

James (Jim) Bernard Hilger, 76

Feb. 13, 1940 - Nov. 29, 2016

CODY, WY – James (Jim) Hilger was born in Worland, WY on Feb. 13, 1940 to the marriage of Donald B. Hilger and Marian (Lindsey) Hilger. After his parents divorced in 1943, he and his father moved to his father's home state of Iowa, where many members of his father's family lived. With his father being a single parent and working in Omaha, Jim's aunt and uncle, Loretta (Hilger) Fisher and husband Eldon raised Jim from 1944 to 1946 on their farm southwest of Red Oak, with his father visiting on weekends. In 1945 Jim started school at the Red Oak Community Schools.



His father, Donald, remarried in August of 1946 to Madonna (Donna) A. O'Connor of Omaha. Jim joined his father and stepmother in Omaha and completed first grade at Holy Name Catholic School. With the new marriage came three siblings: Dennis, Larry and Laurie.

In 1948, Don and Donna Hilger with Jim and his new infant brother moved to Harlan where the couple, along with Harold and Margret McKim of Omaha, founded the NAPA Automobile Parts franchise. The new franchise was known as Harlan Auto Supply, located on 6th Street and later, Market Street.

During his youth, Jim spent summers visiting his mother, Marian, in Worland, WY. With the Lindsey family, he spent time in the nearby Big Horn Mountains at the family cabin and at ranches of friends.

After graduating from Harlan High School in 1958, Jim worked in retail in Harlan and Avoca. In late 1959, he moved to Worland, WY where he worked for the local NAPA store. He married Kathleen M. Albert in December 1960, and they had three daughters and one son: Rachelle, Barbara, Krista, and Donald.

In Worland, Jim also worked for a Wyoming dairy processor, Frito-Lay, and the Worland Livestock Auction. In 1989, he moved to Cody, WY where he married Mary L. (Stauffenberg) Wright in February 2001. While living in Cody, Jim was employed in security at the Buffalo Bill Historical Museum until his retirement in 2012.

Jim was a longtime member of the fraternal organization, Elks USA, in Worland and Cody. He attained different officer positions and was recently recognized in acquiring 30 new memberships in 24 months.

Jim passed away from natural causes on Nov. 29, 2016 at the West Park Hospital in Cody, WY. He was 76 years of age and formerly from Harlan.

He is survived by his wife Mary L. Hilger and his four children, Rachelle Rogers (David), McCombe, TX; Barbara Bennett (Norm), Crane, TX; Krista Thompson (James), Beaumont, TX; and Donald (Pam) Hilger, Tahoka, TX. Jim is also survived by a sister and brother, Laurie Clark (Providence, RI) and Dennis (Independence, MO) along with grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews. He is preceded in death by his father Donald (d.1963), mother Marian (d.1993), stepmother Madonna (d.2001), and brother, Larry (d.2010).

On Dec. 7, 2016 James' life was honored with an Elks USA Celebration of Life performed by the lodge officers in Cody, WY, attended by family and many friends. His ashes will be scattered in July 2017 at the site of the family cabin in the Big Horn Mountains above Ten Sleep, WY.

(Submitted by: Dennis Hilger, Independence, MO.)