



James W. Yocum

October 14, 1954 - January 7, 2024

SHIRLEY: James W. Yocum, 69, of Shirley, died Sunday, January 7, 2024, after a brave struggle with prostate cancer.

Jim was born in Maquoketa, Iowa on October 14, 1954, son of Dudley E. and Virginia (Hardin) Yocum. He grew up working in his family's Western Auto store. He was a graduate of Maquoketa High School and the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, where he received a Bachelors of Science Degree in Computer Science.

Jim and Barbara, his wife of 37 years, resided in Shirley for more than 20 years. He was involved with his community, serving as a Registrar for the Town of Shirley, on the Zoning Board of Appeals, and driving for Meals on Wheels. He was a licensed private pilot, a longtime volunteer with the beagle-rescue group Beagles of New England States (BONES), and an avid woodworker.

Throughout his career, Jim worked for several computer corporations in Minnesota and Massachusetts, including Control Data, Wang Laboratories, ComputerVision, and the Digital Equipment Corporation, retiring in 2003. He also shared his computer knowledge by teaching night classes at Boston University.

Jim was well known in the area for his passion for cooking. After retiring from the computer industry, Jim took classes at the Culinary Institute of America, acquiring skills to be a chef. He then embarked on a twenty-year career in the culinary world, cooking professionally at several area restaurants such as the Herb Lyceum in Groton, Nancy's Airfield Café in Stow, and the Marriott Event Center at Devens. He especially enjoyed teaching people about cooking, and hosted the local access TV show "Great Cooking at Home with Chef Jim Yocum."

In addition to his wife Barbara A. (Andersen) Yocum, Jim leaves his sister Mary Margaret ("Marg") Nelson of Las Vegas, NV; in-laws Peter and Maureen Andersen of Dalton, MA, Foster Andersen of Santa Cruz, CA, and Carol (Andersen) Kaplan of Greeley, CO; nieces and nephews Sandy (Yocum) Scott and Mike Houdek, Kathleen (Yocum) and Kevin Michie, Kristin Yocum, Matthew Kaplan, Jessica Kaplan, and Riley, Liam and Brennan Andersen; his beloved beagle Freckles; and many dear friends. He was predeceased by his parents and brother Robert A. Yocum of Fort Collins, CO.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to SharedAdventures.org or BonesBeagles.org.

Funeral services will be held privately. A celebration of life will take place in the spring.

The Anderson Funeral Home, 25 Fitchburg Road, Ayer is assisting the family with arrangements. www.andersonfuneral.com.

Tribute Wall

NS

“ Jim was a wonderful friend to my late husband Gary and me. Always there when you needed him, as was Barbara. Jim was a lovely and giving Soul. He was also brilliant. He had an on-going interest in life and learning. I’m sure he’s soaring in the heavenly worlds. My heart goes out to Barbara and family (including Freckles). May the grace of love guide you all on your journeys.

Nancy Swanberg - February 02, 2024 at 12:08 PM

PK

“ Barbara- I am a massage therapist at The Healing Garden and had the opportunity to offer massage for Jim there. I so enjoyed getting to know him and listen to his stories. I’m very saddened to learn of his passing but it is comforting knowing he is no longer in pain. For now I’ll imagine him out rowing on a glasslike lake in the early morning hours because that was one of the stories he told that seemed to bring him much joy. I’m very sorry for your loss.

Patty Kitchen - January 22, 2024 at 04:26 PM

MN

“ This is Mike Nault, Jim was my next door neighbor on HHL Lake. As I got to know Jim he always had a great memory to share. At the end of every conversation, he would always ask, “Is there anything I can do to make your day better?” Usually I would have a quick quip, but instead would pause and just say, “Thank you, I’m good”. If I had the chance to answer him today, my reply would be, “I feel I am a better person today with having met you.”

