



## James Walter Nelson

January 8, 1942 - April 4, 2025

Nelson, James Walter passed away peacefully on April 4, 2025 under hospice and loving care from his wife, Lorna, at Friendship Village in Bloomington, MN. James, Jim, Jimmy, Nellie, Dad, Uncle Jim and Grandpa Jim was born on January 8, 1942 in Saint Louis Park, MN to Wally and Marge Nelson. He graduated from The Blake School in 1960 as Head Boy of his class. After a brief stint at Princeton, he returned to his beloved University of Minnesota graduating in 1964 with a B.A. in History. During the Spring of his graduation year, two of Jim's lifelong best friends and SAE fraternity brothers, Bill Davis, Jr. and Al Druskin, helped the Golden Gophers win the College World Series, establishing what would become a lifetime of Golden Gopher fandom. During college, Jim thought his passion for sports and school would lead to a career in coaching and teaching, but generational timing and circumstances came calling. Jim's father, Wally, asked him join the family real estate business, Eberhardt Company, in 1965 and he came on board. Jim's passion for sports, coaching and teaching, however, did not go away, they accelerated ... Jim, and his first wife, Robin, settled in Edina, MN where they raised their three kids, Lucy, Tom and Libby.. With organized youth sports in their early boom stages, volunteer coaches were in demand and Jim signed up, even before his kids were old enough to play. Basketball, football, softball, volleyball, baseball, hockey ... it did not matter. Jim was ever-present on the sidelines in his General Sports jacket of the moment (he was also an original investor in General Sports), whistle around his neck and clipboard in hand. At pre-season

team parent meetings, no matter the sport he would utter one of his many trademark, common sense pearls of wisdom, "The best way you can help the coaches this year is to please have your child go to the bathroom before they put on their equipment." Somehow, youth coaching commitments did not distract Jim from achievements at work and in the community. Jim became President of Eberhardt Company in 1976 and CEO in 1990, eventually selling its core business, commercial mortgage banking, to L.J. Melody & Co. (Now CBRE) in 1999. Along the way, his kind, calm and thoughtful manner, best portrayed by the large, slow-moving needlepoint tortoise that hung carefully framed behind his desk at the Young Quinlan Building, earned him the respect of his peers along with numerous local and national accolades and affiliations. Jim was the 1991 President of the Mortgage Bankers Association of America, 1993 Chairman of the Fannie Mae National Advisory Council and member of the Urban Land Institute Public-Private Partnership Council, to name a few. He also served on the Boards of the Minneapolis Downtown Council, the Minnesota Chapter of the NAIOP, the Edina Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Courage Center and Lakewood Cemetery. After selling the family mortgage business, Jim turned his focus to growing the one the part of the business that he started himself, and that he genuinely loved the most, Eberhardt Advisory. The mission was simple, "to provide services to a variety of clients seeking real estate solutions," but the challenges were not. They required patience and competent teaching and coaching. Jim's reputation as an even-tempered, consensus building listener made him an easy choice to help clients who were often (actually, always) navigating competing egos and incentives to build complex public private projects that we all benefit from today. These include the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission (HHH Metrodome), Minnesota Ballpark Authority (Target Field), Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority (U.S. Bank Stadium), Minneapolis Community Development Agency (various, including Midtown Exchange, the former Minneapolis Sears Tower), Minnesota Orchestral Association (Orchestra Hall) and the expansion of Walker Art Center & Sculpture Garden. The connection

to many new Twin Cities athletic venues is no coincidence. Jim loved sharing his joy for sports with friends, family and associates and had season tickets to nearly every professional, and Gopher game in town. His favorite local sports venue, however, is not new, it is one of the Twin Cities' oldest, Williams Arena, aka "The Barn", where Jim was a fixture for over five decades at Gopher Men's basketball games in his center court seats across the aisle from the Athletic Director, a job he secretly coveted. Many who knew Jim as part of his active and engaged professional life consider him a mentor, coach and confidant. For his family, he was all of that, and more. Cheerleader, advocate, inquisitive and unconditionally supportive parent, uncle, grandpa, and a beloved friend who will be missed. James Walter Nelson is survived by his wife Lorna Nelson, her children Mandee Kleckner and Luke Kleckner (Anna) and their children Lillie, Violet, Nelson and Rowan. His first wife, Robin Bean Nelson, their children Lucy Langa (Ken), Thomas Nelson (Martha Dayton) and Libby Rosencrans (Todd) and grandchildren Melanie, Dan, Lucy, Abbie, Remi, Beau and Rafferty. A celebration of life will be held at Lakewood Cemetery, 11am the morning of Thursday, May 1, 2025 with reception at the Lakewood Mausoleum to follow. The family requests that in lieu of flowers, memorials be directed to the University of Minnesota Foundation for the College of Liberal Arts, (612) 625-2020, [cla@umn.edu](mailto:cla@umn.edu). [www.Washburn-McReavy.com](http://www.Washburn-McReavy.com) Edina Chapel 952-920-3996

# Tribute Wall



“ Washburn-McReavy Funeral Chapels created a Celebration of Life for James Nelson in memory of James Walter Nelson



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Washburn-McReavy - April 30, 2025 at 10:40 AM

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“ Dearest Lorna,  
I am so sorry for your loss. You will be kept in my thoughts and prayers.

Hugs,  
Nicki (Liane) Hankland

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Nicki Hankland - May 17, 2025 at 10:08 AM