



James 'Jim' Coke Byrd

April 6, 1950 - April 30, 2025

To all those who knew and loved James “Jim” Coke Byrd, we share our mutual sorrow at his passing. Jim passed away peacefully on April 30, 2025, while traveling in Malaysia with his beloved wife, Peisha. A devoted husband, father, brother, grandpa, and friend, Jim lived a life full of love, laughter, and curiosity.

Born in Quanah, Texas on April 6, 1950, Jim’s sharp intellect and passion for learning led him to earn a National Merit Scholarship and attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He later pursued his doctoral education at Vanderbilt University, laying the foundation for a distinguished career in medicine. Jim served as a respected researcher and professor at MD Anderson in Houston, Texas, where he dedicated his work to colon cancer research.

Jim had a deep love for travel, embracing cultures from around the world and filling his life with adventure. Yet, nothing brought him more joy than time spent with family—especially during Thanksgiving, when he enjoyed bringing everyone together. He was known for his quick wit, sharp sense of humor, and a charm that made all who knew him feel at ease.

He is survived by his loving wife, Peisha Yan; his children, James “Frank” Byrd, Kate LaVelle, and Sophie Tan; his sisters, Elaine Wheeler and Carole

Adams; daughter-in-law Jade Byrd and son-in-law John LaVelle; and grandchildren Drew and Julia LaVelle. Jim's legacy lives on in the laughter, stories, and memories shared by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

A Celebration of Life will be held on August 23rd at Swallows Nest Clubhouse in Sacramento, California, where friends and family will gather to honor and remember his remarkable life.

Tribute Wall

CW

“ Jim Byrd will be forever young as I remember him in the back of a ski boat while his family lovingly and patiently helped me gain confidence enough to ski. It was a thrill I'll never forget. He was a cut above his peers even as a teen. He was funny, always smiling, able to converse well, seemed like a happy guy. That he found his calling as a researcher who made science and medicine better because of his efforts is in great part due to his close-knit and loving family. I mourn with each of you.

Carol Willis - July 29, 2025 at 09:29 PM