



James McConnell

December 7, 1935 - January 14, 2010

Jim McConnell passed away on January 14, 2010 after a sudden internal illness. His body, after mightily fighting multiple health problems over the last few years, finally gave way and he joined the Lord in a place where he is pain free and restful. Jim fought the good fight. Born on December 7, 1935 in Colorado Springs, Colorado, Jim and his family moved to Lincoln NE in 1939. He spent a formidable and mischievous childhood in Lincoln where he developed life long friendships, a love of hunting and Cornhusker football and a deep passion for art. He graduated from Lincoln High School in 1953. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in the Arts and Sciences College from the University of Nebraska in 1957, with double majors in Painting and Sculpture and double minors in Art History and Spanish. The university selected four of his works for their Permanent Student Collection. Active during university, he pledged and was initiated into the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity and has been a life-long member. His senior year he was elected and served as President of Delta Phi Delta, an art honorary fraternity. He was also active in the U.S. Air Force ROTC. He was a Squadron Commander, obtained his civilian pilot's license and received his commission in 1957. It was at NU where he met the love of his life, Judith Anne Blackburn of Omaha. He was smitten with Judy from the very beginning and worked hard to win her favor. It worked; they were married on August 29, 1958. Jim loved his time in the Air Force and his duties took him to Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Moore Air Field at Mission, Texas and Webb Air Force Base in Big

Spring, Texas for pilot training. After Personnel Officers training, he became Adjutant of the Installation Squadron at Larson Air Force Base and a Squadron Commander (MATS) in Moses Lake, Washington. He held the rank of Captain at time of resignation from the service. After Jim's service with the Air Force was finished, Judy and Jim McConnell lived a spirited and social life that included several moves starting when Jim took a position with Campbell Soup Company in Omaha, NE. After various promotions, the couple moved to Paris, TX where he staffed the first 1,000 positions in the new heat process plant. He then went into the oil and gas business working for Coastal States Gas Producing Company in Corpus Christi; APCO Oil Corporation in Oklahoma City, OK, and Natomas, North America in Houston. After an oil industry downturn, Jim and Judy owned and ran the Regency Gallery II in Houston before moving to Tyler, Texas in 1988 to join SAF-T-MARK Supply Company, Inc. In 1990, Jim was appointed by Commissioners Court as Director of Personnel for Smith County from which he retired in 2001. He was active in and served in various professional organizations including the American Society of Personnel Administration (ASPA) in Corpus Christi (where he was president), Oklahoma City and Houston; earning the highest accreditation level of Accredited Executive in Personnel (AEP) and served as Vice President of the Board of Directors of the East Texas Personnel Association. McConnell was a member of Christ Church Episcopal in Tyler and had served on the Vestries of Episcopal churches in Paris, Texas and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. In line with his interest in art, McConnell has shown, won exhibition awards and sold his sculptures, woodcuts, and paintings in Dallas, Corpus Christi, Houston, Paris, Tyler, Seattle, Spokane, Omaha, Lincoln, San Francisco and Chicago. He has a drawing, a sculpture and two oil paintings in the permanent student collection in Sheldon's Museum of Fine Art at the University of Nebraska. He served as President of the Southwest Sculpture Society in Corpus Christi and was a member of the Corpus Christi Museum of Art and the Tyler Museum of Art. An example of Jim's art, "Drao-Komodra, Tragoidia", a marble sculpture that was donated

and on display at the Braithwaite Theatre at the Tyler Civic Theatre Center. McConnell is survived by his wife of 51 years, Judy, daughter Anne Marie Graf and her husband Dennis; sons Michael Scott and Mark Richard and their wives Chris and Sarah; and grandchildren Claire Elizabeth and Michael Flynn McConnell, John William, Jake Anthony and Ryan James Graf. Jim is also survived by his sister, Lou Mitchell of Folsom, CA. Services will include: a visitation from 6:00 to 8:00 pm on Monday, January 18th at the Stewart Family Funeral Home located at 7525 Old Jacksonville Hwy in Tyler and funeral services at 1:00 pm, Tuesday, January 19th at Christ Episcopal Church located at 118 South Bois d' Arc, Tyler, Texas. In lieu of flowers, Judy has asked that donations be sent to Christ Episcopal Church or PATH, a service provided through Christ Episcopal Church.

Tribute Wall

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“ *Judy - I am so sorry to here about Jim...I just saw the obituary and we live in Houston now...I lived next to you on Timbercreek...Sorry we have not kept in touch..Bob and I send our prayers to you and your family for the loss of Jim...If you are ever in Houston please give us a call. Bob & Cathy Fuller*

Cathy & Bob Fuller - January 14, 2010 at 12:00 AM