



James Kirby Jackson

October 20, 1949 - February 17, 2022

James Kirby Jackson, 72, passed peacefully on February 17, 2022, in Manassas, Virginia with his wife and family at his bedside after a long and courageous battle with cancer.

James was born October 20, 1949 in Salt Lake City, Utah to Arthur Dean (Kirby) Jackson and Yvonne Mary Williams. He was the second oldest of their four children. James was raised in the Sugar House neighborhood of Salt Lake City, where he attended his elementary through high school years. He gained a love for the outdoors by going on camping and hiking trips with his two brothers, a love that he passed on to his sons through frequent family camping trips. He was also an avid runner and cyclist who competed in multiple marathons and traded his lunch breaks for 10 mile runs well into his fifties. He had a deep passion for gardening, developing beautiful landscapes for him and his family to enjoy together, and especially loved the cherry blossom trees native to the Washington, D.C. area. James lived out his faith in God by quietly serving his neighbors and those in his church community, giving more than 20 years of service mentoring youth through his church and the National Capital Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America, and training other youth leaders through his local Wood Badge chapter. From 1969-71, he served a full-time proselytizing mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Japan, where he gained an abiding love for the Japanese people.

James received both his bachelor's and master's degrees in Economics from the University of Utah, and pursued doctoral studies in Economics at the University of Washington. He dedicated his life to public service, first with the Office of Economic Research at the Central Intelligence Agency, then with the Bureau of Intelligence and Research with the U.S. Department of State, and finally serving 35 years at the Congressional Research Service. While James seldom spoke about his work, he regularly briefed U.S. Senators and Representatives and his writing and research influenced countless pieces of legislation.

But James's greatest passion and legacy is his family. Soon after moving to Washington, D.C., he met the love of his life through a mutual friend, and on October 29, 1983 married Mary Elizabeth Vaggalis. He is survived by his wife; father (age 98); brothers, Bruce and Dave Jackson; sons, Matthew Birdsall (and wife Kim), Scott Jackson, and Ted Jackson; and his five grandchildren, who will miss their "Papu" dearly. He is preceded in death by his mother (2002) and brother Jerry Jackson (1951, as an infant), and was followed in death by his sister, Susan Buffington of St. George, Utah (February 20, 2022), who died suddenly only days after James.

He was diagnosed with multiple myeloma in 2018, a degenerative blood-based cancer. Sadly, as he neared his four year anniversary of his original diagnosis, he passed due to a compromised immune system and atrial fibrillation. The family would like to thank Dr. Mitul Gandhi and Dr. Tamila Kindwall-Keller for their kind care of James these last several years.

James was known for his tender heart, humility, and perseverance. He never once gave up on living life to the fullest despite his cancer, and he fought heroically until the bitter end. He will be remembered by many for being a dependable source of comfort, joy, and love. As he often said: "The race is not

to the swift nor the battle to the strong, but to those who endure to the end.”

James’s family and friends will be able to pay their respects on March 4, 2022 at a viewing from 6-8 pm, and at the funeral on March 5, 2022 at 10 am, both located at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at 14105 Glenkirk Rd, Gainesville, VA. He will then be interred at Bright View Cemetery in Warrenton, Virginia.

In lieu of flowers, James’s family encourages donations to the American Cancer Society to continue its fight to end cancer. Please visit donate.cancer.org to make a donation in James’s memory.

Cemetery Details

Bright View Cemetery

8265 Lunsford Road
Warrenton, VA 20186

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 4. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
14015 Glenkirk Rd
Gainesville, VA 20155

Funeral Service

MAR 5. 10:00 AM (ET)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
14015 Glenkirk Rd
Gainesville, VA 20155

Tribute Wall

MW

“*My deepest sympathies on James's passing. I knew James for almost 20 years at CRS and he could not have been a kinder and more generous colleague and friend. I will miss wondering in his office and gazing upon the stacks and stacks of research papers and chatting about what he was reading and new policy questions he was thinking about. Later, after I had children, our conversations expanded to include cub scout activities, hikes, and other adventures. I will miss the way James always asked how my boys were doing and what activities they were engaged in.*

I will never forgot early in my tenure, I backed up James while he was leading a boy scout bike trip in Utah and his issue blew up. James had given me his cell phone number in case of an emergency and when he answered, he was on his bike. Without missing a beat or hitting a hole, he kindly walked me through some fine point of the legislation.

