life James dealt with trials and tribulations that would have defeated a lesser man. It is a tribute to his strength of mind and the good of his character that James continued to rise above, always looking out for those less fortunate than him and forever seeing beauty and positivity in the world around him. Whenever he was asked how he was doing- even when he could

barely breath, he struggled with the fatigue that ALS brought on, and his voice was reduced to a whisper- he would reply, "I am Blessed."

A service for James will be held Friday, December 9 at 2pm, at Moles Farewell Tributes – Greenacres at 5700 Northwest Ave, in Ferndale, WA. In lieu of flowers, please make donations to Real Change at [www.realchangenews.org](http://www.realchangenews.org) and/or to The Evergreen Chapter of the ALS Association at [www.alsa-ec.org](http://www.alsa-ec.org).

# Tribute Wall

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“ I only met James once – he came to help me with some serious water issues in my yard that was approaching flooding my home. He worked tirelessly to divert the “river” away from the house. After he finished I offered for him to come inside, so I could dry his clothes and get him something to eat. He insisted he was fine and went to leave – I handed him some money and he refused to take it – my husband had died recently and he said he was doing it for Joe... I remember his southern drawl and his generosity...

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**KATHLEEN BULLOCK** - December 02, 2016 at 12:00 AM