

THE HONORABLE JAMES Q. BLOMGREN

The Hon. (Ret.) James Q. “Jim” Blomgren left us far too soon on September 25, 2019 at the age of 71. He was born in Oskaloosa, Iowa on November 6, 1947, to Francis Hamilton “FH” Blomgren and Mary Hygene Sharp Blomgren.

A proud 1965 graduate of Oskaloosa High School, he played tennis, basketball (#20), and football (#83), but did not sing in the glee club because, as he would tell you, “they didn’t kick me out, they just didn’t ask me to return.”

He played tennis well into his adult life and was quite successful winning many singles and doubles tournaments both locally and throughout the state. When tennis was no longer an option, he took up golf and pickle ball and played both regularly.

Jim graduated from The University of Iowa in 1969 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History. He discovered his love for the law after a history professor suggested he take a prelaw class while at Iowa. He took the LSAT (scoring in the 95th percentile) and obtained his Juris Doctor Degree in 1972 from the University of Virginia (UVa) in Charlottesville.

Anyone who knew Jim knew he remained a devoted ‘WaHoo’ the rest of his life. He showered his children and grandchildren with more UVa paraphernalia than any self-respecting Iowa-born kid knew what to do with. The number of UVa t-shirts and hats in Jim’s own collection only grew over the years as UVa teams, in any sport, proved their competitive worth. To say he was over-the-moon excited when UVa won the 2019 NCAA Basketball Championship was an understatement – he bought a piece of the hardwood floor where the championship was played.

Jim was a respected jurist and member of the Iowa legal community practicing first in Des Moines and then for over 20 years in Oskaloosa. His career achievements and honors were vast, but he was especially honored to be a member of the Iowa Academy of Trial Lawyers and the American Board of Trial Advocates. Both organizations require personal invitation, a unanimous vote for acceptance along with the accomplishment of rigorous admittance criteria such as the completion of fifty or more civil and/or felony jury trials.

In 1998, he was appointed as a District Judge for the 8th Judicial District of Iowa by then Governor Terry Brandstad. Jim was appointed as the district’s Chief Judge in 2001, and was reappointed every two years thereafter until his retirement from the bench in December 2012. To date, he has been the only Judge from Mahaska County to serve as Chief Judge of the 8th District.

His family is fond of saying he failed retirement as his first retirement lasted all of 30

days. After leaving the bench he returned to private practice for two years. He then retired from private practice a second time when he was asked to accept an appointment as Mahaska County Attorney in 2015. He served in that role until his final retirement in December 2018.

While there is no doubt Jim loved his legal career, it paled in comparison to his love for his family. He was a devoted husband for 33 years to Pamela Jo and it was evident to all who saw them how very much he loved her. He was a dear friend to his children and he knew that sometimes it was better just to listen than to offer fatherly advice. That being said, he was very good at comforting but didn't believe in sugarcoating.

He was an engaged parent and grandparent who always wanted his children and grandchildren to choose the path that was right for them, advising them to always "do what's fair and right" (followed with "and don't forget to wear your seatbelt"). He was known to cut out newspaper clippings on any number of topics, which he'd then send to his children following engaged conversations about said topics. He would not send the articles however before highlighting in yellow, or underlining in blue, the pertinent facts supporting his position.

Jim was always ready to go on one of daughter Kate's culinary adventures. He coached his son Jim's little league team and, as Jim got older, spent countless hours with him hunting and fishing. He developed a new appreciation for choral music by attending innumerable choir concerts for daughters Shannon and Ryan. And he was the first person Shannon told when she was accepted into law school.

He loved to attend the many events of his grandchildren: Quinton, Coty, Hunter, Maddy, Joshua, Matthew, Paige, and William. He enjoyed watching them play sports, talking to them about their passions and activities, showing them around Oskaloosa, fishing and hunting with them, and playing card games and board games with them whenever they would visit.

Jim loved the outdoors and loved to fish and hunt. He and his wife, Pam, fished Alaska's Kenai River for King Salmon numerous times. Stories exist about the salmon that took both Jim and Pam's lure, the first King Jim reeled in (33 lbs.), and one of the last Kings Pam landed (63 lbs.). His hunting expeditions included Alaska black bear, antelope, mule deer, elk, whitetail deer, Canada geese, pheasant, quail, and turkey – all hunts resulting in successful harvests.

It was during his final adventure – hunting mountain caribou in Canada's Northwest Territories – that Jim left this world for one even more majestic. Through this tragedy, the family finds a breath of comfort in knowing he was doing what he loved. His final earthly vision was that of the 'substantial' Caribou he had harvested – the trophy he envisioned during three years of planning – a hunting adventure culminating in one final success.

He touched so many lives, and the world is better because he was in it. His laugh, his words of wisdom, his kind face – beard and all – will be greatly missed.

Jim is survived by his wife, Pamela Jo; daughter Kate Blomgren (Alastair Bullett) of Chicago, IL; son James Blomgren (Katy) of Cumming, Iowa; daughter Shannon Gausman (Carl) of West Des Moines, IA; daughter Ryan Goemaat (Jesse) of Hamilton, IA; sister Carol Roever (Jim) of St. Joseph, MO; sister Barbara Miller of Dayton, OH; grandchildren Hunter and Maddy Blomgren, Quinton Goemaat (Caitlin Peterson), Coty Goemaat, and Joshua, Matthew, Paige, and William Gausman; niece Lynsey Douglas (Brian) of Kansas City, Mo; nephew Nate Miller (Maya Steinitz), of Chicago, IL; niece Lena White (Tim) of Dayton, OH; his mother-in-law Bessie Young of Cedar Rapids, IA; five great-nephews, one great-niece, and one great-granddaughter.

He was preceded in death by his parents, father-in-law James W. Young, and a brother-in-law Dan Miller.

Jim was interred at Forest Cemetery in Oskaloosa, Iowa.