



# James R. McGranahan

APR 20, 1935 - DEC 22, 2008



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# James R. McGranahan

APR 20, 1935 - DEC 22, 2008

**J**AMES R. MCGRANAHAN  
April 20, 1935 -" December 22, 2008  
Beloved Husband, Father, Brother, Grandpa  
Our Rock

Born in Santa Cruz, California, who knew that the boy with the curly hair was destined for greatness in life and love. His achievements are many and respected by all who knew him. As a prominent architect he helped change the shape of the greater Tacoma area and lent his expertise to those who sought his advice. He won many awards and was recognized by his profession as a Fellow of The American Institute of Architects. Jim gave back to the community in multiple ways, sometimes in very public ways, and other times with quiet dignity.

Jim's great love was his family: his wife Merri Ellen, his children Kevin, Kathi and Kendra, his step-children, Steve (Nikki) and Laura (Pat). He was known to his grandchildren as Grandpa or -Å"Jimmy Guy- by Tyson, Brandon, Tyler, Aly, Max, Sarah and Laney. His sisters, Kay and Patty, will grieve his loss tremendously as will everyone who knew him. Preceding him in death are Marcia, his first wife, the mother of his children, and Kevin, his only son.

He lived life to the fullest with many activities: river rafting, skiing, hiking, and traveling to far ends of the earth. He will be missed by all whose lives he touched.

A celebration of Jim's life will be held at 2:00 PM Saturday, January 3, 2009, at the Sharon McGavick Student and Conference Center, Clover Park Technical College, Bldg 23, 4500 Steilacoom Blvd. S.W., Lakewood,WA.

Donations may be made to the Lakewood Community Foundation, Clover Park Technical College Foundation, or a charity of your choice.



## Obituary

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Arrangements by Mountain View Funeral Home. 584-0252. Please sign online guestbook at [www.mountainviewtacoma.com](http://www.mountainviewtacoma.com).



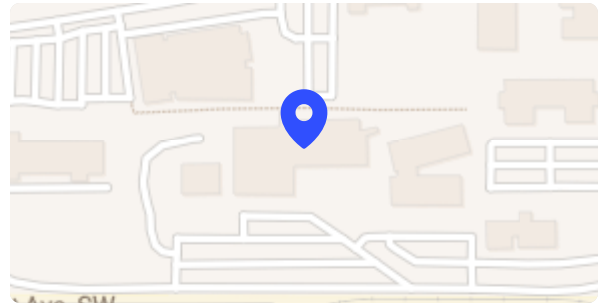
## Service

 **Saturday**, January 3, 2009

 2:00 PM - 2:00 PM PT

 **Sharon McGavick Student and Conference Center, Clover Park Technical College**

4500 Steilacoom Blvd. S.W. Building 23,  
LAKEWOOD WA 98499





## Tribute Wall

**James R. McGranahan**

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**Anonymous** posted:

My sincere and heartfelt condolences to Merri Ellen, Kendra, Kathi, and your families. To me and my daughter, Miki, Jim will always be a very special person who changed our lives forever. I had the privilege of working for Jim as his Financial Controller 26 years ago and again for a brief time as a special project Consultant. It is rare these days to hear of someone who, through his kindness and guidance, is more than an employer but is also a teacher, a mentor, a friend and at times, a father figure as Jim was to me. As a very young accountant, he taught me the world and language of architecture and he taught me how to be a true leader. With his encouragement and support, I went back to college, became a CPA, and traveled the world as an executive with HOK Architects. My daughter Miki, and myself both "grew up" in Jim's office. She as a little girl who would play school in the conference room and visit with "Mr. Granahan" in his office to tell him all of her stories when I would work weekends. He always delighted in taking time for this little girl who, to this day as a mother herself, remembers him so very fondly and is saddened by his passing. Jim's business legacy will live on in more than architecture; it will thrive through the younger accountants and financial professionals that I have been blessed to mentor just as he did for me. Over the years I have told so many people about Jim and shared examples of his business acumen and amazing management style. Although he paved the way for me to work with world renowned international architects and engineers, believe me when I say that Jim McGranahan truly is "The Gentleman of Architecture". For the one he always called "Red", he will always be "Jimmy R. McG", a man I adored and will miss forever.##imported-begin##Kathy Gray##imported-end##

