



## James Thomas "Jamie" Wilkes, Jr.

February 18, 1932 - December 1, 2019

James Thomas "Jamie" Wilkes, Jr., was born February 18, 1932 in Harvey, Illinois, the third of four children born to James T. and Helen Wilkes. He died peacefully at age 87 with his wife of 42 years, Bonnie, at his side.

A graduate of Thornton Township High School (Class of 1950), Jamie earned a degree in business and accounting from the University of North Carolina and finished law school at Northwestern University.

After his father's death in 1962, he became a partner in his father's accounting business, the James T. Wilkes and Company accounting firm, later named Wilkes, Besterfield and Company. Over the course of time the company became the largest accounting firm in the south suburbs of Chicago featuring a full-service operation employing accountants specializing in all phases of the business. In addition to providing tax planning and tax compliance work, Wilkes, Besterfield and Company was best known for its work with savings and loans associations, municipalities and school districts.

Jamie and his accounting business partner, Allen Besterfield, developed Governors Office Park, a multi-use complex including six office buildings, a restaurant and a bank in Olympia Fields. In 1995 Jamie and Allen jointly received the Business Person of the Year Award from the Matteson Area Chamber of Commerce in recognition of their contributions to the community.

Jamie and Bonnie also purchased and further developed Shady Lawn Golf Course in Beecher, Illinois and then Brookwood Golf Course in Buchanan, Michigan. As he helped develop these properties, he became highly respected in the south suburbs of Chicago for his achievements in real estate development and management.

Jamie was also very invested in public service and exhibited this his entire life. He served on the board of Ingalls Memorial Hospital for many years, played an integral part in the racial integration of the Olympia Fields Country Club, spent countless days delivering meals to families thru Meals on Wheels, and supported Cornerstone Academy in Chicago for years.

Except for the company of his family, Jamie enjoyed nothing better than going to a Chicago Cubs baseball game. In the summer of 2016, Jamie and Bonnie, Cubs season ticket-holders for 30+ years, orchestrated a combination of these two loves: they organized a family reunion around some Cubs games, taking their children and grandchildren to Wrigley Field to watch the soon-to-be World Series Champions.

Jamie was preceded in death by his parents and his sisters Betty Jean Besterfield and Marjorie Tolly.

He is survived by his wife Bonnie Wilkes; his brother William Wilkes; his children Jim (Cheryl) Wilkes, Kim (Eric) Gourieux; his step sons Jim (Mary) Fugett, Jack (Dina) Fugett, Mike (Dara) Fugett and Mark (Carrie) Fugett; his grandchildren Daniel (Holly) Gourieux, Melissa (Corbin) Marshall, Evan Gourieux, Nicole Gourieux, Katie Wilkes, Lauren Wilkes, Emily Wilkes, Ashley (Adam) Conard, Cutter Fugett, Telle Fugett, Chase Fugett, Mckenna Fugett, Ian Fugett, Noah Fugett, Mackenzie Fugett, Tiger Fugett, Lion Fugett, Tyler Fugett, and Jacob Fugett; his great-grandchildren Adalyn Conard, Clara

Marshall and Mason Marshall.

The family wishes to thank Peterson Oliviera, Gusetta Curtis, Jennifer Currier, Monalisa Daniels, Laretha Burks, and Liliana Planes who with kindness and gifts of friendship cared for Jamie and his family in the last months.

A memorial service will be held at a later date. If you feel led, donations can be made to Cornerstone Academy, 1111 N. Wells, Room 403, Chicago, IL 60610. <https://www.cornerstonechicago.org>.

# Tribute Wall



“ This is Tom Hayes. We all loved Uncle Jamie, and here is one memory. A bunch of us were on vacation on Anna Maria Island in Florida, and we were watching the Cubs game on TV. When the TV camera was facing home plate from the pitcher's mound, you could see some of the fans right behind the net that protected the fans behind the plate. I saw Uncle Jamie standing up in about the 4th or 5th row, and I exclaimed, "Look everyone! That's Uncle Jamie!" We were all watching him, and he reached down to rearrange his "Jewels," so to speak, and we all saw him do it on national TV. Aaah...a true Cubs fan!

