



James F. Harris

March 12, 1939 - August 21, 2022

Voorheesville - James (Jim) Harris passed away peacefully on August 21, 2022, at the age of 83, surrounded by his family. His sense of humor and joy for living vivaciously always infected those around him.

Jim was born in Albany, New York, on March 12, 1939, to Ruth and James M. Harris, who predeceased him. He was a Boy Scout in his youth and a paper boy for the Times Union and the Knickerbocker News. He would reminisce about being 12 years old delivering 200 papers, seven days a week on his bicycle, rain or shine. He had the same route for three years. This work ethic carried through into his teenage and adult years.

He attended five different high schools due to his father's company's transfers for work, ultimately graduating from Searles High School in Great Barrington, Massachusetts as captain of his basketball team. He then attended Concordia Teachers College with the goal of becoming a preacher, but dropped out to pursue work. This decision ultimately transformed him into a lifelong learner and mentor, centered on improving the lives of others.

Jim started his career as a truck driver for a liquor distributor before working in

operations. He took accounting night classes when he could and ended up heading a national marketing and sales team for a cleaning company. In 1972, Jim started his own business, Janitronics Facility Services. He spent the next 50 years working nearly every day on his business until 2022. In 1984, he was joined by his son. The company currently employs three generations of his own family, as well as many employees across upstate NY and Vermont. Their ethos, created by Jim himself, is, "You mind your business, we'll keep it clean."

In 1979, he was approached by one of his best friends, Dan Bishop from Omaha, Nebraska, to expand Dan's blooming business, The Maids. Jim supported Dan, his family, and the staff as The Maids scaled their business to hundreds of locations across the USA and Canada. Jim also served on the board for The Maids International for nearly 30 years.

Jim was entirely self-taught, and often talked about his self-improvement cassettes he would listen to in the car, and finding mentors. He was an exemplary speaker, a passionate reader, and extraordinary businessman. He spent most days speaking about the cleaning industry and its significant impact on all of our lives. In 1992, he founded Concepts4 International Consulting, a training and consulting business for the cleaning industry. His cleaning systems and training impacted millions worldwide, and his processes and techniques established in the early 1990s are still in use today. As one of the founding members of the Cleaning Industry Research Institute (CIRI), he helped spread the story of the efficacy of cleaning around the world. When the ISSA conducted their research to develop their K-12 Cleaning Standard to be used internationally, Jim oversaw that research and made sure that the cleaning for health standard was priority. He was heavily involved in writing standards used to clean higher education facilities with APPA in the late 80's

that are still used today. Even in an unofficial capacity, Jim led the way in the national and international cleaning community with his emphasis on the science of cleaning and the impacts it had on health.

Jim's guidance and leadership was in high demand as he served as the first Chairman of the merged Albany Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce. He was a founding member of the Center for Economic Growth. He also served on the board of Building Service Contractors Association International (BSCAI) for 12 years and was a founding member of the World Federation of Building Service Contractors. Jim was also a founding member of the Capital Region Building Owners and Managers Association (CRBOMA).

He was committed to his community and his philanthropy efforts were spread wide. Jim volunteered for Shenendehowa Junior Plainsmen youth football, even serving as their organization's President for some time. He also helped sponsor several different youth sports groups throughout the Capital Region. He served on numerous nonprofit boards, including the local American Cancer Society, St Peters Foundation, Youth For Christ, and St. Anne's Institute, just to name a few. His belief to give back to his community was always present on his mind.

Among his many accolades, he won Best Dressed Man in Albany (1986) and LifePath's Third Age Achievement award (2021), along with numerous other civic and professional awards.

In his spare time, Jim loved to play a round of golf at Albany Country Club

where he was a member for almost 50 years, and he even once hit a hole in one on Hole 16. For the last 40 years, Jim enjoyed driving his boat around Lake George with family and friends. He was a fan of the New York Giants and the Yankees. His curious mind and intellect had Jim constantly collecting books and watching the History Channel. On other days, you could catch him telling tales of his travels around the world, getting a speeding ticket from at least seven different countries, and meeting people like Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, and Jack Welch.

Jim was beloved by friends and especially his large family. He is survived by his children, James (Lori Anne) of Clifton Park, Jill Harris-Johnson of Latham, LanJin (Chris Astrouski) of Tucson, Arizona, and daughter-in-law Tina of Birmingham, Alabama. He was predeceased by his son Jeffery. Jim was a proud grandfather of Daniel, Brian, Brianna, Abigail, Chamberlain, and Braxton Harris. He is survived by his brother Robert (Joy) Harris, and predeceased by younger brothers Edwin and Gerald Harris. He has many cousins, nieces, and nephews.

The family would like to thank all those who cared for Jim and have shown support and friendship throughout his life.

All are invited to celebrate Jim's life on September 2, 2022 at Our Savior's Lutheran Church (63 Mountain View Ave, Albany NY 12205) with a visitation starting at 10:00 am, followed by his Funeral Service at 12:30 pm, and a reception at Albany Country Club (300 Wormer Road, Voorheesville, NY 12186) at 2:00 pm.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to St Peter's Hospital. Gifts can be made online at givetospeters.org and directed in memory of Jim Harris, or sent to: St. Peter's Hospital Foundation at 310 South Manning Blvd, Albany, NY 12208.

