



## James "Jim" M Wiggins

February 2, 1933 - January 14, 2022

James M. "Jim" Wiggins was born in Valdosta, Ga. on Jan. 2, 1933. He was a sickly kid - bad asthma - so he had to go to schools in Florida and North Carolina from the 7th grade on to get away from the pecan trees that are native to Georgia and to which he was highly allergic.

He had a wonderful story about being home and mowing the lawn while his mother rested on the chaise lounge drinking lemonade. She decided to take over the mowing job so Jim could sit and drink the lemonade. Just then his friends rode by and saw Jim resting on the chaise while his mother mowed the lawn. He joked that he never lived that down.

Jim was always interested in people - what they did for a living, what they looked like - so he started collecting autographs. His first autograph was from Walter Winchell. His father had gotten it on the train.

After collecting signatures for several years, he started wondering what people looked like in photographs. So, he wrote for autographed photos. The first one he got was from the king of Greece.

It was a big color photo, and he was hooked. He collected autographed photographs from then on and amassed a collection of over 19,000 photos of people from all fields. He turned that hobby into a job as the co-publisher of

the V.I.P. Address Book with his wife Adele Cooke, which began in 1988 and ended in 2016.

Jim also loved journalism. After graduating from Vanderbilt University in 1955, he went into the Navy to earn money for graduate school. The best way to make extra money in the Navy was to volunteer for the submarine service. Which, of course, he did. He remained as a Navy reservist for 22 years and retired as a commander.

He graduated with a master's degree in Journalism from UCLA in 1959, and then went to work for the Los Angeles Times. Jim was the editor when his photographer took the photos of Robert Kennedy's assassination at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles.

He worked as an editor for the Los Angeles Times and ended his career with West Magazine which had some of the best talent in journalism, including art director Michael Salisbury. He switched for a short time to do fund raising for Claremont Men's College, and then he returned to his journalism roots by moving to Florida and working for the National Enquirer. He said they did the best research of any paper he ever worked for - except where it applied to celebrities.

He briefly worked at a men's magazine, which was not to his taste, and then he threw his talents into Dynamic Years magazine- a pre-retirement magazine put out by AARP. He always said he went from sexuality to senility.

His writers and photographers agreed Jim was the mentor who changed and helped their personal and professional lives. They turned out dozens of stories he assigned.

His last job working for someone else was putting out an Orange County

regional magazine for the Irvine Company. After that experience, he went to work for himself and pronounced himself a much happier man.

Jim met his wife, Adele Cooke, on a blind date in 1978. They hit it off immediately, but it took Jim seven years to finally pop the question - on Christmas day in 1985. They eloped in Las Vegas, surprising everyone including Adele, since Jim planned the entire event in secret.

His friend Hank Nuwer said Jim went from an unhappy man on a quest to a man in love and fulfilled. "Jim adored Adele, and he could not wait to introduce her to his friends," Nuwer said.

Adele and Jim had one love besides each other and that was cats. Adele had two cats when they met, and they added two more. Their love of cats lasts to this day. In fact, the only photo Jim ever carried in his wallet was the cat he "auditioned" to be "his" cat. His name was Katze.

In 1996, Adele and Jim moved to the beautiful central coast of Oregon where they lived. They peacefully enjoyed the rugged Oregon ocean where Jim still followed people of every walk of life.

Jim had a Bachelor of Arts from Vanderbilt, a Masters in Journalism from UCLA, a Masters in Political Science from UC Berkley, an MBA from Pepperdine and a PhD from UCLA.

Jim died on Jan. 14, 2022 of heart disease.

He might not have been as famous as the celebrities whose autographs he collected, but he was their equal as a man and national editor of consequence.



# Tribute Wall



“ *James "Jim" M Wiggins*

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**James "Jim"** - February 07, 2022 at 12:00 AM