



James R. Van Kollenburg

October 27, 1951 - May 4, 2023

James Van Kollenburg

by Gerald Van Kollenburg, His Brother

We are gathered here today to celebrate the life of Mary Beth's and my brother, James Van Kollenburg.

While many of you know Jimmy in a variety of ways, some of you do not, and those of you who do know him, may not know everything about him.

Jimmy was a very unusual person who had many interests and talents. I'd like now to tell you a little about him.

Jimmy was born on October 27, 1951, and died at the age of 71 on May 4, 2023.

He was a musician, songwriter, and studio engineer.

He played jazz piano and wrote many excellent songs. He taught himself how to correctly transcribe and annotate music, which he did for all of his songs, and obtained copyrights for those songs.

For several years he studied music theory and composition at the Chicago Conservatory College, but quit before he completed a degree. He studied and became expert in the 1930s and 1940s jazz era. Of particular interest to him were the great songwriters of that time, including Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Rodgers and Hart, Jerome Kern, and others, and legendary jazz leaders, such as Louis Armstrong. He was a great fan of the Rag Time artists, such as Jelly Roll Morton.

He converted his home into a highly-professional, 16-track recording studio with top-of-the-line vintage and modern equipment that he carefully researched and collected over many years. He did all of the wiring in the studio and repaired and modified much of the

equipment he purchased for improved sound and functionality. Recently, when we sold the equipment, the buyers asked us if he was an electrical engineer because of the extraordinary job he did in designing, wiring, and building the studio.

For a short time, he was the founder and leader of a jazz band, Blue Sunset, for which he played piano and sang.

He built an extensive library of CDs comprised of many genres of music, including classical music, jazz, blues, and rock.

He was a highly religious person.

Throughout his adult life, he explored a variety of religions. He studied several forms of Christianity. For many years he studied and practiced Buddhism because he was attracted to its traditions and ceremonial aspects as well as the fact that Buddhism recognized and respected belief in many gods. In his later years, he became a Hellenist, worshipping the ancient gods of Greece, particularly identifying with Apollo.

He became expert in this area by reading and studying over the internet with a woman in Greece named Apollonia, who, over a number of years, taught him much about Hellenism and ancient Greece. He built an extensive library of Greek and Roman religion, art, philosophy, and language, which furthered his education.

He learned how to program a web site and established the site hellenicgods.org, which grew to a length of several hundred pages, and included text, images, and videos about Hellenism and ancient Greece. The site was frequented by scholars from all over the world. He frequently had lively discussions with scholars from large universities such as Harvard about his writings.

He was a scholar and a teacher.

He intensely studied many things, including music, Russian ballet, and ancient Roman and Greek religions, philosophies, language, and culture.

He taught himself to translate ancient Greek.

He shared his knowledge of Hellenism, tutoring more than 50 students worldwide, refusing to be paid for this work.

James Hellenic name was Kallímakhos. Here are messages that we received from three of his students:

From Blake Wilcox:

“I came into contact with Kallímakhos while searching for a way to meaningfully connect with the Gods and worship them sincerely. Kallímakhos taught me how, by living a pious life more than anything. He taught me what it means to be devout to the blessed Gods, and he changed my life forever. His name means "Beautiful Battle." And he certainly fought in that beautiful battle that is life. He was my teacher, my confidant, and an inspiration to me. But most importantly he was a true friend, and companion in life and in worship of the Ever-Living Gods. I'll love him forever, and thank the Gods each day for his friendship.”

From Renier Steyn:

My dearest Jim,

The worst emotion is having to miss someone that is no longer with you. You were the Gods' priceless gift to me, you were my biggest inspiration, my role model, my supporter, and my best friend. Death has taken your companionship from me, but I still think of you in everything I do. Your presence is everywhere. You will always remain my best friend, and the light in our hearts.

I've always told you how special you are to me. You are full of kindness and love, and our friendship remains tightly knit, even stronger as we're apart.

Thank you for making the world, and my life, so much more beautiful.