Mike Nault - January 20, 2024 at 12:49 PM

“ Jim Yocum was a very kind and hospitable friend when I first arrived in the US, in 1973 and didn't know anything about either acclimatizing to the weather in Utah, or adjusting to a new country and its people! Jim Yocum had a very good friend in Jim Schlight and the two of them took me under their wing. This is what I remember distinctly: I had come from India with shoes they said would be sturdy in the snow! Well, the first day I wore them after a huge Salt Lake City snowstorm, they came apart, I fell down and sprained my ankle! The Jims as they called themselves, literally had to carry me back to my dorm room. Jim Y was super kind and brought me food and medicines! Since then through their entire 4 years at the University of Utah, they were extremely good and kind friends. I even met Jim's father once when he came down from Iowa to repair Jim's little sports car. (Can't remember what it was now!) After their graduation and mine with an MA we all went our way, though I had stayed on at the University of Utah to do my Ph.D!

Imagine my surprise when I suddenly heard from Jim this past summer after 40 years. It was bitter sweet. It seems that he had been clearing out papers in anticipation of the end, and had come across an old photograph of the three of us, from graduation day. It was a hello and goodbye, all at once! With his usual sense of humor he kept saying, "I'm standing on the rainbow bridge!" During these last 6 months, we texted and chatted, my even seeking advice from him on household matters, as dear Barbara took great care of him. As she drove him to appointments, we three of us sometimes chatted. I'm glad that old friends, Jim Schlight and I were of some comfort to him, in these last few months! His ever loving wife Barbara, stood stalwartly by his side, and humored us! Long ago, I learned from him this colloquialism: "Keep on Truckin'" I have used that throughout the difficult times of my life! We have all been through troubled waters — another of his favorites; "like a bridge over troubled waters!" Barbara is greatly to be admired for having been a solid caregiver through 2 difficult cancers! Others would have abandoned their caregiving position!

Their love for each other was strong. Jim spoke of Barbara with such love and admiration, especially that she was the person with the most publications that he knew of in The Library of Congress catalog!

I am grateful to have reconnected for this brief period of time and had the privilege of being part of Jim's last days on earth as he was part of my first days in the US. God bless you Jim, wherever you are now!

Feroza Jussawalla - January 19, 2024 at 05:43 PM

RU

“ *In 1976, Jim taught me to cross country ski, do pushups, row on a scull on the Mississippi River, and ski at Banff. We were young then. He went on to become the Renaissance man you describe. Then one summer day he researched, and employed his technical skills until he found the right cell phone number. Who was more fortunate to have conversations from June to December? Both of us. And yet, you his family are the fortunate people who saw him become the man he became in the next 44 years, the one you may have met in Maquoketa or Massachusetts—the brother, sister and wife he loved. May your soul be at peace, my friend. Ruth Krech Degen*

Ruth - January 16, 2024 at 08:50 AM

NS

“ *Dear Barbara and family, so sorry to hear of Jim's passing...like his mum he was always so positive! A fond memory I have of delivering Western Auto fliers with Jim and my sister. God bless, Nancy Swanson*

Nancy Swanson - January 16, 2024 at 02:16 AM

CS

“ Jim was a very positive and cheerful person. It was always enjoyable to see him in my dental office and be a small part in his tv cooking show career

. There are only a handful of my male friends that I would consider Renaissance men Jim is one of them. Jim we will miss you as you go on your new adventure. We are sure that you are enjoying it with the same joyful glee you have always shown. God speed. Charlie and Marylou Seitz

charlie and marylou seitz - January 14, 2024 at 01:23 PM

JJ

“ Jim was a wonderful and caring friend, a true Renaissance man in all of his talents. He loved helping others or solving a problem. He was a loving husband and "beagle father" to the many Yocum beagles. He was also strong and courageous and he lived his life these past few years on his terms, enjoying his family and beagles, and his beloved lake house. God Speed and Rest in Eternal Peace, good friend.

James and Suzanne Johnson - January 12, 2024 at 03:00 PM

SF

Powell and I had many laughs with Jim. He was a super guy.

Sharon Foster - January 24, 2024 at 07:03 AM