



James Ronald Baggett

April 24, 1928 - January 21, 2016

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Dr. James “Jim” Ronald Baggett, PhD, completed an epic life on Jan. 21, 2016.

Born on April 24, 1928, to James and Laura Baggett in Boise, Idaho, Jim began his grand adventure. The Great Depression arrived about the same time life began for Jim so his parents were working hard to scratch out a living. Eventually settling in Burley, Idaho, where Jim was joined by a younger brother, Keith, who would share many of his adventures.

A life twist occurred soon when at the age of 4, Jim’s mom, Laura, died from complications in pregnancy. Dad and the two boys moved in immediately with Jim’s grandparents. The boys were well loved by them.

Work centered on agriculture, harvesting potatoes or working in a feed mill. Jim recounts a meager homestead where there was no running water or electricity and ice was delivered by wagon. Still, Jim did not know they were poor. Plenty of food was provided by raising livestock and chickens as well as growing a vegetable garden. In 1935, his dad was remarried to Ethel Stimpson. During the ensuing school years, Jim received a real introduction to farming on his grandfather’s farm with the aide of workhorses. He milked

cows, learned to thin and hoe sugar beets, weed beans and harness horses. At 10 years old he remembers a fear of being smashed between two work horses as he was struggling to get the harness over their necks.

Jim recalls trading work with the Butler farm across the road, "Putting up hay with Keith, and I tromping the wagon loads. After the first and second cutting, Mr. Butler gave us each a silver dollar, the most we had ever earned. My two dollars were carefully spent on a \$1 watch and a Kodak Baby Brownie Camera."

Jim and Keith excelled in the classroom as they entered their teenage years, learning all aspects of farming as well. World War II broke out as they were learning how to farm with a tractor instead of horses. After graduating high school, Jim enlisted in the Navy for two years, serving as a Yeoman. Stationed in Guam, he benefited from his typing skills by being assigned to the office of the Commandant of the Naval Base.

In 1948, after his stint in the Navy, Jim traveled home and enrolled at the University of Idaho and majored in horticulture.

During his junior year, he met his future brother-in-law, Mark Martin, a fellow horticulture student. The two became fast friends. Jim ended up spending the summer with Mark's family where he met Janice Martin. The two were married Sept. 8 that year. The newlyweds traveled back to Moscow where Jim completed his senior year and graduated from Idaho State with a degree in horticulture.

After a summer of working for a seed company, Jim and Jan traveled to Corvallis to attend graduate school at Oregon State College in the fall of 1952. It was here that Jim and Jan were reunited with brother Keith and his wife, Audrey. They lived near each other as Keith pursued his pharmacy degree.

The two couples were soon in the hospital together having their first babies, Jimmy and Charlie.

Jim was hired by Oregon State as a vegetable breeder where he became well-known for introducing varieties of vegetables that thrive in the Pacific Northwest. His work has benefited the home gardener as well as master gardeners and commercial farmers. For 30 years Jim also enjoyed judging vegetables at the Oregon State Fair. He has received several awards including the Green Thumb Award from the Oregon Master Gardeners Association, the National Food Producers Award for Raw Products Research (1978), the Northwest Food Processors Association 1990 Distinguished Service Award and was inducted into the University of Idaho Alumni Hall of Fame in 1993. In 1996 the Baggett-Frazier Vegetable Breeder Professorship was created to continue the tradition of excellence demonstrated by Jim at Oregon State University.

Jim enjoyed a life of hobbies that was always changing and going strong. His most extensive hobbies included: rock hounding and lapidary; pottery, which led to a purchase of a wheel and developing his own glazes; restoring and printing photos of family history, and of course horticulture. The Baggett property has been a never ending array of ornamental and vegetable gardens, his work and pleasure which he never tired of. It was enjoyed by all. He provided many family and friends with tomato plants and produce as well as flowers from his vast supply of dahlias and zinnias.

His legacy and the hobby that will continue to give throughout the generations are the family histories that he wrote — nine books in all — following every branch of our family tree.

