



James "Jim" Poole

February 6, 1932 - November 7, 2021

James "Jim" Poole passed away peacefully on November 7, 2021 after a brief bout with cancer. Born just outside Nashville, Tennessee, Jim spent a majority of his life in California and Arizona, moving just a few years ago to Blacksburg to be closer to family.

Jim was an incredible athlete playing both basketball and baseball for San Diego State University. He was honored to have his baseball jersey retired as one of the top pitchers in school history. Following graduation, he went on to participate as a member of the winning USA Basketball Team for the 1955 Pan American Games earning a gold medal. He followed that as a member of the All Air Force Volleyball Team in 1957, during his time serving in the Air Force competing in the Armed Forces Sports.

Jim became a world-class, international badminton champion and one of the most decorated players in USA Badminton history. He was the number one-ranked singles player and number one-ranked doubles player (with partner, Don Paup) throughout the 1960s and mid-1970s. His 65 United States Championships are the most for any badminton player and his record of winning his first in 1958 and his last in 1979, a span of 21 years, remains the longest of any player in USA Badminton history. He won numerous European and Canadian titles and was the World Champion in the over-55 age group in 1987. His most cherished victory was winning the Malaysia Open in 1961, as he was the first victor from a non-Asian country. He remains the only American player to win this elite tournament. He also played for the US National Team (Thomas Cup) from 1958-1976 (even coaching several teams) traveling all over the world. In 1970 he was elected into the USA Badminton Hall of Fame now known as the Walk of Fame.

As his badminton career was winding down, his football officiating career was reaching its pinnacle as he worked for 20 years on the field for the National Football League (1975-1995) being honored to officiate Super Bowl XXI (1987) and Super Bowl XXVII (1994). After retiring from the field, Jim worked briefly as a supervisor in New York City before returning full-time to Sun Lakes, Arizona where he continued to be an NFL trainer and then an observer for the Arizona Cardinal games for many more years. During his retirement years in Arizona, Jim naturally became a scratch golfer and won a couple club championships.

Professionally, Jim was a college professor for over 30 years at Cal State University, Northridge and Cal State University, Dominguez Hills.

Jim met his wife of 53 years, Sue, during his time in the Air Force. Jim and Sue loved traveling and spending time with their family. Sadly, Sue passed away in 2013.

Jim is survived by daughters Kelly (Mark) and Lisa (Jeff), and son Jon (Kathleen), seven grandchildren Melissa (Matt), Kristin, Carly (Geoff), Kenny, Ricky, Kyle, McKayla, and one great grandchild Wyatt.

The family would like to thank Dr. Robert Solomon, the staff at Medi-Home Health (most notably Jacqui, Alecia, Matthew, and Chaplin Mike), and the staff and ownership of English Meadows Blacksburg for their care and concern for Jim.

The family will receive visitors celebrating Jim's life from 3:00-4:00 pm, Sunday, November 14, 2021 at McCoy Funeral Home, 150 Country Club Dr. S.W., Blacksburg Virginia. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the American Cancer Society at the following link, https://donate3.cancer.org/?campaign=default&lang=en&giftType=hon&giftTypeMonthlyDisplay=0&_ga=2.163564799.2128693431.1636481042-224428454.1636481041

Previous Events

Visitation

NOV **14**. 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

McCoy Funeral Home

150 Country Club Dr. S.W.

Blacksburg, VA 24060

mccoyfuneralhome@verizon.net

<https://mccoyfuneralhome.com>

Tribute Wall

DM

“ Coach Poole was one of the most encouraging mentors I ever experienced. Once while in gym class I wound up having to wrestle with a much stronger opponent, coach Poole sat watching and yelling for me to "Go Dirk, pin him!" - at first I thought I wasn't hearing him properly, but he kept it up and wonder of wonders I did it! Coach Poole taught me a lesson in exceeding my self imposed limits, which I'll never forget.

Dirk Mous - November 27, 2021 at 12:21 PM

DK

“ A fine coach at Kearny High School, San Diego. Coach Poole arranged an exhibition Badminton match at Kearny with a nationally ranked player friend of his. Seeing this match helped me to appreciate that our teachers were/are gifted and talented people.

Danny Fulkerson Kearny-65 - November 27, 2021 at 03:44 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of James "Jim" Poole.



November 13, 2021 at 09:33 PM

JT

“ Never got to work with Jim on the field in the NFL, but he observed many of my games and was a true professional, mentor and friend. Always loved the way he was willing to help me become both a better on-field official and an even better crew member. My life was truly enriched by having Jim Poole being a part of it. Everyone in the NFL officiating community mourns his passing and our prayers are with his entire family.

Jeff Triplette

Jeff Triplette - November 12, 2021 at 03:33 PM

LB

“ I will truly miss you and your family my friend . I looked forward to your banter and life stories daily. You have left a spot empty in our place and our hearts.

Ladonna Barnett - November 12, 2021 at 04:41 AM

AL

“ Mr. Poole as I called him was the best Dad a Son or Daughter could ever have in my opinion. I was treated like a second son during my High school years with Jon, Kelly, and Lisa. As I mentioned in Kelly's post What a tremendous person and World-class athlete he was! When thinking of Mr. Poole I would be remiss if I did not mention Mrs. Poole in the same breath. Well, hand in hand. She was my second mom. I would come to see Jon and when she opened the door for me she always had a big smile for me and welcomed me to come in. As much as I loved my mother, I secretly wished I could live with them full-time. It's just the way I felt. Mr. Poole was the greatest person I have ever known. Many of his ethics as a person to this day I pass on to my two young boys. Although it's been so many years since I have seen him or the family I hold fond memories deep within. What a MAN, What a FAMILY!. I miss you all.

Anthony "Tony" Lane - November 12, 2021 at 12:36 AM

AN

Jim sure will be missed he was such a jokester every morning he would tell us something to make us laugh before taking his meds. He had the sweetest demeanor & his life stories will be forever cherish.

Annetta - November 12, 2021 at 07:56 PM

CD

Jim was a great teacher and coach. I participated as a Kearny athlete and "Coach Poole" was one of my mentors (1958-1961) and he taught me many things ---- I still talk about the badminton demonstrations he used to put on. I went on to be a college football player (UCLA) and later on in life became a college football coach and then an NFL Coach.....We used to run across each other in NFL games and I loved to visit with him in pre game get togethers.....I was always honored that he would remember Kearny stories. Truly, a wonderful person.

Charlie Davis Nov. 26

Charles Davis - November 27, 2021 at 06:26 AM