



## James L Washburn

June 8, 1939 - December 21, 2020

Jim Washburn passed away on December 21, 2020, after a valiant 7 year battle with melanoma.

Jim was born on June 8, 1939, in Longmont, Colorado, but spent the majority of his first 8 years in Iowa, including a year and a half at a Catholic boarding school. When his mother remarried, the family moved west to California and then to Portland, Oregon, where the family settled. Jim attended 3 elementary schools in the Grant district and graduated from Grant High in 1957.

The first in his family to attend college, Jim worked at Boeing and surveying to put himself through college. He attended PSU for 2 years, before transferring to the University of Oregon for another 2 years, where he became a member of Beta Theta Phi.

Jim was a lifelong adventurer and, after 4 years of college, worked for a year on Grand Bahama Island life-guarding and instructing scuba. He then traveled to Europe and then spent another year working and traveling through Europe by Vespa.

Returning to the US, Jim worked in Montana on the Minuteman Missile silos before returning to Oregon to reestablish residence and complete his Bachelor's degree at OSU. He then continued his education with graduate

work in oceanography. While working at OSU in 1968, Jim met Kathy Steinbach, who happened to live in the same apartment complex. They married in 1971 and shared life's adventures for next 49 years. In 1980, their lives were enriched by the birth of their son, Doug.

Jim spent the majority of his career working for OSU's Department of Ocean Engineering as a research associate and as the university's first diving officer. Jim participated in many long cruises on the OSU research vessel, the Yaquina, being responsible for the hydrographic data. He made numerous dives on the TOTEM project to moor instruments designed to monitor oceanographic and meteorological conditions. He participated in oceanographic experiments in Tahiti, New Caledonia, and the Bahamas. He was in charge of hydrographic data on cruises to Costa Rica and Peru, which provided him with the opportunity to dive in the Galapagos before the tourist boom! He also set up experiments in the OSU wave tank to study the effects of storm and tsunamis.

As a diving officer, Jim worked with as many as 500 divers on university related projects and estimated he made around 150-200 dives a year. Jim had the opportunity to dive around the world~from the Arctic to South America and from the Persian Gulf to Polynesia. One of the nicknames he was given as a diver was "Iceman," for calmly playing Tic-Tac-Toe with a fellow diver while being circled by a great white shark.

On leave from the university, Jim worked as a diving supervisor on the Exxon Valdez oil spill, spent two summers instructing scuba at ARAMCO and worked as a consultant to the EPA on a sewage dumping project which allowed him the opportunity to spend a week living in an underwater habitat.

Jim enjoyed ski trips and traveling with his family to Hawaii, Mexico, Europe, the Caribbean, Canary Islands, and French Polynesia. Jim was an avid

reader, enjoyed coffee chats with friends and cheering on the Beavers He was thrilled sharing his diving passion with his son, coaching his son's soccer and basketball teams, and visiting in Sweden to spend time with his son and other family. He appreciated the many wonderful sailing adventures he shared with good friends in Hawaii, Canada, Tahiti, the Bahamas, and Croatia.

Jim was definitely a people person and keenly interested in others. HE had an engaging smile, punctuated by dimples, which drew people to him. Jim had an intellectual curiosity, a good sense of humor, was an excellent listener, and loved a good conversation. He felt fortunate to work in a stimulating university environment, live in an enlightened community, and have talented, intelligent, and caring friends and family.

Jim is survived by his wife, Kathy; his son, Doug (Paula); and his two beloved grandchildren: Olivia and William. He is also survived by his three sisters: Judy Brennan, Pat Minor, and Lisa Trickle.

In line with Jim's wishes, a celebration of life will be held once the pandemic has passed. For those interested, donations in Jim's memory can be made to the Union of Concerned Scientists, with hope that science can help our planet be safe and healthy for future generations,

# Tribute Wall

BG

“ Jim was the dive officer for most of my 21 years at OSU. I always enjoyed my interactions with Jim as he was both rigorous and facilitative. Such a friendly demeanor; always a joy to be around.

*Bill Gerwick*  
*1984-2005 in college of pharmacy*

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**Bill gerwick** - February 15, 2021 at 02:55 PM

JO

“ I’ve known Jim for many years and one of my memories was of how happy he made his friends by having had the brilliant sense and fortune to have married Kathy. He was such a warm and friendly person, he always made you feel as if it was a wonderful surprise to run into you, even if you had just seen him the day before. Kathy, our thoughts and sympathy are with you and your family.” Janet O’Doherty-Hessel

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**Janet M O’Doherty-Hessel** - January 18, 2021 at 08:11 PM

AH

“ I met Jim in 1969 or 1970, during my first year as a graduate student in Oceanography: he was a sea-going technician, and thus responsible for teaching us green newbies the essentials of sampling the ocean and its waters without endangering our selves or others. Jim was always kind and considerate, an excellent teacher. Kathy, thank you for your role in enabling him to provide so much support to so many.

