



Dr. James "J.P." Patrick Bell

January 20, 1948 - September 4, 2020

On September 4, 2020, James P. Bell, photographer, physician, and outdoorsman, went to be with his Lord and savior, after brief but aggressive complications from prostate cancer. He was born in Fort Smith, Arkansas, on January 20, 1948.

J.P. was a devout Christian, dedicated husband, father, grandfather, brother and uncle. His passion and love of life, whether it be photography, medicine, travel, service to others, books and writing, trains, or the outdoors, will not easily be replaced.

After medical school at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, J.P. continued his service to others with his work in Browning, Montana, on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, followed by stops in Little Rock and Mena for internal medicine, before returning to his hometown of Fort Smith to practice as an emergency room physician at Sparks Medical Center. J.P. participated in numerous volunteer medical mission trips overseas, including to Brazil and Haiti, and in cooperation with Global Partners

His photography took him throughout the world, tracking down steam trains, landscapes, people and all those interesting angles that he had the knack to capture in just the right light. He made many friends on these adventures, and his ability to find the unique aspect of a person was similar to his ability to capture an image.

Throughout his life, J.P. had a desire to be outdoors. Whether it was hiking the Grand Canyon rim-to-rim, spending college summers as a park ranger, or just canoeing a stretch of Big Piney, he felt at home in the open air with the big sky before him. He passed this along to his family, and cherished the trips he took with his family to various national parks in the Western United States.

Phillipians 3:13-14 encapsulates just a small part of J.P.'s life: "Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." He lived his life in this regard and encouraged others to press on as well.

He was preceded in death by his father, James Hoyt Bell, mother, Gladys Brewer Bell, grandmother, Grace Stokes “Mommer” Brewer. He is survived by his wife, Candy Anderson Bell; his daughter, Elizabeth Bell; his son, Steven and wife, Erin, and their children, Anderson and Sophia; his brother, David and wife, Mary Ann; and many nieces and nephews.

The family will gather for a private graveside service. Due to the COVID pandemic, a public celebration of J.P.’s life will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations could be sent to Rolling Hills Baptist Church in Fayetteville, or to CBF, memo: Student.go at Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, 160 Clairmont Ave., Ste. 500, Decatur, GA 30030.

Cemetery

Campbell Church Cemetery

West Fork, AR, 72774

Comments



“ When the Bells lived in Fort Smith, I often dropped my daughter Marcene off to visit.

I always enjoyed talking to JP at our civic club and looked forward to his programs.

I pray God will grant that peace that exceeds all understanding to Candy and the family.

Gene McVay - September 14 at 08:58 AM



“ Judi and I thought the world of JP. He was a friend to us, and to all he met. He was a caring husband and father. His interests and lifestyle are to be truly admired. He was a contributor to the creative culture in all of his endeavors and left a very positive legacy as a kind and loving man. We were all better citizens that had the pleasure and honor of crossing his path.

Judi & John McIntosh

John McIntosh - September 13 at 11:52 AM



“ J.P. was my friend. He loved his family, his church and he loved going on adventures, I was lucky enough to share some of those with him. We chased steam trains across 4 states trying to get the make great images of the Challenger steam engine. We travelled through Glacier National Park in early October one year including canoeing down the Flathead River while wearing 2 sets of longjohns under chestwaders. Over twenty years ago he introduced me to two of his passions, canoeing and the Buffalo River. Two things that I still love today. We paddled the Buffalo, Mulberry and Kings river together always hauling way to many cameras film and tripods along. J.P. loved to meet people along the way and listen to their family stories, always making a photograph of the individual and learning about the history of the area. It was never anything less than an adventure when you went anywhere with J.P..

