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James Arthur Field



Dec. 7, 1923 - April 25, 2022

Jim Field, or Cowboy Jimmy as he was known to many, lived a vibrant and rich life. Brimming with creativity, graciousness and a deep love for his family and friends until he left this world for lush pastures elsewhere.

Born and raised outside Detroit, Jim was the only child of Arthur Clarence Field and Helen Jean Spertner. He attended Royal Oak High School where he was Senior Class President and a member of the varsity tennis team. Summers as a camp counselor at the YMCA Camp in Hale, Michigan were a wonderful time for Jim. He was a wrangler with seven head of horse and Assistant Riding Master where, "each horse was my friend." Jim attended Dartmouth College where he was a Theta Delta Chi and a proud member of their victorious inter-fraternal hockey team. Jim left Dartmouth for WWII during which he was a 1st Lt. fighter pilot in the US Army Air Corps and returned to graduate Phi Beta Kappa in 1948.

Jim moved to New York where he was a copywriter at BBDO and Young & Rubicam and was one of the original Mad Men on Madison Avenue. Receiving awards for his ads did not quell his entrepreneurial spirit, which fueled multiple small businesses including Raincoat Chaps, "don't get caught with your pants down," Lumps (lamps made out of junk), and others. While in New York, Central Park spawned Jim's "love affair with slow-pitch softball which finally ended after trying out for the Over 70's league in Walnut Creek at the age of 85 and where the hard grounders hit me instead of my glove."

Jim arrived in San Francisco in 1959, working for BBDO and "quick as a wink, I was an obsessed backpacker, fly fisherman and skier." BBDO is where he met Virginia, later to become his wife of nearly 59 years. They left the city for the country, choosing Orinda where they bought a home in 1964 and painted it fire-engine red, the color it remains today. Blessed with two daughters, known as Big Al and Bill Bailey, the three ladies were his biggest champions when Jim decided to turn his winemaking hobby into a business, making "not another \$40 cabernet, but a wine for everybody." James Arthur Field Wine was launched in 1976 with HQ in Lafayette's Fiesta Paint Store. Ahead of his time with a quality vin ordinaire in the U.S., Jim deemed it a "jug wine," which was cheerfully and affordably consumed by even the most discerning before he sold the business in 2001. Before his retirement, Jim enthusiastically donated countless cases of wine to local schools and service club events.

Easily recognized in his cowboy boots, pressed jeans and signature sterling belt buckle, Cowboy Jimmy didn't dally in the pasture. He continued to play hockey into his 60s, skied and backpacked into his 80s and fished, played tennis and golf well into his 90s. He also spent time in his workshop, designing and creating handmade furniture and other goods from nature's and mortals' scraps producing a wonder of pieces. He was quietly philanthropic, but quite boisterous about the love he had for Gina and their garden, and the love and joy he experienced with his children, grandchildren and many dear friends.

Jim Field died peacefully, Gina by his side, in the same fire-engine red house. He is survived by Gina, Allison and her husband Andrew, Bailey and her husband Robert and granddaughters Caz, Gaby and Shira.

Jim loved the Lamorinda area and hiking the local hills and trails. If desired, donations may be made in his honor to the East Bay Regional Parks Foundation: <https://www.regionalparksfoundation.org/>

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