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**Thomas Hayes** - December 09, 2019 at 07:57 AM

MP

“ Bonnie, not sure if you got my first text. I think of you and Mugsey and Jamie often! This is Ellen, and if you need anything at all I want you to call me. My number is: 941-747-3240. Even if you just want to talk. I have retired from my job so I have plenty of time to help. I fell in love with Mugsey and loved talking to you in our parking lot! I am always available to dog sit.

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**Margaret Pickering** - December 08, 2019 at 03:07 PM

BH

“ Thank you for the obituary. The facts of my cousin Jamie's life speak volumes. Yet there was even more to the man than his amazing business acumen and his undying devotion to the Chicago Cubs. He was a loving, generous, kind man who adored his family, spent hours chasing down and writing about his Wilkes (and Hayes) ancestors. He and his wife Bonnie traveled the world extensively. He was bright and funny, and enjoyed life. He truly was a spiritual man, with a heart that was open to all mankind.

*Jamie Wilkes will always be remembered for an incident that occurred when he was but nine years old. In the middle of the night, he observed an intruder stealthily opening drawers and searching for objects to steal. Little Jamie then conversed, via sign language, with his deaf grandfather, and--when the thief rounded the corner into the living room--took the telephone into the bedroom and called the Police. Minutes later, the man was apprehended and caught red-handed with the loot he was heisting. Jamie will ever be my hero.*

*Cousin Bill Hayes*

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**Bill Hayes** - December 07, 2019 at 03:46 PM

KG

*I love this and you, Uncle Bill. I couldn't agree more- My dad was everything the obituary says....but SO MUCH MORE than that to me and so many others.*

*Love,  
Kim*

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**Kim Gourieux** - December 07, 2019 at 04:29 PM

PN

*Jamie, will always be special to me and my family. Bill Newhart was my father and an original "Comet". Jamie, my dad and the rest of the Comets were lifelong friends from Harvey, IL. My Dad's last words to Jamie the night before he did was, I'll be at the lounge with the gang waiting for you. Bonnie, our hearts go out to you. Fondly, Paula Newhart-Linklater.*

Paula Newhart-Linklater - December 07, 2019 at 05:59 PM

KG

*Paula, thank you for sharing ❤️ My dad's love and loyalty to the Comets has always blown me away! What a special band of brothers!*

Kim Gourieux - December 07, 2019 at 07:40 PM

JL

*wow-- My dad "Arthur Caskey",, also a comet was a best friend of Jamie's. Many years of being friends and now they are re-joined together to continue with all their other buddies who have left us. (joanne lorenz ) -Arts daughter..*

Joanne Caskey Lorenz - December 08, 2019 at 09:53 AM

BW

*I always thought I was older when Jamie found the burglar, but in fact it was a story from my childhood that I knew, but didn't remember. I was only two when this happened., but I grew up knowing (I think) the window the burglar came through. I'm thankful we got to visit with him and go over old photos the week before he left us. What a pleasant surprise to hear from second generation Comets. I knew your fathers and admired that they were still together after nearly 80 years.*

Bill Wilkes - December 08, 2019 at 09:01 PM

BW

*I cant edit my comment, so I will add that while most of the Comets are gone, I knew them as friends in spite of the age difference and that they are still together in spirit.*

Bill Wilkes - December 08, 2019 at 09:12 PM

AB

*What a wonderful man. Growing up just a few blocks away, his presence seemed to always be a part of my life whether it was family gatherings, babysitting or working summers at WB & Co. and later when we all ended up in Sarasota.*

*Uncle Jamie was a sweet, kind, gentle man devoted to his family. It goes without saying that he was bright but also thoughtful, funny and charming.*

*He seemed to like few things more than talking about family, past and present, and as a massage client of mine we spent many hours doing just that. I enjoyed it as much as he did.*

*He loved my Mom and visited her regularly when she became housebound with Alzheimer's which she loved and for which I am grateful. he was a great example for all. My heart goes out to Bonnie and all of the family. He will always have a place in my heart.*

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**ann besterfield** - December 12, 2019 at 02:33 PM