Jim was a faithful husband and father, and a man of humility and integrity. He

pursued tasks with vigor and excellence. He had a strong work ethic, never leaving a job unfinished. Though a man of few words, his intellect, wit, kindness, hobbies, and diligence have enriched the world around him. He will be greatly missed.

Jim is survived by his loving wife of 63 years, Jan; and their four children, James (Kim), Stanley (Debbie), Mitchell (Mary Beth), and Michelle (Marlin Seefeldt). Jim is also survived by 10 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. We would also like to remember his late daughter-in-law, Pam.

A private ceremony will be held at a later date.

Donations can be made in Jim's honor to Samaritan Evergreen Hospice and the American Cancer Society in care of McHenry Funeral Home, 206 N.W. Fifth St., Corvallis, OR 97330.

Tribute Wall

DL

“ *Dr. Jim Baggett,*

A friend, a colleague, a professional and a mentor, Jim was all of these and more. You could not ask for a more congenial, practical down to earth individual who had very good common sense and was focused in what needed to be done. I am thankful for the knowledge I gained from Jim. The agricultural industry and home gardeners will be forever indebted for the varieties and germ plasm he released during his tenure at OSU. Jim will be greatly missed.

*Dick Lowe
Retired Director of Research
PURE LINE SEEDS, INC*

Dick Lowe - February 20, 2016 at 11:38 AM

MI

“ *Jim at work.*



Michelle - February 01, 2016 at 12:43 AM

MI

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Michelle - January 29, 2016 at 10:20 PM

TD

“ When I started farming in Corvallis 1978 the first crop we cultivated was Oregon Sugarpod Pea, which was bred by Jim. He kindly provided seed to a couple of young "farmer wannabees." Later, his tomato cultivars Oregon Spring, Siletz, and Santiam became the work horses of our vegetable farm. His vegetable breeding successes live on, to remind us of this great man and his contributions to the world.

Tom Denison

Tom Denison - January 28, 2016 at 04:35 PM

AW

“ Jim's green thumb reached more people than you know. When I was a kid, I used to help my folks judge different varieties of squash that dad (Bud) said he brought home from Jim Baggett. I didn't know Jim well but instantly liked his quiet and thoughtful demeanor. Filling out paperwork on the different qualities of squash -- color, texture, flavor, appearance gave me a real appreciation for a high quality squash without anything on it. I think of him every time I have a velvety sweet Delicata, especially if I've grown it myself. Wanting that same good flavor that I discovered as a kid has been a major factor in spurring me to grow my own food. And I do believe a bit of us gets worked with the soil that nourishes our future. Thank you, Jim

Andrea Weiser - January 28, 2016 at 03:32 PM

MW

“ *Dr. Baggett's kindness and excellent teaching for all of us graduate students at Oregon State was inspiring to me. Quiet caring and amazing plant breeding skills and knowledge: every project or hobby he engaged in was done to perfection. One hobby that was not mentioned in his obituary was his collection of Narcissus and jonquils (in the 70s). I am sorry for your loss of this great man and my friend. Dr. Mary Hotze Witt, University of Kentucky*

Mary Hotze Witt - January 28, 2016 at 07:48 AM

MI

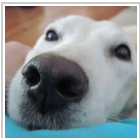
Yes the Narcissus. My dad became re interested in those about ten years ago leaving us plenty to enjoy. We appreciate your entry.

Michelle - January 29, 2016 at 02:13 PM

SH

Hi Michelle. We have never met. I'm Glen Terrieres granddaughter. Does that make us double cousins? I am a fellow horticulturist and a big admirer of your fathers work and legacy. I went to visit him and your mom, few times in the last couple of years and had so much fun admiring his garden, ceramics, and incredible bonsai collection. He was truly an inspiring passionate person, until the end. I'd love to come to his service if it hasnt already happened.

sharris - February 18, 2016 at 04:22 PM



“ *I am so sorry to hear of Dr. Baggett's passing. I was a horticulture student at OSU, and so admired his vegetable breeding skills. You are in my thoughts and prayers. Dr. Margaret Norton, University of Illinois.*

Margaret Norton - January 27, 2016 at 12:13 PM