March 8 at 12:37 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

MERRI ELLEN ALL OF US AT NISQUALLY CHEVRON ARE VERY SHOCKED BY THE PASSING OF JIM.HE WILL BE VERRY MISED BY US ALL.WE WERE ALL BLESSED TO HAVE JIM IN OUR LIVES. SINCERELY MIKE & PAUL BRESSIAND ALL THE STAFF AT NISQUALLY CHEVRON##imported-begin##MIKE BRESSI##imported-end##

March 8 at 12:37 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

We wish to extend our deepest sympathy to the McGranahan Family upon Jims' passing. Even though he will no longer be able to contribute to our current society, it is evident that somewhere, others will benefit from his talents.##imported-begin##Carole (Norman) & Jerry Husby##imported-end##

January 4 at 6:10 AM



## Tribute Wall

**James R. McGranahan**

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**Anonymous** posted:

Sorry for your loss. Sad to lose a ski buddy. Thoughts and prayers are with you. Sincerely, Avis Vye Oakbrook Ski Bus##imported-begin##Avis Vye##imported-end##

January 4 at 2:54 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

Kendra,I am so sorry to hear about your Father. I never did meet him but seem to know so much about him. You must be very proud to be his daughter. May the wonderful memories carry you through the difficult times. Love, Sandypa##imported-begin##Sandy Papacek##imported-end##

January 4 at 2:44 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

Our lives have touched pleasantly, through the years, hiking and skiing through the years. God bless Jim's Soul.Keith Johnson##imported-begin##Keith Johnson##imported-end##

January 2 at 9:09 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

I just got back in town Wed. How can I begin to express what I feel? Jim was just the "cream of the crop" and such a dear friend. He was one of the first people I thought of when we lost Ron and someone that you could always count on. We always laughed about sharing April birthdays and what fun we had over the years. I know what a large, large hole this leaves in all your hearts because I've felt that sudden loss. Just know that the rough edges of that pain do subside with time and that your friends do share some of that pain. Love and hugs to each of you.##imported-begin##Ardie Herbel##imported-end##

January 2 at 7:12 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

Jim was a great leader in our community... A real tribute to our business culture... Tacoma is better for his Architecture works... Jim, we all miss you.. God's Blessings to your family##imported-begin##Jack R Hamilton##imported-end##

January 2 at 6:12 AM



## Tribute Wall

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**Anonymous** posted:

Kendra We were sorry to here about your loss.you are in our prayers.Chuck & Hazle##imported-begin##Chuck & Hazle Brumfield##imported-end##

January 2 at 12:05 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

Merri Ellen, I don't know if you remember me. You were always so faithful in visiting my mother, Wilma Meyer, in the Evergreen Nursing Home. She always marveled at all the fantastic trips you and your husband went on. May thoses memories be snapshots taken with your heart and are never lost. May the memories you cherish give you and your family strength at this difficult time. Love and Prayers to you and your family. Marlene Westhoff, Olympia, WA##imported-begin##Marlene Westhoff##imported-end##

January 1 at 8:56 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

The world is a better place because of Jim having been here. What more can you say about such a good man?##imported-begin##John & Guelda Messina##imported-end##

January 1 at 8:24 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

To the McGranahan Family- Jim was a gentle, smart, humble man who had a sparkle in his eye everytime I met him. His planning for surprise parties (Merrie Ellen's in particular) was so much a picture of how much devotion he had for all his family members. His quiet excitment and care for every detail showed what great love and respect he had for all. Much grace to you during this time. Jennie Hannah##imported-begin##Jennie Hannah##imported-end##