*Jane Huyer*

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**Adriana Huyer** - January 16, 2021 at 04:31 PM

EB

“ When we moved to Corvallis in 1981, Jim and Kathy were among the first people to welcome us. While others would say "you must come over sometime" and then never follow up, Jim and Kathy invited us to their home and introduced us to so many other people. I will never forget and will always appreciate the warmth of their welcome. Jim was always a joy to spend time with. His positive approach to life and his energy were infectious. We are so sad to know that we will never be able to do TGIF at Big River with him again. We will look forward to celebrating his wonderful life and sharing memories with Kathy and Doug at a later date. Till then our love and sympathy is with you.

*Elizabeth and Chris Bell*

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**Elizabeth M Bell** - January 13, 2021 at 08:26 PM

DH

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



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**Dale Hubbard** - January 08, 2021 at 05:01 PM

DH

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



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**Dale Hubbard** - January 08, 2021 at 05:00 PM

DH

“ Jim was an outstanding individual who I was lucky enough to have known in a variety of roles: mentor, advisor, colleague, and friend. I met him initially as OSU's dive safety officer, and I was very impressed by his laid back yet involved management style. Jim had this knack for inviting OSU divers on social weekend dive outings during which the divers would have a good time and Jim would be secretly assessing their skills. Jim tough this formerly young graduate student a thing or two about collegiality, about mixing business with pleasure (which it turns out is pretty easy when you are engaged in a pleasurable business), and about enjoying life's finer pleasures. As others have said, Jim will be sorely missed. My deepest sympathies to Kathy, Doug, and the rest of his family.

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**Dale Hubbard** - January 08, 2021 at 04:48 PM

LC

“ Jim was a great guy. I worked with him at OSU wave tank for years. I got my diving license from him. I heard many of his stories of his dives in the Caribbean and other places. We did so many things together. He'll be missed. Larry Crawford.

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**Larry Crawford** - January 08, 2021 at 10:51 AM

MH

“ Jim was my Diving Safety Officer from 1984, when I was hired by OSU, until his retirement. I also served on the OSU Diving Control Board with him. Jim was always friendly, helpful, and enthusiastic. I was a pleasure working with him. My heart goes out to his family. Aloha, my friend!

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**Mark Hixon** - January 05, 2021 at 01:52 PM

KB

“ I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to have gotten to really know Jim when I moved to Corvallis as OSU's full-time dive officer. I had met Jim previously through AAUS, but did not know much about the OSU program. I remember when I was out for my interview I was looking for something to do that night. Driving around campus, I noticed some bright lights at what looked like an athletic field, so I checked it out. As a soccer player and fan I was happily surprised to find a match in progress with the OSU Women's Soccer team hard at it on the pitch. As I was walking around looking for a seat, I heard somebody hailing me- and then saw Jim's smiling face with Kathy up in the stands! And that pretty much helped tip the scales, and Jim became both friend and advisor from that point on. We made a great road trip to co-present to the NW Historical Diving Society, and Jim kept me current on news in CEOAS, was always finding gear to donate, and would call me out to lunch at McMEnamin's to talk shop-and soccer!

The current OSU scientific diving program and the students that it has grown to support during my tenure owe a huge debt to the foundations laid by Jim during his long years of service and dedication.

As I come to grips with the fact that I won't be getting anymore phone calls and lunch invites, I will reflect on the fun visits with Jim and Kathy and be thankful to have met and gotten to know Jim for the now, seemingly short, time that I had. Well done, Jim!

*Kevin Buch*

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**Kevin Buch** - January 05, 2021 at 01:33 PM

BS

“ We will sure miss this always positive Jim Washburn. He only asked about us and never talked about himself. His respect for and devotion to Kathy was tremendous. The example he set, particularly over the last years, as he lived an active life while struggling against cancer was amazing. This community will dearly miss his perspectives and we can rely on his memory for those good ideas in the future.

*Bruce Sorte*

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**Bruce Sorte** - December 25, 2020 at 11:01 PM

PK

“ My deepest sympathies go out to the family of Jim on his passing. I sailed with Jim on many CEOAS cruises with Jim aboard the R/V Yaquina and the R/V Cayuse hanging hundreds of Nansen bottles. Jim was a wonderful shipmate and co-worker. I also took the SCUBA certification class from Jim. Rest in peace, old buddy. May you have fair winds and following seas on your next journey.

*Pete Kalk (CEOAS, retired).*

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**Peter A. Kalk** - December 22, 2020 at 06:36 PM