As so many others here have mentioned, James was a special person, a great friend, and a treasured member of CRS. May his memory be a blessing and my condolences for your loss.

Marty Weiss

Marty Weiss - March 04, 2022 at 05:40 PM

AV

“ My deepest condolences to James' family and loved ones during this sad times. I knew James from my early days at CRS in the economics division when I had just moved to the Washington, DC area from Texas. It was such a huge change for me and I remember how willing he was to help and how patient was in explaining how to approach our work how to work economic data into our reports, and more importantly where to find it since we did not have online resources back then. His careful, detailed, and intelligent explanations and insights on economics will always be remembered and instilled in my mind. More than that will be his warmth, gentleness, good humor, and passion for his job, as well as the stories about his family. He was an inspiration to so many of us and brought much laughter and joy into our work. His humor always lightened the mood when our section meetings were getting too serious. I will never forget him and will always be grateful for his mentoring. Our workplace will not be the same without him and he will be very much missed. May God bless him and may he rest in peace.

Angeles Villarreal - March 04, 2022 at 03:00 PM

FC

“ Friends and Colleagues in CRS purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of James Kirby Jackson.



Friends and Colleagues in CRS - March 03, 2022 at 11:47 AM

BW

“ My deepest sympathies to James' family and loved ones during this difficult time. I was James' colleague at CRS for just over a decade in the trade section. He was an inspirational figure at CRS for so many reasons. As many have noted, James' aptitude for economics and trade issues was well known both among colleagues and our congressional clients. Despite his busy schedule, James always had time to share his knowledge and kindness with others, whether talking through a challenging request, explaining a complex economic policy in simple yet precise language, or providing a friendly chat to pick our spirits up on a tough day.

Perhaps more inspiring than his many talents and skills in the workplace, James had a true passion for the work he did at CRS. He believed in the mission and the importance of providing thoughtful analysis for Congress, and his calm, steady, and always positive approach to difficult questions or challenging report topics was something I truly admired.

As I reflect back on our many conversations over the years, I'm reminded of his description of why he loved gardening and it seems to really capture his approach to so many things in life. He noted that what he truly enjoyed was getting the opportunity to try plants in new places in the garden each year, see what worked and what didn't, and then adjust to make the space even better for the next year.

For me and for so many others, James made the spaces we shared in this world better, and he will be dearly missed.

Brock Williams

Brock Williams - March 02, 2022 at 11:32 AM



“ *Your BAO Systems colleagues purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of James Kirby Jackson.*



Your BAO Systems colleagues - March 01, 2022 at 09:38 PM

SA

“My heart goes out to you, Mary, Scott, and Ted, for your tremendous loss. I am so grateful for having had the opportunity to count James as a colleague and friend over the years as part of the CRS International Trade and Finance team. James represented the best of CRS. He was not only an incredible analyst, full of thoughtful observations and keen insights, but he was an all-around good person and inspiring role model. He was always warm and friendly, and had the most positive outlook for life, no matter what challenges he may have been facing. James had such a major, positive impact on Congress and his colleagues in the most understated and gentlest of ways.

As a relative newcomer to CRS, I always admired James, and was happy to have had the chance to get to know him better and work with him more closely when I inherited the trade financing agencies portfolio from him. James had enjoyed working on the Export-Import Bank and Overseas Private Investment Corporation, but he graciously offered coverage of those issue to me—supporting a newer analyst going up the professional ladder. These were complicated issues for me, and James was always willing to talk through them and to help me find my footing. James and I also had the chance to work together more directly to analyze Brexit trade and economic issues and later on foreign direct investment issues as well. I appreciated his economic intellect and ability to distill the issues to their critical core.

Like so many others that knew James, I cannot think of James without being reminded of his passion for gardening. I have the opposite of a green thumb, and would often go to James' office for advice on my plant woes. He was always full of helpful suggestions. And what was even more fun was that what would start out as a gardening conversation would often expand into so many other directions. It was always a treat to chat with James.

James loved his work and serving Congress, but to all who knew him, he loved his family the most. During many of these visits of

mine to his office, James would speak with such pride, love, and joy about his wife and sons, and his extended family. Later, when I had children of my own, he enjoyed telling me stories about his grandchildren, and we laughed about the many adventures of these little ones.

