



Jim Tudder Hamilton

September 2, 1922 - April 18, 2020

Dr. Jim Tudder Hamilton, born in Weir, KS in 1922, died at his residence in Pittsburg, KS, on April 18, 2020. Jim was the son of William R. and Eva Marie Hamilton of Weir, KS. While growing up in Weir, he inherited a love of the outdoors from his father and a love of sports from both his parents. He attended Independence Community College for 1 year and Kansas State Teachers College (Pittsburg State University) for 2 years before entering the US Navy and serving as “skipper” on a Landing Craft Support ship in the Pacific during World War II. His ship was part of a perimeter radar picket patrol in the Pacific Theater and in the Battle of Okinawa in April, 1945. Afterwards his ship was offshore in the Philippines, being outfitted for the invasion of Japan, when the war ended with the Japanese surrender in August, 1945. Post-war operations took him off the coast of Japan, near Tokyo and Sasebo in 1945 and 1946.

Jim, an outstanding high school athlete and NAIA College All-American in basketball prior to the war, was recruited to continue his athletic career at the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill. He played out his years of eligibility there, playing 1 year of basketball and 2 years of baseball as a Carolina Tarheel. It was at UNC that he also met and married William (Bill) Lloyd; her unusual name never detracted from her status as a true lady. After graduating from UNC with a teaching degree, Jim began his coaching, administrative and teaching career at Lenoir Rhyne College, coaching the men’s basketball team from 1950-57. He then entered George Peabody Teachers College (Vanderbilt University) and earned a doctorate degree in Education in 1959. From there his career took him to High Point College (1960-66), where he served as athletic director and chair of the physical education department and then to Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, NC (1966-88), where he was chair of the Physical Education Department. He retired from Western Carolina in 1988. During his career as a teacher, coach and administrator, he influenced countless students and faculty. He was a strong advocate for his students and continually sought to provide opportunities for them, especially those who were unfairly denied access to opportunity. In the mid-60’s, he led efforts to successfully desegregate the athletic program at High Point College, and in the 60’s and 70’s, he was in the forefront of providing funding and support for college women’s athletic programs several years before other institutions followed suit.

For his accomplishments as an athlete, teacher, coach and administrator he was inducted into the Lenoir Rhyne Athletic Hall of Fame, Western Carolina University Athletic Hall of Fame, Huntsman World Senior Games Hall of Fame and the N.A.I.A. Helms Basketball Hall of Fame.

Always encouraging and always positive, nothing gave him more pleasure than to see others achieve their goals. This spirit was evident when, after his retirement, he formed the Cullowhee Running and Social Club and began recruiting novice runners in their 50's and 60's. His group eventually traveled to races, both regional and national, including the Senior Olympics, where Jim and club members won numerous medals competing in 5K and 10K distances. In March 2004, he was cited in Running Times Magazine as one of the 10 fastest runners in the country in the 80-84 age group. He continued competing in races until age 90.

Jim's wife, Bill Hamilton, was his greatest and most loyal supporter. She died in 1999, two months after their 50th wedding anniversary. Jim is survived by his 3 children: John Hamilton (Dana) of Golden, CO; Beth Gorman (Scott) of Pittsburg, KS; William Hamilton of Weir, KS; 3 grandchildren: Austin Hamilton of Hickory, NC; John Gorman (Nury) of Lawrence, KS; and Ashley Hamilton of Phoenix, AZ, as well as many nieces and nephews. He will always be fondly remembered by hundreds of former students and will always be well-loved by his friends and family. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Jim's honor to the Catamount Club (Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC), or the Bears Club (Lenoir Rhyne University, Hickory, NC).

Comments



“ Dr. Hamilton was a wonderful teacher and role model for me at WCU. He was always so upbeat and happy. He was so positive and seemed to always know how I had done in the latest track meet. RIP Pappy.

