



James Harvey Wells M.D.

May 4, 1923 - May 1, 2019

James (Jim) Harvey Wells, M.D. died on May 1, 2019 - three days before his 96th birthday and three months after the death of his wife of 73 years, Elizabeth (Betty) Graham Wells. Jim will be remembered for his good nature, wit, intelligence and service in medicine.

Born May 4, 1923 in Wichita, Kansas to William Harvey Wells and Mary Roanna Stokes, Jim spent his youth in Missouri, Kansas and Iowa. He enjoyed sports and excelled at running, earning a track scholarship to Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. While at Drake, Jim met and fell in love with Betty Graham. They were married in April 1945.

Jim joined the U.S. Navy Reserve in 1942, entering a program to attend medical school while in service. In 1945, he earned his B.A. degree in absentia from Drake University. After training at Miami University, Ohio; Great Lakes Naval Training Center, Illinois; and Indiana University, Bloomington and Indianapolis, Jim obtained his M.D. from Indiana University in 1947. He continued his training in Indianapolis as a rotating intern and a resident in psychiatry and neurology. At a time when medical education was much less specialized than today, he spent time directing an emergency room, driving an ambulance, and even delivering babies.

In 1949, Jim transferred to the regular U.S. Navy. His assignments included

the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in Parris Island, South Carolina; the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland; and the U.S. Naval Hospital in Yokosuka, Japan.

After returning to civilian life in 1955, Jim directed psychiatric programs at hospitals in Indianapolis, Indiana and Stockton, California. He also held faculty appointments at Georgetown University and Indiana University Medical School.

Jim and his family settled in Santa Barbara, California in 1958, where he established a private practice in psychiatry. He helped develop the mental health resources of the city and county, including the Santa Barbara County Mental Health Facility and the psychiatric unit at Cottage Hospital. He contributed significant pro bono work, such as volunteering for the Santa Barbara Unified School District and the Mental Health Center at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Active in legal and industrial psychiatry, he was a consultant to the Santa Barbara Superior Court, a Medical Examiner for the State of California, and a Qualified Medical Examiner for the California Worker's Compensation Appeals Board. He was designated a Distinguished Life Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association in 1987.

Retiring at age 82 because of advancing blindness, Jim became involved with the Braille Institute of Santa Barbara, first as a student then as a volunteer. A lifelong learner and teacher, he led a popular Science and News class there for 10 years, well into his 90s.

Jim is survived by his son James Graham Wells, daughter Amy Wells Graham (John; daughters Leslie FitzGerald and Tracy Graham), and brother Robert Francis Wells (Sally; daughters Pamela Phelps and Melissa Dale).

Donations in remembrance of Jim may be made to the Santa Barbara-based

charities See International (<https://www.seeintl.org/>) or Direct Relief International (<https://www.directrelief.org/>).

A memorial service will be held on Wednesday, August 7, at 3:00 p.m. at Welch-Ryce-Haider Memorial Chapel (Downtown), 15 E. Sola St., Santa Barbara, California.

Cemetery Details

National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific

2177 Puowana rd.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Previous Events

Memorial Service

AUG 7. 3:00 PM (PT)

Welch-Ryce-Haider - Downtown
15 E. Sola St.
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 965-5145
info@wrhsb.com
<https://www.wrhsb.com>