

Jim Davis, New York State Geologist, California State Geologist, 1931 – 2023



James Frazier "Jim" Davis passed away on September 30, 2023. He was born on October 18, 1931, in Douds-Leando, Iowa, he grew up in Sleepy Hollow, Virginia, and he learned about geology from dinosaur skeletons and more at the Museum of Natural History in nearby Washington, D.C.

He obtained his geology degree from the University of Virginia, and then his Master's and PhD from University of Wisconsin, Madison, where he met his beloved wife Sally. They were married in 1956.

He gained experience mapping the wilderness in Alaska and Canada by canoe, and by doing iron ore research in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

He joined the New York State Geological Survey in 1963, and he became New York State Geologist from 1968 to 1978. He worked on many issues including the safety of nuclear power plants in relation to earthquakes.

This work led Jim to become the California State Geologist from 1978 to 1987 and 1989 to 2003, with much focus at both state and national levels on saving lives and minimizing damage through comprehensively improved seismic mapping, monitoring, scenarios, and preparedness, along with many other topics, including geologic mapping and surface mining.

He loved to draw and sketch, and he enjoyed the outdoors, including pheasant and duck hunting on Long Island, and fishing in Canada and the Atlantic Ocean. Jim had a beautiful singing voice and enjoyed the arts, along with his passion for football. He enjoyed visiting many sites of Revolutionary and Civil War importance. He was the descendant of four Revolutionary War patriots.

He was President of AASG in 1984-1985, he also was President of AGI, he held many other leadership roles, and he won the Campbell Medal in 2014, as well as many other honors.

He is missed.