Tom Baker - April 29 at 11:44 AM



“ I never could BS ole Dr. but there was always a mutual respect for each other and he was main reason i graduated from Western

Ted Whitworth - April 29 at 11:08 AM



“ Dr. Hamilton was my professor for both my undergraduate and my masters programs at Western Carolina. He did so much for me at Western, reaching out a helping hand more than once to save me when I needed it. He saved many like myself and so, so many went on to coach and teach. Many had long careers because he cared and reached out a helping hand. I remember calling Dr. Hamilton when I was coaching football at Notre Dame and told him “I am here because you believed in me when many did not.” Thank you Doc for everything. Dave Roberts

Dave Roberts - April 24 at 08:39 PM



“ One of the greatest men I've ever met and I was truly blessed to be instructed by him at WCU. His laugh and wit, his sense of humor, his incredible knowledge were wonderful traits, but his compassion for his students and athletes was immeasurable. His legacy is powerful and will continue through the life lessons he taught to so many of the HPE majors. Love you, Rest In Peace Doc, I'm still shaking my head, yes!

Judy Stroud, WCU 1976, 1981

Judith Stroud - April 24 at 08:41 AM



“ Dr Hamilton was my major professor for my Masters Degree at WCU . A fine gentleman who influenced many students. He guided me in many ways. Doug Echols

Doug Echols - April 23 at 11:12 PM



“ Jim and Bill Hamilton, Dr and Mrs Hamilton to me, were both incredible people. This is evidenced by their wonderful children, Beth and John. Western Carolina University, Forest Hills, and Cullowhee, North Carolina were made better places because the Hamiltons made a home there. Jim did a great service to many by leading the Cullowhee Running & Social Club. He encouraged fitness, friendship and fellowship and included some of his fellow retirees in this group. When our father, Gene McDowell, suffered a serious illness resulting in significantly decreased mobility, Jim remained by his side as a friend and fellow runner. When our father was finally able to attempt jogging again, Jim simply adjusted his pace and cheered Dad on. We will be eternally grateful for his encouragement and support. Jim was also a stellar educator and lived the healthy life that he taught. Many thanks to the Hamilton family for making Cullowhee, NC your home! Our hearts weighs heavy today knowing the pain of the loss for Beth, John and many other family and friends. May God wrap his arms around you and fill your hearts with smiles and fond memories!

Julie McDowell Townsend
Betsy McDowell Cooper
Mac McDowell

Julia Townsend - April 21 at 09:25 PM

Julia Townsend - April 23 at 04:16 PM



“ Who knew that a few days later his running partner, Gene would join him in a better place???

Julia Townsend - May 10 at 10:27 AM



“ I first meet Jim in 2001 when I started working for Stanberry Insurance. We became friends immediately and he was always concerned how you & your family was doing. His visit to the office made my day with his smile. Love & Prayers to his Family.

Pam Morgan - April 23 at 01:46 AM



“ Jim T. was a wonderful friend to my mother, Lillys! They grew up together in Weir! She always enjoyed visiting with Jim T. and Billy when they were back visiting! He was truly an inspiration from the get go! We are so sorry fro your families' loss! May the Peace that passes all understanding be with you and yours! In His Love, Hoyt and Debby Johnson



Deborah Johnson - April 22 at 02:21 PM



“ Dr. Hamilton and his wife Bill were great neighbors when we lived in Forest Hills. His energy and smile were contagious.

Linda DeForge - April 22 at 08:25 AM



“ I always enjoyed seeing him on campus. His smile and energy just lit a room up. He touched so many people he will be missed by many

Philip Turpin - April 22 at 01:11 AM



“ I met Jim when I first started at Stanberry Insurance & we immediately became friends. He brought me mistle every December from his lake house & I brought him fudge. Love & Prayers to his family. Pam Morgan

Pam Morgan - April 22 at 10:01 PM



“ I enjoyed working and being around Dr. Hamilton. He was special

Kathleen H. Wilson - April 21 at 11:02 PM



“ Mike And Terry Manis lit a candle in memory of Jim Tudder Hamilton



Mike and Terry Manis - April 21 at 04:25 PM



“ Mike and I were lucky, privileged, and honored to have known this man when we were at Western.