I will love you always,

Renier

From Jason Inczauskis:

Kallímakhos was one of the kindest, gentlest souls I've ever been privileged to encounter. His wisdom, faith, humility, and generosity had no peer. He guided me through many rough patches in my life, and I shall forever be grateful for the wonderful things he taught me. I shall miss him greatly.

Jason also sent a prayer that Jimmy wrote:

THE TRIPLE HEART

Come, Phivos Apóllôn, Apóllôn Phôsphóros, God of Immeasurable Light! Apóllôn Pátær, my Father! Apóllôn, the Healer!

Be with me today, tomorrow, and forever, closer than my own heart.

You who are dearest to me, you who are first in my life; the most beloved of my heart.

Oh, mighty slayer of the Pýthôn, my handsome, lovable God: bless me, bring me good

things, bring me happiness, and guide my life.

And may I please you in every way, for I love you, my golden-haired Father, with all my heart.

He was an artist.

He dabbled in drawing, painting, illustration, and sculpting. In particular, his very first stone carving, that of Apollo, is a true work of art.

He loved good food.

He particularly loved Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, and Japanese food, but also enjoyed Portillo's sandwiches and Lou Malnati's pizza.

Jimmy and Mary Beth were very close throughout their lives and shared many interests. They were co-owners and operators of JVK Hard Chrome, an industrial plating company specializing in mold plating, originally started by our dad, Joe Van Kollenburg.

He was a terrible driver.

He had a mischievous sense of humor and could be very funny, but also had a serious side.

He was gay.

He always wanted a life partner and had a number of relationships during his adult life, but never achieved that ultimate goal.

Christmas

Jimmy loved Christmas more than anyone I have ever known. He looked forward to it all year long and had an almost childlike delight in giving the exact right present to every person as well as opening those given to him.

An Unfinished Life

Putting aside my great sadness at the loss of my brother, I am deeply struck by the tragedy of his not being able to complete his many plans:

He was in the midst of completing an unfinished five-foot tall, wooden sculpture he had purchased, which he was carving and planning to gild.

He was in the midst of translating some texts, which were written in ancient Greek.

For me, perhaps the greatest tragedy of all, he was improving the soundproofing in his studio to record all of the songs he had written. He wanted to leave these as a legacy.

Finally

I will miss all of our phone conversations about politics, music, religion, and many other subjects, and I feel that the world will be an emptier place for many of us now that he is gone.

Addendum (added after the funeral service)

Jimmy was also an avid gardener. He created a peaceful sanctuary in his large back yard with trees, bushes, perennials, annuals, walking path, and beautiful bronze classic Greek statues and benches.

Previous Events

Committal Service

JUN **19**. 10:30 AM (CT)

Mount Carmel Catholic Cemetery
1400 S Wolf Rd.
Hillside, IL 60162

Family and friends to meet at Queen of Heaven office parking lot at 10:15 AM.

Tribute Wall

ST

“ I was recently privileged to participate in an Invocation to the Sun at our local CUUPS Winter Solstice celebration. My protogee and I sang Kallimachus' gorgeous call to Apollon, a capella just as he sent it to me. I will always be grateful for his wisdom, support and inspiration. What a beautiful man.

Suzanne Thackston - December 25, 2024 at 10:24 AM



“ 5 files added to the album James Van Kollenburg by Gerald Van Kollenburg, his Brother



Schielka Addison Street Funeral Home - June 21, 2023 at 11:49 AM

PL

“ Best neighbor and friend anyone could have. We will miss him forever.

Peter and Maureen Lanza - June 15, 2023 at 02:06 PM

RI

“ May he rest and may the Gods bless his journey.



River - May 15, 2023 at 02:37 PM

KA

“ *May The Gods Bless Him and Grant Him Eternal Peace*



Kazama - May 11, 2023 at 01:01 PM

VL

“ *Victoria Larkin purchased the Written in the Stars for the family of James R. Van Kollenburg.*



Victoria Larkin - May 05, 2023 at 11:37 AM