



James Clifford Pirius

April 6, 1947 - June 16, 2020

James C. Pirius, of Alexandria, VA, a globetrotting Redwing, MN, native, figure-skating enthusiast and retired education lobbyist, died on June 16, 2020, at his winter home in Bonita Springs, FL. The embodiment of “Midwest Nice,” Jim was 73.

Eric Nerf, his loving partner of 29 years, survives, as do brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Ronald and Jane Nerf, nieces and nephew Katelyn, Mitchell, Amy and Allyson Nerf and godchildren Spencer, Trevor, and Anastasia Blankley, Andrew Friberg and Colleen Brady-Lindstrom.

Jim’s late parents, Clifford and Margery Pirius, raised him and his late sister, Carol Ann, to love the ice. Jim was always seeking friends to watch competitive skating and ice dancing with him on TV or at the rink. He brought that same passion to golf.

Jim was generous, hardworking, optimistic and gregarious. His friendships spanned decades and continents. Wherever he went, Jim radiated warmth, good cheer, and a love of life, which instantly drew people to him.

After graduating from the University of Minnesota with a B.A. in Political Science and Journalism, Jim taught middle school in Illinois. He returned to Minnesota after several years of teaching to become the Chief Public

Information Officer for the Minnesota Senate.

In 1977, Jim's dreams came true and he moved to Washington, D.C. to work for Rep. Bruce F. Vento (D-MN), rising to be top political advisor. After leaving Capitol Hill, Jim served as President Carter's first Director of Legislative Policy for the U.S. Department of Education. Remaining in Washington, D.C., Jim then began his long-standing relationship with the State of Florida by becoming the Federal Liaison for Florida Education Commissioner Betty Castor.

Jim left government in 1996 to become a lobbyist for higher education clients at APCO Worldwide. In 1999, he established his own federal relations firm, JCP Associates, and for many years represented Florida's state university system before Congress and the Executive branch.

Jim loved travelling. He and Eric often visited Europe and other parts of the world, celebrating his 70th birthday in grand style in London with friends from his journeys.

Jim also loved to be at home, whether on West Boulevard in Alexandria, in Bonita Springs, or at a third home on Lake Boca in Boca Raton. For many years, Jim and Eric owned a home and wintered in Maui, and he often mused about whether they should buy another place in Hawaii, too.

All who knew Jim will miss his sunny outlook, infectious laugh, and penchant for hyperbolic storytelling. Tall, blond, blue-eyed and handsome, Jim was often told that he looked like a taller Paul Newman, which delighted him.

Many of us heard Jim's story – sometimes more than once – of meeting Joan Rivers in the lounge of a Vermont resort, where she said, "Paul Newman, I didn't know you were here too." Some versions of this story had them playing

darts in the club room. Jim won, of course.

Jim often said that he had been privileged to live a wonderful life. We who knew and loved Jim were privileged to have him in our lives for so long.

RIP, James C. Pirius.

If you'd like to make a donation in his memory, please consider The Rodham Institute; <https://smhs.gwu.edu/rodhaminstitute/>. Jim was a long-time supporter of the Rodham Institute which seeks to apply the transformative power of education to achieve health equity in Washington, D.C.

To sign his guest register or to leave online condolences please visit www.shikanyfuneralhome.com

Arrangements are being handled by Shikany's Bonita Funeral Home Family Owned and Operated Since 1978

Tribute Wall



“ *James Clifford Pirius*

October 09, 2023 at 03:40 AM



“ *Silvia A. sent a virtual gift in memory of James Clifford Pirius*



Silvia A. - July 22, 2020 at 09:52 PM



“ *Silvia A. sent a virtual gift in memory of James Clifford Pirius*



Silvia A. - July 22, 2020 at 08:26 PM



“ *So sorry to see that Jim has passed away. We were friends in DC and met at APCO. Jim stood out for his genuine warmth and sweet nature. He reminded me of Paul Newman with those twinkling and mischievous eyes. With sympathy, John Stiner*

john stiner - June 27, 2020 at 09:30 AM



“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



Shikany's Bonita Funeral Home - June 25, 2020 at 04:10 PM