



James F. Gafken

January 4, 1936 - April 2, 2022

James 'Jim' F. Gafken was born at the Union Mission in Charleston, West Virginia on January 4, 1936. He was adopted by Chuck and Helen Gafken of Point Pleasant, West Virginia. Upon graduation from high school, Jim went to Marietta College in Marietta, Ohio on a football scholarship. While at Marietta, he married his high school sweetheart, Sandra Proffitt. Jim graduated from Marietta in 1957 with a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Petroleum Engineering.

After college, Jim went to work for Magnolia Petroleum, a predecessor company of Mobil Oil. He worked for mobile for 42 years. Jim and his family lived in Colombia, Venezuela, Canada, Louisiana, New Mexico, and Texas. He became a world class expert on oil and gas production and operations and was in charge of start-ups in Indonesia and offshore platforms in the U.K., Norway, and the Netherlands.

In 1983, Jim married Virginia Lathrop and they moved to Argyle, Texas. He began buying land in Montague Country when he came home from overseas assignments. Jim retired in 1996 and spent the next year working to fix up a two-story log home. In 1997, Jim and Virginia moved into that home and began cattle ranching full time. He loved his land, his cows, his dozer, and taking his cattle dog, Bobo, for rides in the pickup and in the Kawasaki Mule. Over the years, Jim had numerous surgeries. He developed non-alcoholic liver cirrhosis following a back surgery in late 2021. Jim was hospitalized for the month of March 2022. He passed away peacefully at the Renaissance

Care Center in Gainesville, Texas on April 2, 2022. Jim leaves behind his wife, Virginia; two daughters, Becky Bachman and husband, Kenneth and Kimberly Douglass and husband, Stephen; and their combined nine offspring. He also leaves behind his sister, Mary Jane Blustein and her husband, Marvin of Lynnwood, Washington and his niece, Kimberly Griffin and her husband Dr. Michael Griffin and an aunt, Barbara Kearns, of Menlo Park, California. There was a Celebration of Life luncheon in Jim's memory on May 21, 2022 at the Lazy Heart Gril in Saint Jo, Texas. Jim was a fascinating man, intelligent, well-read and well-traveled. He is missed by his family and friends. Should you wish to honor him with a memorial contribution, please sent it to the Museum of the Stonewall Saloon, 100 N. Main Street, Saint Jo, Texas 76265. This is a 501(c) 3 Non-profit organization. The phone number is (940) 872-0269.