



James Lewis Proctor

March 16, 1927 - March 25, 2018

James Lewis Proctor died March 25, 2018 at home in Felida, surrounded by his beloved family. He was born March 16, 1927 on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation in Poplar, Montana, the fifth of nine children of James Jamison Proctor and Elizabeth (Lizzie) Renz Proctor, who were of Sioux and Assiniboine descent. Life was very difficult for Jim in his youth. His mother died of complications arising from giving birth to her youngest son in 1936, and another son later died unexpectedly. Shortly after that, Jim's father adopted out most of his children and, with young Jimmie, left the reservation to eke out a living as a carpenter throughout the Depression-era southwestern U.S. Jim often recalled that, for three years, he almost never stayed at the same school for more than 30 days, which made forming relationships almost impossible. Along the way, Jim attended Chilocco Indian Agricultural School in north-central Oklahoma, where he learned several vocational skills that would serve him well for the remainder of his life. Whether it was installing engines and transmissions in automobiles, pouring and shaping concrete sidewalks, constructing and wiring outbuildings, or planting and tending a garden, there was almost no project beyond Jim's ability. In 1942, Jim's father moved to Vancouver to work at Kaiser Shipyard while Jim attended Camas High School. Jim met Minnie Hall in the summer of 1944 while riding his motorcycle through the Rosemere (now Rose Village) neighborhood. Their relationship blossomed through written correspondence after Jim enlisted in the U.S. Navy in November 1944 to serve on minesweepers in the Pacific Theater. His yeoman

typing skills there were so valuable that he was frequently called upon to transcribe Admiral's Mast proceedings, and he was present for the Japanese Instrument of Surrender onboard the USS MISSOURI in Tokyo Bay on September 2, 1945. Three months after Jim's honorable discharge, he and Minnie were married April 10, 1948 at First Presbyterian Church (now New Heights Church - West Campus) in Vancouver. Aside from a few brief periods spent in Portland, Seattle, and John Day, Oregon, Jim and Minnie lived in Vancouver for their entire married life. Despite being born with a severe congenital heart murmur, Jim was a superb athlete. He once held a Montana state record in the 220-yard hurdles, and excelled at every other sport he tried. Jim especially loved football: he was a two-way high school player at Chilocco and Camas, a letter winner on Clark College's last football team (where he also earned an Associate's degree), and a walk-on defensive back at the University of Washington. The mention of UW football would make him laughingly recall getting steamrolled by legendary Husky running back Hugh McElhenny during practice. He also boxed and played baseball semi-professionally, and his dives from the highest "experts only" platform at the Jantzen Beach swimming pool became part of family lore. Family meant more than anything else to Jim, and his investment in our welfare was truly astounding. He was a 55-year member of IBEW Local 48 and worked as an electrical estimator for various ship repair companies on Swan Island, but also often held second jobs to satisfy our material needs. During Jim's off hours, he was very active in our lives as a sports coach, scout leader, "weenie" roasting fisherman, and vacation planner. In the evenings, he would play educational games with us at the dinner table ("Animal, vegetable, or mineral...") and had us read to him at bedtime. Jim and Minnie provided assistance through monetary gifts, including contributions to the Washington Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET) Program, that made college education possible for all their grandchildren. The beneficiaries of his efforts, left behind to cherish his memory, are his wife, Minnie; daughters Cindy Schlecht (Joe), Tina Rattling Thunder, and Brenda Hall (Alan Fivian); son James Jr. (Marilyn);

grandchildren Bob Hall, Millicent (Mimi) Hall, Aaron Schlecht, Jeff Schlecht, and Gina Schlecht (Keegan Baun); and great-grandchildren Kelton Baun and Kallen Baun, all of Vancouver, and his sister Shirley Nordwick of Kenndale, Washington. Jim was predeceased by his parents; eldest daughter Cynthia; brothers Frank, Clarence, and Robert Renz; and sisters Lorraine McClammy, Lillian Engel, Edith Moore, and Pauline Truex. In July 2000, Jim was diagnosed with congestive heart failure and later suffered from atrial fibrillation, Stage Five chronic kidney disease, hypertension, mesothelioma, and a kidney tumor, among other ailments. Any single one of these afflictions would have overcome a lesser man, but Jim faced them with incredible courage and dignity for almost 18 years with the expert assistance of his primary care physician, Dr. Daniel Highkin, his cardiologist, Dr. Thomas Kovarik, and later the medical staffs of Legacy Salmon Creek Medical Center, Transitional Care Clinic at Vancouver Clinic, and Community Home Health & Hospice. Our family will be forever grateful to you all for your support and compassion that provided us "bonus time" with Jim. A Celebration of Life service will be held Saturday, April 7 at 12:30 pm at the Evergreen Memorial Gardens Chapel, 1101 NE 112th Avenue, Vancouver, with graveside Navy honors and reception to follow. Viewing will be held at Evergreen Memorial Gardens Chapel on Friday, April 6 from 2:00 pm - 7:00 pm and Saturday, April 7 from 10:00 am - noon.

Tribute Wall



“ 0 file added to the tribute wall

Evergreen Memorial Gardens - July 03, 2025 at 08:47 PM

LB

“ *Rest in peace, Dad Proctor! What a wonderful man. I never saw him get mad. I mostly admired the love he showed his family.....Always putting them first. Truly going to cherish his memory and kindness.*

Larry Bernt - April 07, 2018 at 12:00 AM