To leave Jim's family a message on their guestbook, obtain directions, or view other helpful services, please visit www.mcveighfuneralhome.com

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP 2. 10:00 AM - 12:30 PM (ET)

Our Savior's Lutheran Church
63 Mountain View Avenue
Albany, NY 12205

Service

SEP 2. 12:30 PM (ET)

Our Savior's Lutheran Church
63 Mountain View Avenue
Albany, NY 12205

Reception

SEP 2. 2:00 PM (ET)

Albany Country Club
300 Wormer Road
Voorheesville, NY 12186

Tribute Wall



“ *James F. Harris*

October 08, 2023 at 09:24 PM



“ *i met mr harris at time warner job site in 2012 he was a great person nice to meet he will be miss*

Jose barnette - September 03, 2022 at 05:43 PM



“ *I was Jim Sr.'s Companion Aid since January of this year. I took Jim on many of his errands. Whether it was to a doctor, barber, the office, or a retail store, Jim always had a big smile and a soothing voice for everyone. We had many great conversations and I will cherish them. My condolences to Jim and Dan and the rest of the family.*

Joe Vetrone Jr - September 01, 2022 at 03:56 PM



“ *I will always hold a special spot in my heart for Jim Sr. I was fortunate to be part of the company for 20 years. In those 20 years, i was not just an employee, but I was always made to feel as part of their family. Jim Sr. always had such kind words and always connect with his employees on a personal level. I send my deepest sympathies to his incredible family. I will always be connected to the Harris family.*



Valerie Picciano - August 31, 2022 at 10:16 AM

FL

“ *Jim was a highly respected leader of thought and innovation in the janitorial industry. He was always very helpful when teaching and coaching me in my software business. I am extremely grateful for all of his advice. My deepest sympathies to all of the family.*

-Frank Labeledz, Team Software

Frank Labeledz - August 26, 2022 at 05:45 PM

BM

A true gentlemen and family icon. My deepest sympathy to all his loved ones for their loss.

Bill McDaniel - September 02, 2022 at 07:48 AM

JA

“ *Jamie Atchinson lit a candle in memory of James F. Harris*



Jamie Atchinson - August 26, 2022 at 03:05 PM

DL

“ *Danielle Lewis lit a candle in memory of James F. Harris*



Danielle Lewis - August 26, 2022 at 08:20 AM

SA

“ Jim was genuinely a good man who always put others before himself. He truly loved his family, always speaking so proudly of them. While his commitment to the cleaning industry was second to none setting a high bar for others to follow. He will be missed, but not forgotten.

Stephen Ashkin - August 25, 2022 at 05:27 PM

AR

Jim was a caring person who lived by sound principles. He was tough but fair and sensitive to the pain of others (he was kind to me when I endured a prolonged bout of depression).

When someone we know passes, it reminds us of the brevity of this life at present and the importance of making the best use of our time.

I am comforted by the fact that, in my belief, this life is not all there is.

Allen Rathey - August 26, 2022 at 08:42 AM

PP

Jim was the consummate gentleman. He always had a kind word for everyone. He treasured his family, friends and faith above all else, however, his love of golf was a close second. My heartfelt condolences to his entire family. Peter Pastore

Peter Pastore - August 26, 2022 at 10:39 AM

CC

Jim contributed to the disability community by unselfishly sharing many of his ideas on Team Cleaning/Concepts4 through training and consulting. He was always generous with his time and talent. He will be missed and his legacy will live long after this day..... Mickey Crowe

Charles Crowe - August 26, 2022 at 02:58 PM

LK

I always looked forward to seeing Jim at ISSA and, years back, at BSCAI. Some will remember ICAN and his efforts with CIRI. Jim was a hard worker and a true advocate for effective cleaning. He will be fondly remembered.

Lynn E. Krafft

Lynn E. Krafft - August 26, 2022 at 03:24 PM

PL

Jim was one of the people, in my life, whom I respected greatly. He was always gracious, and like a mentor. He seemed to be able to understand the future, better than most. I had quite an adventurous life, but always respected that which he did and it helped inspire me. Much love to the family, you were lucky to have him with you.

*Paul J. LaBossiere
PML Maintenance Ltd.*

Paul Jules LaBossiere - August 26, 2022 at 06:42 PM

BG

Jim was a formidable opponent and a great guy just to hang around with.

*I will miss him.
Condolences to his family*

barnett gershen - August 27, 2022 at 09:48 AM

JW

Jim was a true Gentleman and a pleasure to converse with. Although I'm no longer at Our Savior's, I'll say a prayer for Jim at my new Church in So. Carolina. I miss him sitting behind me.

John Wood - August 28, 2022 at 01:20 PM

RK

Jim leaves a great legacy...an awesome Family of caring and hard working people...a very successful business he studiously passed on to the next generation...and contributions to the 'science' and success of the cleaning industry at large. He was a big Man who thought big and acted with grace and passion. Jim Sr.'s Life is a role model for all of us.

Rob Kohlhagen

Rob Kohlhagen - August 29, 2022 at 03:47 PM

RB

A man of integrity never to be forgotten.

*Ruby Bernardo
Latham*

Ruby Bernardo - August 29, 2022 at 04:48 PM

PA

*With deepest sympathy to the Harris family from Patrick Comaskey &
Allyson Spurling and all at Direct Clean.
Jim, you will be greatly missed*

Patrick - August 30, 2022 at 03:35 PM

PM

*Jill, I am so sorry to hear of your loss. Your Dad sounds like a very
special person. He will be in my prayers.*

Pat Mendel - September 01, 2022 at 01:19 AM