



## James Whitman Smith

November 6, 1928 - September 20, 2018

James Whitman Smith

Nov 7, 1928~Sept. 20, 2018

Jim was born in Fox, Ok. While growing up he also lived in Ardmore, Ok. His family had a farm there and they were widely known for their sorghum. After leaving Oklahoma and moving with his family to southern California, Jim worked as a machinist. It was there he met and married Harriet Rich. They started their family in Azusa, Ca. They moved to Placerville, Ca. in the late 50s, when Jim worked for Aerojet General in Sacramento. He built a speed boat in the garage so the family could water ski on their camping trips to the Sly Park.

In 1962 the family moved to Hoskins Oregon to buy his parent's property and run Fisherman's Camp on the Luckiamute River. He taught his kids how to fish, clean and paint cabins, and rake the property "park clean". At this time he also worked at Moore-Rane MFG Co. and performed with a family band on the weekends.

In 1966 the family moved to South Pasadena, Ca. where Jim was a supervisor for plastic injection molding at Digitran. In 1969 they made their final move as a family to Redondo Beach, Ca. Jim bought a sailboat and obtained his mariner's license so the family could sail the waters, fish, and make trips to Catalina Island. He was known for playing his guitar while keeping his foot on the tiller to steer the boat!

Jim spent his last working years at Gillette Paper Mate in Santa Monica, Ca. as a supervisor and he delighted in giving the family special pens. After retiring in 1988, Jim spent most of his retirement years between Redondo Beach, Ca. and Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. He was known at his favorite bookstore and espresso shop in Puerto Vallarta as "Santa Claus", because of his beautiful white beard. Family knew that if they needed to reach him, they could call there and get a message to Santa! He moved back to Corvallis, Oregon in 2006 to be close to his family.

He was a hunter gatherer; he fished, bow hunted and scuba dived for food and pleasure. He would now be what is called a "foodie", preparing everything from abalone that he caught to handmade candy. On family trips to Hoskins, Ore. from California, he would commandeer the family to pick blackberries, put them on ice, and then head back to California to make freezer jam.

Jim grew up in a family of musicians, originating in the church. He had a great love of old country music, but enjoyed and shared much of the same music and many of the same contemporary folk and country artists as his children. He took his family to folk and bluegrass festivals for family vacations. He had a gorgeous voice and a perfect yodel. The family had a charmed life for many years because music was always involved. At every family gathering they would pull out their guitars and other instruments and he would sing many of his classic country songs with his kids singing harmony, and the youngsters would contribute their favorite songs. The family appreciated how special this was, that it was due to Jim's influence, and that not all families had this privilege and the joy that it brought. He let them all learn to play on his favorite old Martin guitar and he didn't care if it got a little beat up as long as they showed an interest in learning to play. Jim encouraged his children in all ways he could to make music and that gave rise to generations of musicians in the family. These memories will be cherished forever.

He was recorded for a program on BBC radio by his friend Lillian Archibald in the early 60s. Also in the early 60s, he, his wife Harriet, and his brother Mack formed a band – The Tunesmiths. They played local venues in the valley, at the coast and at Mt. Hood Lodge. In his later years he would perform solo in small clubs.

Jim was preceded in death by his parents James H. Smith, Louisa Jane Chapman, step-father Harvey Chapman, sister Laverne Hattensty, former wife Harriet Rich, son Dennis Smith, daughter-in-law Renee Smith, and daughter Laura Ann Gast. He is survived by brother Tony Smith (Gayle), brother Mack Smith, daughter Sandy Smith (Jack Wolcott), daughter Teresa King (Jeff King), granddaughter Monica Smith, son-in-law Frank Gast, granddaughter Anneliese Gast (Andrew Freborg), grandson Wyman ("Bo") Gast and numerous nieces and nephews.

The family greatly appreciates and would like to thank the staff at the Corvallis Manor where he lived since 2009, for the good care and kindness he received. Per his request, there will be no services.

Please see the video/audio link on the Tribute Wall to hear recordings of Jim!

# Comments

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“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



**Anneliese Gast** - October 24, 2018 at 12:27 PM

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“ I'm so sorry to hear this. May his memories bring you comfort, our thoughts and prayers will be with your family in the coming days! Hugs~Tamara Ching

**Tamara Ching** - October 05, 2018 at 12:24 AM

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“ Tamara Ching lit a candle in memory of James Whitman Smith



**Tamara Ching** - October 05, 2018 at 12:19 AM

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“ Jolynne Baertlein lit a candle in memory of James Whitman Smith



**Jolynne Baertlein** - October 04, 2018 at 08:39 PM

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“ Denny & Nicole Thompson lit a candle in memory of James Whitman Smith



Denny & Nicole Thompson - October 04, 2018 at 07:44 PM

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“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



sandy - October 04, 2018 at 03:10 PM



“ RIP uncle Jimmy. Much love and nothing but fond memories of you

Jolynne Baertlein - October 04, 2018 at 08:37 PM



“ I had forgotten his sweet voice

Faye - October 04, 2018 at 11:29 PM



“ Mighty fine soulful music and singing! May James continue to blossom!

Ralph - October 05, 2018 at 12:08 PM



“ Just so great. I have listened to this probably a hundred times. Thank you...

Wyman - October 06, 2018 at 11:33 AM



“ Teresa and Sandy, thank you SO much for putting your dad's eulogy and pictures and songs on facebook!!!!!! I loved it!!!! Sure would like a copy someday of his life. I remember meeting your dad for the first time at a stables in Azusa Calif where your mom was, I think teaching horse back riding, I myself got hooked on horses back then and never got over my love for the beauty of horses and teased until my parents got one for me. His name was Sunny and we were buddies for years!.....Teresa, Sandy, I loved the story of your dad..... Good job!! He is now in Heaven I'm sure, happy and well again...

Marianne, Harriet Smith's younger ister. - October 06, 2018 at 11:34 AM



“ So sorry you guys. That was great! My Dad started in Azusa and built our first boat in the garage! Moved to Claremont below Mr Baldy we we camped on the Colorado every weekend and the lake. My parents had a folk music band,taught us both guitar and both

had great voices.ny brother went on to teach himself any instrument by ear. Ha ha me not so much. Sending you guys healing good jou-jou. 🦋

**Cheryl d Shocklee friend of Jeff,Teresa** - October 26, 2018 at 08:07 PM

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“ Teresa And Jeff King lit a candle in memory of James Whitman Smith



**Teresa and Jeff King** - October 01, 2018 at 08:05 PM



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**Jolynne Baertlein** - October 04, 2018 at 08:38 PM



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More than 45 years ago, Jim took Lolly and me to a Don Williams concert in Salem and introduced us to his fellow 'tunesmith' troubador. What a thrill! It was always such fun being around him. As a father, he enjoyed the people his children actually were and loved being around them and their friends, seeing them enjoy their lives. He will be missed.

**Carma Henry** - October 25, 2018 at 03:10 AM

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“ Sandy lit a candle in memory of James Whitman Smith



**sandy** - September 27, 2018 at 07:48 PM



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**Jolynne Baertlein** - October 04, 2018 at 08:39 PM