



James Thomas Martin (1953 – 2019)

Jim Martin died June 15, 2019, after battling early-onset Alzheimer's disease for several years. He is preceded in death by his parents, William Robert and Mary Bell Martin, his brother Robert Martin, and his in-laws Richard and Kay Rush. He is survived by his wife, Holly Johnson, his daughter, Katie, his sister, Kathy Martin and her husband Eddie Bagwell, his father-in-law and football buddy, Reed Johnson, sisters-in-law Laura Smith and Jill Johnson, nephews Tiger, Aaron and Alex, nieces Rebecca and Adrienne, and many cousins and extended family.

Jim was born in Lake Charles, Louisiana and spent his childhood and teen years in New Orleans and Houston. He received a BFA in art from the University of St. Thomas in Houston. After starting his art career in Texas, Jim then set off for New York City. During his fifteen-year sojourn in New York, he was represented by the Charles Cowles Gallery and the Sherry French Gallery. In addition to maintaining his studio practice, Jim founded a construction management business with his brother Robert that completed ever-larger projects, culminating in the complete renovation of a 128 building complex and supervising over 450 craftspeople. Throughout, Jim's genius at managing complex and endless details spurred his group of artisans to make their best work.

In the late 1980's seeking a new challenge and a break from life in New York, Jim moved to Isla Mujeres, Mexico for three years, where he managed all aspects of the start-up of a restaurant and live music club. It was there his passion for fun, music, and scuba diving flourished.

Upon his return from Mexico, Jim moved to Houston, where he was able to more fully focus on his art career while also working as a Project Manager for CE Ward Constructors. He was warmly welcomed back to the Texas art scene with representation by the Hiram Butler Gallery and subsequently the Barbara Davis Gallery. His work was acquired for the permanent collections of Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, San Antonio Museum of Art, Chilewich, Inc., Gensler & Associates, Jackson and Walker Inc., Norfolk Southern Corporation, Panhandle Eastern, SBC Communications (now known as AT&T), and the University of St. Thomas in Houston.

Jim's personal life was colorful as well as artful. After two marriages and birth of his daughter in 1992, he met the love of his life, Holly Johnson. Together, Jim and Holly moved to her hometown of Dallas and married in 2000, where he continued to work as a project manager at Constructors & Associates. In 2004 he became a partner in the Holly Johnson Gallery, and built the gallery's first space on his own in the Dallas Design District. They loved island travel all over the world, and prior to his illness, Jim was an avid scuba diver and accomplished tennis player. He remained at heart a lanky and fun-loving boy from Louisiana, with a passion for art, music, Holly's cooking, and the New Orleans Saints.

Holly wishes to acknowledge and give thanks for the invaluable support of Jim's nurse, Glen and the staff of Holy Savior Hospice as well as her many friends who helped during Jim's final illness.

Memorial contributions in the name of James Thomas Martin may be made to the Old Hegg Turtle Sanctuary in Bequia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadine Islands, Tortugueros Las Playitas A. C. in Todos Santos, Mexico or the SPCA.