Mike and Terry Manis - April 21 at 04:27 PM



“ Dr. Hamilton was far and away the best professor I had at Western Carolina, and that is quite an honor because I had so many great ones there. He was not just your teacher, but a friend and mentor. Some of my fondest memories were our mixed doubles matches with him and Ms. Benson and me and my partner, Betty Peele. I also remember watching him for hours as he played tennis with his daughter, Beth, admiring his patience and positive comments he always had for her. I feel like his influence carried over to my own teaching and coaching philosophy.

My deepest condolences go out to his family. I am sure you have so many great memories and you should always cherish them.

Don Lucas
BS '69 & MA '71

Don Lucas - April 21 at 03:47 PM



“ I grew up in Cullowhee, NC and knew Dr. Hamilton when he was at Western Carolina. He and Bill were very close friends with my parents (Frank and Elsie Brown). I left home not long after Dr. Hamilton came to WCU, but he would always ask mom and dad how I was doing. Their love and friendship meant a great deal to my parents. The fact he would always ask about me will not be forgotten. My wife attended WCU from 1967 to 1971 and said he wanted what was best for the students. Our love and prayers go out to each member of the Hamilton family. Hang on to all of the happy memories!! Frank and Becky Brown

Frank Brown - April 21 at 02:46 PM



“ Always smiling. Such a sweet sweet man. Made this California girl feel so welcome and loved in North Carolina. He would also always compliment my teeth every time I saw him. :) He was also always out running the outer edge of the track as I ran my volleyball girls for conditioning. He was always encouraging them and telling us how hard we worked. The girls and I always appreciated his kindness. He always made the time to say something uplifting and positive. <3 He lived an amazing life and touched a lot of people.



Michelle Gardiner - April 21 at 01:37 PM



“ My deepest sympathy to the family of Dr. Hamilton. He was a man that I admired, respected, and loved. His influence on the lives of teachers and coaches has spanned a generation and will continue for generations to come. He was not only a teacher, he was a friend to all students in his class or department or the University for that matter. He was one of a kind and will be missed by all those who had the privilege to know Dr. Hamilton.

Bruce Peterson - April 21 at 10:35 AM



“ Dana & Deborah Bryson lit a candle in memory of Jim Tudder Hamilton



Dana & Deborah Bryson - April 21 at 10:08 AM



“ Donna Mason lit a candle in memory of Jim Tudder Hamilton



Donna Mason - April 21 at 08:52 AM



“ I am so sorry for your loss, Beth and John. He was a wonderful man, known and loved by so many. Donna Clark Mason

Donna Mason - April 21 at 08:54 AM



“ A wonderful educator, neighbor and friend. Doc made me want to do my best. John and Beth, I hope you find comfort in your memories.

Marcia Marshall Franklin - April 21 at 08:29 AM



“ Jennifer Luker lit a candle in memory of Jim Tudder Hamilton



Jennifer Luker - April 21 at 08:15 AM



“ John and family - I am so sorry to know of the passing of the famous legend. What a lovely person he was. It was good to see where you are living now. I had not heard anything about you in years. Hope all is well with you. I will share this info with Gene. I know he would love to see you and sit down and chat about the "good ole days." Please know we will be keeping your family in our prayers.

Judy McConnell - April 21 at 08:11 AM



“ John and family. Bob and I are so sorry for your loss. Dr. Hamilton was a wonderful man.

Anna Allen - April 21 at 08:56 AM



“ Jim was a family friend of the Ashe Family in Tuckasegee NC. We were neighbors on Bear Lake with joining properties. Fond memories of him Fishing and enjoying his time there at the Lake. Thoughts and prayers from our family to yours during this time.

