



James "Jim" Lawton

April 18, 1942 - June 26, 2022

The memorial service celebrating the life of Jim Lawton of Wadena will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 30, at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Wadena, with Pastor Nate Loer presiding.

A gathering of family and friends will be held at the church on Thursday from 11:30 a.m. until the time of the service.

James King Lawton, 80, of Wadena MN died peacefully with his family by his side on June 26, 2022. Born in Wauwatosa, WI April 18, 1942, the son of loving parents, Charles DeWitt Lawton and Eleanor Marie (Beckwith) Lawton who predeceased him.

Summers were spent at the family cottage in Houghton MI near where his father was from in Hancock MI. Also nearby were the copper mines where his great uncle was the superintendent and his grandfather was the attorney. In later years, after the mines closed, as a teenager, Jim began exploring the abandoned buildings and taking slides (photos) of the mine grounds and buildings. Slides that would come in handy many years later.

After graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a degree in entomology and parasitology, Jim went to work at the Milwaukee Public Museum as the Assistant Curator of Entomology. He traveled far and wide

collecting specimens for the newly built MPM exhibits. A lot of his field trips took him to National Parks where he collected specimens and took slides of the beautiful landscapes. More slides that would become prominent in his life later.

While working at the MPM, he met and married his wife, Janet (Jana) Ann Sewell who was attending school in Milwaukee and volunteering at the museum. They were married June 12, 1971 and later moved to Jackson Hole WY where they opened a museum design studio, designing exhibits for smaller museums. Three happy years were spent there, but they couldn't make a success of the business.

Jim next accepted a position at the University of Utah Natural History Museum in Salt Lake City as Curator of Exhibits. Employed there for eight years, his artistic abilities really blossomed, and his exhibits won countless awards. He and Jana had two children, James King II (2/9/78) and Jenna (1/19/1981) while in Salt Lake City.

When Jim's parents got along in years and became ill, Jim and Jana decided to move back to Wisconsin where he accepted a job as Curator of Exhibits with the Neville Museum in Green Bay. He received many awards for his exhibits, one of which was a national award. While in Green Bay, Jim became a rabid Green Bay Packer fan.

After early retirement, Jim and Jana moved to Prescott, WI to be closer to good friends who lived nearby. While in retirement, Jim enjoyed gardening and working part-time at Funkie Gardens. Working with Baard and Diane Webster and all the wonderful customers at Funkie Gardens made Jim's retirement a wonderful blessing. He also began painting landscapes of National Parks and the abandoned mines of the Quincy Copper Mine in Hancock MI. Many, prestigious art shows later, Jim received many local and National awards. In

addition to being known far and wide for his National Park paintings, he was known as the Copper Country Artist.

Alzheimer's finally took the best of him, ultimately requiring that he live in a nursing home for care. Moving to Wadena to be closer to his son and his family, gave Jana the support that she needed during this period.

At last Jim received a call, a sort of offer you can't refuse, for an appointment from which he will not be returning. This assignment comes with a huge sign-on bonus, a reunion with family and friends he has not seen in a long time. No doubt he will regale them with some very energetic storytelling of the highlights of his life.

Jim is survived by his wife Janet "Jana": son, James II of Wadena, and daughter, Jenna of Wadena; four grandchildren; and brothers, Charles "Chuck (Joan) Lawton of Grafton WI, and Thomas (Pat) Lawton of Green Bay, WI.

Jim was preceded in death by his brother, Stephen Lawton who resided in Sewell NJ at the time of his death.

In lieu of flowers, donations to Immanuel Lutheran Church, Wadena, can be made in Jim's memory.

Many thanks to Fair Oaks Lodge and their wonderful, caring, and loving staff who cared for Jim, and Heartland Hospice who stepped in at a time he needed them the most.

(opt) Honorary pallbearers will be James K. Lawton II, Charles D. Lawton III, Thomas R. Lawton, Baard Webster, Floyd Easterman and Steve Meyer.

Burial will be in Wadena Cemetery, Wadena, MN.

Cemetery Details

Wadena Cemetery

Franklin Drive & 5th St. SW
Wadena, MN 56482

Previous Events

Gathering of Family & Friends

JUN 30. 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Immanuel Lutheran Church - Wadena
403 2nd St. SE
Wadena, MN 56482

Memorial Service

JUN 30. 1:00 PM (CT)

Immanuel Lutheran Church - Wadena
403 2nd St. SE
Wadena, MN 56482

Tribute Wall

MR

“ He was my best friend in grade school in Wauwatosa. I lost track of him and just found out he had passed away.

Marilyn Ricklin - September 03, 2023 at 08:44 PM

PA

“ Polly Anderson lit a candle in memory of James "Jim" Lawton



Polly Anderson - July 12, 2022 at 02:57 AM

AG

“ Jim was SO enthusiastic about life, plants, Melaleuca and his family & friends... he was a joy to be around!!! Ann & Paul Good

Ann Good - July 08, 2022 at 01:17 PM

MM

“ I met Jim Lawton briefly many years ago when I went to Funky Gardens in Prescott to purchase some shrubs. I was inexperienced about what to choose to plant along 75 yr. old shed on our farm that I wanted to preserve by enhancing the old structure by some perennials. Jim was kind and patient, obviously knowledgeable. He and I stepped out the length and calculated how many plants were needed. I will never forget his words that day when he encouraged me and excited about our choices saying, " Your shed will be beautiful and you will enjoy looking at it over the years!"

I have thought of Jim so often in the spring or summer when appreciating how our old shed has survived surrounded by Jim's perennials. I tell my husband Tom how I remembered the kind man from that day. I will continue to think of Jim, his kind engagement that day, listening and then being happy to share his talent and at the same time sincerely wishing me well. I knew he was a special person.

Marie Magnan Ellsworth WI



Marie Magnan - July 05, 2022 at 06:17 PM

JB

“ Joan Brauch lit a candle in memory of James "Jim" Lawton



Joan Brauch - July 02, 2022 at 05:38 AM



“ *Heavenly and Harmony was purchased for the family of James "Jim" Lawton.*



July 01, 2022 at 07:19 AM



“ *Jim was a talented scientist and a wonderful artist. We so appreciated knowing him and have fond memories of Jim.*

Linda Bjorklund and Tom Blanck - June 30, 2022 at 08:07 AM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of James "Jim" Lawton.*



June 29, 2022 at 07:57 PM

SM

“ I had the joy of being Jim's pastor when they lived in Prescott, but also the joy of being able to call Jim my friend. Jim inspired me in many ways: with his humble spirit, with his love of creation and the way he nurtured creation (especially his woodland garden from which he shared so generously), and with his skill as an artist. We are proud to hang our "Jim Lawton original" painting of the Tetons above our mantle and think of Jim everyday when we see it. It is a great privilege to be considered an honorary pallbearer. I wish I could be with you in person as your lay Jim's body to rest. Please know that you are in our thoughts, now and always.
Pastor Steve Meyer

Steve Meyer - June 29, 2022 at 06:07 PM

TH

“ Tammie Hamlin sent a virtual gift in memory of James "Jim" Lawton



Tammie Hamlin - June 28, 2022 at 09:03 AM