January 1 at 3:18 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you during this difficult time. We are sorry we cannot attend the services, but will be praying for all of you. Uncle Jim was a very special man, and memories if him will bring all of us comfort in our grief. God Bless you all - Kelly, David, and kids##imported-begin##David and Kelly Fluit##imported-end##

January 1 at 1:07 AM



## Tribute Wall

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**Anonymous** posted:

I was one of the lucky ones who worked for McGranahan, Messenger and Assoc. in the 1980's. I have nothing but fond memories of the years I worked there. Jim McGranahan was an unforgettable employer. I will always remember him with a smile on his face. My condolences to his family and friends who will miss him immensely!##imported-begin##Lorraine Kuneman##imported-end##

December 30 at 2:58 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

Jim was such a wonderful sharing and caring man. He included myself and my staff in redesigning the Hobby Hall connecting it to the Showplex building on the Western WA Fairgrounds. He always had a big smile and a spring in his step. Please accept our condolences and know we are thinking of you at this difficult time. Eileen, Charlotte, Marilyn, Tana, Dorinda##imported-begin##Eileen Meyer - Hobby Hall Superintendent##imported-end##

December 29 at 2:43 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

Dear Merri Ellen, I don't know if you remember me but I worked out with Jim at the Y with the group from the First Light Brigade. I was saddened to read of his passing and your loss. I am so sorry for you and your family. There are a lot of fond memories of over the years of the Y but also social gatherings that spun off of that group. Please know I am thinking of you during this time and beyond. Very Sincerely, Trish Smith##imported-begin##Trish Smith##imported-end##

December 29 at 1:11 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

Merri Ellen, Kendra, Kathi.Gentleman Jim. Those words keep coming to mind. Kind. Gentle. Smiling. I never saw Jim any other way -- even in those very dark days that followed Kevin's passing.For the multitudes who knew Jim, he was a personal status symbol, the subject of considerable name dropping. When his picture graced the Tribune, we could say, "That's Jim! My friend. Look what he's accomplished this week. I know him!"But the "status" never seemed to alter the kindness and gentleness that were his aura. I never sensed that his notoriety ever inflated his meagerly haired head. He was just "one of the guys," who happened to design amazing structures, who gave back to his community generously and quietly, who led by example and with humility.And Jim loved his family. I remember how he would show a sheepish grin and shake his head whenever I told a Kevin story. It seemed, from my limited perspective, that the McGranahan boys did not fear much of anything and were great admirers of each other -- even though Kevin chose an unorthodox path. There was a manly love and respect that any father and son might envy. And it got even stronger as both weathered those difficult personal times.Let me say something about our mutual experience with Lakewood Rotary. In a group of achievers, Jim stood out and became a favorite target for all our presidents. Whenever his mug hit the papers, copies were clipped and sent by the handfuls to the reigning Rotarian. He/she then joyously called Jim's name, made him stand and acknowledge his newest accomplishment, agree to pay the fine, and listen to the audience's good-natured hooting. All done with the greatest humor and affection. These folks loved him, admired him, felt better for knowing him and (vicariously)lived through him. After all, he was OUR celebrity!T he cliché is: There will never be another Jim McGranahan. May I use it? He was unique. He made my life better without even trying -- and I can think of no better measure of a man. Yes, he had an impressive resume. But more than that, when we were together, he looked me in the eye and asked how my life was. And wanted to hear the answer. Amazing! In my heart, I knew he cared.McGranahan family, I grieve with you all. But the memories of this kind, gentle, smiling man will always be with me. Isn't that a wonderful legacy? Good job, Jim!Dave BurgoynePS Do you suppose he's with Kevin now? Telling him to slow down at the curves? I can actually feel the warmth of their hug.##imported-begin##Dave Burgoyne##imported-end##

December 28 at 5:43 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

kathy and kendra my hearts and prayers go to you both. I was so sadto hear about your dad. I always enjoyed talking to him whenever I saw him, God Bless to you and all your family. Sincerely Marie##imported-begin##marie tollan louvrak##imported-end##

December 28 at 5:43 AM



## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring James by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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