We will miss James greatly at CRS, continuing to keep him and his family in our thoughts and prayers. Mary, Scott, and Ted, please accept my heartfelt condolences. Sending much love and peace in this most difficult time.

Shayerah I. Akhtar

Shayerah Akhtar - March 01, 2022 at 02:16 PM



“ *Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of James Kirby Jackson.*



March 01, 2022 at 01:07 PM



“ *Your Colorado Cousins and Families purchased the Treasured Lilies Spray for the family of James Kirby Jackson.*



Your Colorado Cousins and Families - February 28, 2022 at 08:55 PM

MI

“ James was one of the most humble, smart, funny, and supportive individuals to enter my life. I am so fortunate to have worked with him since joining CRS more than 12 years ago as his section head. He was a superb analyst and economist. CRS and Congress relied on James as a key part of the policymaking process on policies of national and international importance, such as how to reform investment screening laws, the economics of trade and investment, the impact of U.S. trade agreements, the 2008-09 financial crisis, and the impact of COVID-19 on the global economy. I counted on James for his leading, insightful and innovative analysis on these and so many other policy issues.

James was an amazing and caring person. His calm, friendly, and quiet demeanor were well known. He also was self-deprecating, despite his wisdom and highly-honed analytical skills. James was such a positive person, even when faced with huge health challenges. Many analysts would go James for advice or if they were having a bad day. I would often visit with James in his office and am grateful for the support he always provided and the laughter we shared. I so enjoyed talking with him about his family, of which he was so proud, his garden and gardening tips, his cross-country adventures with his sons, some of his favorite shows (Rick Steve's travels and auto shows), and international trade and economic policies, among many other things. I so admired James for his fortitude and positive approach to life.

James will be deeply missed by his CRS colleagues and friends. My deepest condolences to Mary, Scott, Ted and his broader family.

Mary A. Irace

Mary A. Irace - February 28, 2022 at 02:02 PM

“ James was a man of many talents who overcame much and slogged on bravely to the end. Our lives intersected at many points. We both worked for CRS, both were economists, both served missions in Japan, both met the challenges of gardening in hot and humid Virginia, both enjoyed hiking and biking, and we both loved our families. Often when my work bogged down and I needed a strong dose of inspiration, I would drop by his office just down the hall from mine. James would share with me his latest work, what was happening with his sons, and let me know how his garden grew.

One time, he said that he had put up netting to keep the deer away from the lower part of his yard. He was dismayed to find that the netting had caught several garden snakes, and letting them go was tricky to say the least. James loved all creatures, great and small.

Before the speeding teenage driver crashed into his car and smashed his body, I stood in awe at James' physical prowess and endurance. Whether running a marathon, riding his bike through mountains, or hiking rugged trails, nothing was too much of a challenge for James. He was the first to teach me to "leave no trace" when camping. After the horrific car crash, James had to piece his life back together much like the surgeons did with his hip and other parts of his body. James did this with great compassion and fortitude.

As James was fighting through the pain of rehab after the crash, I asked him why he did not sue the teenager's parents for everything they owned to help pay for his medical bills and compensate for taking away many of his joys in life. He said that he didn't think it would do any good. What happened, happened, and he would have to make the best of it. He was still alive. He could live to see his sons grow up, and he could spend more years with his lovely wife Mary.

We will miss James. He left a legacy of work for Congress and love

and care not only for his family but for us who were fortunate enough to have walked with him for a while on the path of life.

Our love and sympathy go out to Mary, Scott, and Ted and hope they find comfort in the promise that families are forever.

*With love,
Dick and Masako Nanto
Clifton, Virginia*



Dick Nanto - February 27, 2022 at 01:34 AM

LS

“*James was always cheerful and happy, a perfect colleague. He was knowledgeable and always very willing to share his knowledge. He served the Congress well as a member of the Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress. He valiantly kept working for many years after his illness. We admired and appreciated James and his entire family. Condolences to all. Larry Storrs, former colleague in the Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division of CRS.*”

Larry and E.J. Storrs - February 25, 2022 at 10:30 AM



“*Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of James Kirby Jackson.*”



February 24, 2022 at 08:57 PM