



James Lester Brooks

April 1, 1926 - September 26, 2016

JAMES "JIM" LESTER BROOKS April 1, 1926 ~ September 26, 2016 James Brooks, beloved husband, father, and grandfather, died peacefully in his sleep on Monday morning, Sept. 26, 2016 of heart failure. He appreciated every day of his 90 years. He was born on April Fool's Day, at home in Evans, CO to William and Ina Mae Brooks. Jim met the love of his life, Virginia Louise Francis, at a University in Denver square dance club, and proposed to her with a moonlight guitar and song serenade. They were married on June 5, 1947. Dad had many talents and abilities. He could play nearly any musical instrument by ear, had an eye for painting and sculpting, and was a school teacher and dance teacher to thousands of people. He won two Sand Castle Contests at Cannon Beach, OR in 1972-73. Some highlights of Dad's life include: He graduated from South Denver High in 1943 where he was in the ROTC. In 1944, he enlisted in the Army Air Force, and was in training as a machine gunner for the B-29 Super-Fortress as the war ended. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Admin with majors in Retailing and Marketing from the University of Denver. He hitchhiked to Seattle with a buddy in 1948, to explore the UW, settled there, and took a 5th year to prepare for Business Ed teaching at Everett High and Cascade High School. They became nationally recognized Square and Round dance teachers, known as "Jim and Ginny". Dad was a caller, and they choreographed dances, recorded for DECCA Records in NYC in 1958, and built "The Hayloft" dance hall in the Seattle area. Thousands shared their love of dances, clubs, and parties there

until 1966, when they sold the business and moved to Vancouver, WA. He was a Vocational Education Supervisor with the Vancouver schools in charge of all business, trade, and industrial arts classes, retiring in 1980. Dad enjoyed carpentry and landscaping. He was an avid fisherman and outdoorsman, who took his young family on many camping adventures. Upon retirement, Dad and Mom joined their friends as dedicated "snowbirds" for 30 years in Mesa, AZ, with an active lifestyle in the Valley of the Sun. Dad always said it was only fair that he lived more years retired than he had worked. Mom preceded him in death after 68 years, in 2015. He is survived by his four children: Kim Burnett (Ken), Jim Brooks (Su), Kathy Brooks, and Jack Brooks (Melissa); nine grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren. ~ To us, Dad was the 9th Wonder of the World ~ A Celebration of Life will be on Mon., Oct. 3 at Evergreen Memorial Gardens at 12:30, followed by a reception. We invite you to make donations in Dad's memory to the American Heart Association , www.heart.org. Please sign his guest book at: www.columbian.com/obits.

Tribute Wall



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Evergreen Memorial Gardens - July 03, 2025 at 08:54 PM

KB

“ Dear Dad, I miss you already! You were my one constant in life, always there when I needed advice, a pep talk, or a humorous perspective on life. I feel so blessed to have had such an exemplary & loving father as they are few & far between. As more time passes I will shed fewer tears & be able to share more life stories without choking up, remembering the many good times we shared on this walk through life. But I have now joined the other "orphans" in this world whose parents have gone on before. It is a disquieting feeling. Thank you to those who have left heartfelt messages here. It is comforting to read them & to realize how special he was to so many. He left this world a better place than he found it & I know he will forever walk by my side until "we meet on that beautiful shore."

Kathy Brooks - October 10, 2016 at 12:00 AM

SW

“ My heart & prayers go out to the Brooks' family. Mr. Brooks was my DECA teacher in 1967, at Cascade High in Everett, WA. He was my favorite teacher in high school. His positive influences to his students, followed them into their adult years. Our class was honored, when Jim attended our 45th reunion with his lovely wife & daughter. He will be greatly missed.

Sunny Williams - October 05, 2016 at 12:00 AM

DC

“ *Mr. Brooks, Jim, was "the" most kind and self-effacing gentlemen I've ever been blessed to know. I enjoyed every time I had the pleasure of talking to him, fishing with him, and knowing his family members. Jim, Allemand left, and do-si-do, forever. Lance W. Christiansen, DO*

Dr. Lance Christiansen - October 03, 2016 at 12:00 AM

LT

“ *My dear Uncle...It was a joy to hear your voice the week before you went to be with your beloved wife, Aunt Virginia. As typical Uncle Jim style, you didn't want to talk about yourself but to know what was going on in my life's. I love you and have learned so much from you. You will always be in my heart. Give my mom a hug and kiss from me.*

Lorrie Tarr - October 03, 2016 at 12:00 AM

JH

“ *It was a privilege and an honor to have known you and Ginny. You live on in our hearts. You raised a beautiful family, rest now kind and gentle soul, for your work here is done.*

Jim Hansen - October 02, 2016 at 12:00 AM