I shall miss him
He was my friend

Martin Duckworth

Deana Duckworth - September 12 at 01:37 PM



“ Candy and Family, my memories of Jim Pat are all of how much he was a servant of our LORD. The last time i saw him was at Dad's funeral. That memory is so special because he took pictures of all of our family there at the funeral, and then sent us all copies of those pictures. i was viewing those photos just the other day. i cannot see them without thinking of Jim Pat. My prayers are and will be lifting you and your family up for blessings of peace and comfort. Like Rusty, i believe Jim Pat and Dad have been reunited in the forever Home that we all long for when our LORD calls us.

suzanne Jones Schwartz

suzanne Schwartz - September 12 at 10:53 AM



“ Candy, I picture my Dad and JP paddling through heaven discussing which f.stop to use.
Rusty

Rusty Jones - September 11 at 07:33 PM



“ I cannot explain this!
Your pain is my gain.
JP and my Dad are canoeing through heaven together.
I'm weeping and they are laughing paddles up!

Rusty Jones - September 10 at 05:36 PM



“ I have known Jim Pat for over 50 years. As a matter of fact he was my best man when Judy and I married 49 years ago. He was one of the best and loyal friends I have and Judy and I will miss him very much. Our best wishes and prayers to Candy and family. We have lost a great man.
Judy and Mose Howard

Mose Howard - September 09 at 08:20 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Service Video





“ To Candy & Family,

We are deeply stunned and saddened by the loss that you and your family have encountered. Our condolences on the passing of J.P. While we did not know J.P. very well, it was easy to tell he was a good and kind man from our brief interactions and conversation. His shared love for and memories of Montana and Glacier National Park will forever be remembered. It is without a doubt, the Glacier National Park framed topo map that he left us is the best housewarming gift I have ever received.

Sincerely,
Tyler & Marguerite

Tyler Haydel - September 08 at 04:20 PM



“ Dear Candy & Family,

We'll surely miss Dr. JP Bell.
Such a competent, compassionate, excellent, broad based, man & physician. His medical assistance to all of us was ever on the mark & healing to patients & doctors.
Few in medicine/ life are truly virtuous, though they labor mightily to acquire it. He had "It". In this, & in all the blessings he left for us with his full life, we are exceedingly fortunate beneficiaries.
We send our heartfelt condolences for your loss.

Take care.

Love,

Jennie & Albert Mac Dade

Albert Mac Dade - September 08 at 10:57 AM



“ JP was a role model who showed the way to be a great husband, father, grandfather and physician. His influence on me will continue for the remainder of my career and he will be missed. He touched countless lives during his time here with us.

John Weddle - September 08 at 10:02 AM



“ "JP BELL"; just saying his names causes me to smile. JP was an excellent ED physician and a very talented artist. He had a great eye. I worked with JP in the ED for 23 years, he was a man solid in his convictions, and consistent in his character. It's hard to imagine Arkansas without JP, but my memories will recall a great guy always trying to do the right thing. My thoughts and prayers are with Candy, Elizabeth and Stephen. Rest in peace my friend.

Keith Veit - September 07 at 09:59 PM



“ My friend JP asked me two questions that impacted my life in great ways. First, he asked me to come join the ER Group at SRMC and I did. Second, he asked me to go with him and his church to Guatemala on a Medical Mission and I did. We are praying for Candy, Elizabeth and Stephen. May God Bless.

Bob and Nomie Fraser

Bob Fraser - September 08 at 04:43 PM



“ Jim-Pat, as I knew him, was a few years ahead of me in medical school, and had lived in the "BSU House" just before the next group of us med students moved in. While he was an intern, he made a 'house call' on me when I was sick with what I thought was strep throat, but he examined me and I had an enlarged spleen--an indication I probably had mononucleosis, which later turned out to be the case. I, too, remember float trips down the Buffalo River with JP and Candy and other BSU students from UAMS. Dr. Bell had a lifelong love of being in God's creation, being with God's people, and doing what he could to help. His Christ-like example has stayed with me these many years. Joe F. Bradley, MD

Joe F Bradley - September 07 at 05:48 PM



“ I am so sad to read about the death of Dr Bell.
I taught both of his children at Ballman Elementary in Fort Smith.