Scott Ashe

Scott Ashe - April 21 at 07:58 AM



“ Dr. Hamilton was one of my favorite instructors. He had so many endearing qualities that it was impossible not to love him. Always encouraging and challenging to bring out your best. Lastly, he would run me silly on the handball court while cracking that wry smile. Heartfelt prayers of comfort for his family and friends.

Chuck Bixby - April 21 at 07:52 AM



“ Dr. Hamilton was a great neighbor to have! I've known him all my life! As a kid he would loan me some of his waders so I could go fishing and not get wet. One day he drove over in his Jeep to the Tuckaseegee river and found where I was fishing to warn me that the river was rising. I quickly got off the river! He saved me for sure! Later in life I would see him while I was working at Ingles. He would always say hi and we would talk about the days when I use to live in Forest Hills. I often would see him while I was driving a Cat Tran bus at WCU. He would always be excited to see me and say hi to me. It was always great to see him! He was an inspiration to all that knew him! I am proud and honored to have known Dr. Hamilton! We will see him again one day in Heaven!
Max Bennett



Max Bennett - April 21 at 07:10 AM



“ My thoughts and prayers go out to his family and many friends. Dr. Hamilton was truly one of a kind and such a special person. Growing up he was always a man that I admired and he was always there to help a young lost college student like me. He would always take his time out to say hello and connect with me and others. The world was a better place because of him and he touched so many people. I was truly blessed to be a student at WCU when he was there. God Bless !

Jeff Carpenter - April 21 at 01:12 AM



“ I consider myself to be very fortunate to have known Dr Hamilton. Others have said that Dr Hamilton was one of a kind and I believe every one that knew him will say the same thing. He will be greatly missed by all that knew him.

Fred Harris - April 21 at 12:50 AM



“ Dr Hamilton was one of a kind. I got to know him when he become a patient at Dr Ramsey's office in Sylva. I got to know Bill there also. They become wonderful friends. Often taking Debbie, the nurse, and myself to lunch. I had lost track of him. I am so sorry for your loss. Both Jim and Bill were extraordinary people.

Gail Melton - April 20 at 11:05 PM



“ One of my greatest experiences in college was having Pap Hamilton as my professor. I thoroughly enjoyed many conversations with him. Taught me the fine art of playing racquetball.
RIP Dr Hamilton. You were a Gem for us all!

Ray Davis WCU 1984 - April 20 at 10:49 PM



“ He was such a great mentor to so many people....his memory will live on. I wish there were more people like him.

Wendy LeMay - April 20 at 09:37 PM



“ If it hadn't been for Dr. Hamilton I would not have been able to complete my Masters degree. He was my mentor and a role model I'll never forget.

Larry Arnold - April 20 at 08:03 PM



“ I only met Jim a few years ago when I had the privilege of being assigned as his chauffeur during the Sylva (NC) Veterans Day Parade. When he was introduced to me, it was as though we were longtime friends who had just spoken a few days before. What a charming man he was. In the two hours we were together he shared many of his interesting adventures, found out all about my time as a Navy wife, and wanted to hear all about my son the musician and my daughter the National Park Ranger. We saw each other only a few times after that before he left to live with family but he always knew immediately who I was and stopped to catch up. He was a kind, loving, inspirational man and I will cherish our brief friendship. Go with God, Jim.

Jenifer Montsinger - April 20 at 08:00 PM



“ I feel sure you would not remember me, Jock Martin was my husband and taught in the Physical Education Department from 1960-1970. When R.J. decided to go to the University of Georgia to get his Doctorate, Dr. Hamilton let R.J. teach during the week and he went to University of GA on Saturdays. He helped us while he got his degree. We had 4 sons and I was busy with the boys and could not help with finances much. Jock would want the family to know how much he admired Dr. Hamilton.

I hold you all in my thoughts and prayers.

Linda W. Martin

Linda W, Martin - April 22 at 03:35 PM