



James “Jim” Jeffres

July 8, 1950 – July 27, 2015

James "Jim" Jeffres, 65, longtime area educator and Ogallala resident, died Monday, July 27, 2015, in his home after a brief battle with cancer.

Jim was born July 8, 1950 in Loup City, NE, the son of DeLysle and Mavis (Schudel) Jeffres. Jim grew up in Scotia, NE, where he attended elementary and high school. After graduating from North Loup Scotia High School in 1968 he worked in Grand Island for a year before enrolling at Kearney State College. During his four years in college, he played the position of defensive tackle for the Kearney Lopers. Jim excelled in football and received several honors such as NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics) All-American Honorable Mention; NAIA District II, All District 1971 and 1972; All Conference; and Team Captain.



After graduating from college, he returned to Scotia for a summer to farm. During that summer an opportunity arose and Jim decided late one night to try-out at a free agent camp in Chicago the following day. He got up early, drove to Chicago, and tried out for a shot at professional football. Jim signed as a Drafted Free Agent with the Cowboys and attended their camp on the UCLA campus. One of Jim's favorite quotes and words he tried to live by was "The quality of a man's life is in direct proportion to his commitment to excellence," by Tom Landry Head Coach Dallas Cowboys.

Jim and Barb (Lydiatt) were married on August 9, 1975. Jim began his teaching career in Kenesaw that fall. He coached football and basketball. In 1979 Jim and Barbara both accepted teaching positions in the Platte Valley School District in Ovid and Sedgwick, Colorado. Jim taught Physical Education, science and social studies and coached junior high sports. In 1982 Jim accepted the elementary principal position with the district and in 1986 was appointed as the K-12 principal for the Platte Valley district.

In 1990 Jim came to Ogallala to serve as the principal for West 5th and Progress Elementary schools. In 2002 Jim was given the task of reorganizing the elementary schools into grade-specific attendance centers and to serve as principal for the three elementary schools.

Jim has been active in his professional organization by serving in the NAESP (National Association of Elementary School Principals) Region V principal's organization and as a member of the NCSA (Nebraska Council of School Administrators) executive council. Through his affiliation with Region V, Jim planned and hosted a leadership conference for 5th graders in the panhandle region from 1997-2007.

In 2005 Jim implemented the fall kindergarten pre-assessments program to assure heterogeneous grouping of students in classrooms and in 2010 he successfully submitted a competitive grant application for our public preschool.

Jim spearheaded several successful fund raising campaigns for playground equipment for the elementary schools without Parent Teacher Organizations or district funds. He personally planted every tree on the West 5th and Progress campuses and many of them at Prairie View School.

Jim especially enjoyed mentoring a number of aspiring, new elementary principals. He was nominated three times for the National Distinguished Principal award by his peers from Region 5 NAESP. He retired in 2014.

He was a member of the First United Methodist Church. His hobbies included hunting, fishing, and woodworking.

Preceding him in death were his parents, three sisters: Janie Worrell, Shelia Loescher, and Linda Jeffres; and his father-in-law Eugene Lydiatt.

Survivors include his wife Barbara Jeffres of Ogallala and his daughters: Danielle Jeffres of Belgrade, MT., Megan (Matt) McGill of Omaha, and Molly Jeffres of Ogallala. Mother-in-law Maurine Lydiatt of Chappell; three sisters: Vicky Buchman, Kim Aldrich and Lori Lewis, all of Grand Island. Three brothers-in-law: Steve (Patty) Lydiatt of Colo. Springs, Colo., Dan (Carol) Lydiatt of Omaha, Bill (Kathy) Lydiatt of Bellevue.

The family chose cremation. The Memorial Service will be Friday, July 31, at 10 a.m. in the Ogallala First United Methodist Church with the Rev. Chuck Rager officiating. The Service will be streamed live from www.methodistchurchogallala.com and drauckerfuneralhome.com for those unable to attend.

Inurnment will take place in the Ogallala Cemetery, following the Memorial Service. Memorials have been established to UN-K Football, the Ogallala Pre-School program, and the First United Methodist Church.

On-line condolences may be given at www.drauckerfh.com. Draucker Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.