Carol Boen



Carol Boen - September 07 at 03:55 PM



“ It’s hard to wrap my mind around him being gone. He was always so full of life. So ready to help anyone he could. He was always there for us when we needed him. I’m looking forward to heaven where there will be no more goodbyes. Love and prayers to the family.

Lynne Anderson - September 07 at 02:29 PM



“ J.P. was an very gifted man who invested in the lives of so many others. He did seek any recognition but rather desired to point others to his savior Jesus Christ. I will miss very much our conversations and how he always asked about my Ethiopian grand children.J.P. was a true servant and a kind gentle spirit.I can only imagine how he will be missed by Candy and the family even though they know they will be reunited in heaven.

John Taylor
Fort Smith

John Taylor - September 07 at 12:48 PM



“ Vickey and I send our deepest sympathies to Candy and the family. I first met JP as a freshman at the U of A in the fall of 1968. We met at the Baptist Student Union (now the Baptist Collegiate Ministry). JP and a few other upper classmen took me under their wing and helped an immature 18-year old freshman learn how to navigate college life. One of my best memories of JP are the impromptu trips to the Buffalo because the "water was up". Regardless of what the weekend plans might have been, if the water conditions were good, off to the Buffalo JP and several friends would go.

I learned pretty quickly that JP loved the Lord and showed that love by loving and serving others. Interestingly one of his stops in his medical career was in Mena, AR, where he would treat my mother-in-law. Life presented several significant challenges to JP, but he never lost his faith or his love for this family, friends, or the Lord. We were blessed to know JP and Candy to be able to call them friends.

Larry Lloyd - September 07 at 12:35 PM



“ Larry P. purchased a sympathy card for the family of James "J.P." Patrick Bell.





Larry P. - September 07 at 12:01 PM



“ Floor Plant for Sympathy was purchased for the family of Dr. James "J.P." Patrick Bell.



September 07 at 11:54 AM



“ I was blessed to have known and been friends with JP for 50 years. I met him while out hiking near Lake Maumelle when he was a medical student and I was in college. He joined our Ozark Society group and hiked and canoed with us. We maintained our friendship and later practiced medicine and shared call in Mena AR. His going into ER medicine inspired me to do the same. He was a dedicated and caring physician. He was an immensely skilled and talented photographer. His energy was boundless and he feared no challenge. I remember when clinical duties made him late for a canoe trip. We went anyway, finishing the white water trip in total darkness. He was a dedicated to his family and to his faith. We will miss you JP. Larry S Price, MD

Larry S Price, MD - September 07 at 11:45 AM



“ So sorry for your loss! Amazing man! Huge loss to all of you and to the world, but God knows best about all things. My prayers are with you, as well as my sympathy.

Don Moore

Don Moore - September 07 at 11:36 AM



“ The world was a better place with J.P. In it. Those of us who met up with him in med school I think all share a similar memory. A real person whose kind heart and inquisitive mind created a wonderful physician and friend. Time passes, but we all can

remember those whose paths we crossed ,and were made better by those friendships.J.P.was one of those souls. Dave Allen

Dave Allen - September 07 at 10:35 AM



“ Dr. Bell was a very compassionate physician, very attentive to his patients. Had the pleasure of working alongside him at Sparks for many years, and so enjoyed his photography! Prayers go up for Candy and his children Glad I had the opportunity to know him on this earth, and look forward to the reunion in heaven one day!

David Payne - September 07 at 10:28 AM



“ Hugs & prayers for your wonderful family! We treasure the memories of your Little Rock years! What a remarkable legacy of faith, love, and talent !

Janet Williams - September 07 at 10:25 AM



“ To JP's family we extend our most sincere condolences. What a great man with enthusiasm for life and helping others. Years ago we saw his photo of the Pangburn, AR cafe taken at dusk with the interior lights on. One of our son-in-laws is from Pangburn so we wanted to get a print. JP could not find the photo in his archives after a long search. Several months later he came across the photo and it now hangs on a wall. Just a small example of his diligence and kindness. God bless you all!

Joel & Melissa Johnson - September 07 at 09:04 AM