



Harold J. "Jim" Crochet

April 8, 1944 - September 12, 2024

Harold J. "Jim" Crochet, 80, passed unexpectedly in Tallahassee on Sept. 12, 2024, after outpatient surgery to relieve spinal pain. He died in the arms of his life partner of nearly 30 years, Craig Waters, and in the presence of his beloved brother and ward Glenn J. Crochet at their home in East Tallahassee. Paramedics could not revive him despite heroic efforts.

Jim worked in Florida government in several programs providing services to those in need, both in Tallahassee and Daytona Beach. He rose to the position of the statewide Long-Term Care Ombudsman who, under federal law, advocates for the rights of elders who depend on care in Florida group homes.

Jim was forced to retire from that position on a pretext by the administration of then-Gov. Rick Scott after Jim cooperated with a groundbreaking program of then-President Barack Obama's administration to focus on better care for LGBTQ elders in long-term facilities. Under Jim, the Ombudsman's Office had participated in the first-ever White House Conference on LGBT Aging. He is known nationally as a pioneer in this type of elder advocacy.

In 1944, Jim was born in Lafayette, Louisiana, to a prominent Cajun family living in the rice-growing region west of the Atchafalaya Basin. His parents were U.S. Army Col. Harold Crochet (1921-1999) and Lou Ella Thibodeaux

Crochet (1923-2019), who lived in Crowley in their retirement years. Col. Crochet served with distinction in both the Korean and Vietnam Wars in the Signal Corps.

After World War II, Jim traveled with his family to Heidelberg, Germany, where his father was stationed with long-term occupation forces. He attended the U.S. Army Dependents High School in Heidelberg Castle, graduating in 1962. In 1968, he graduated from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette with a degree in social work and held jobs with Louisiana state government before moving to Daytona Beach in the 1990s.

Jim moved to Tallahassee after meeting his partner, Craig, in June 1995 while at a professional event in the state capital. The two built a life together and in 2019 jointly began taking care of Jim's brother Glenn, who has a lifelong disability, after the death of their mother Mrs. Crochet. Craig is an attorney and the retired communications director of the Florida Supreme Court, where he worked for 35 years. Jim played an active role in Craig's career and was often involved as volunteer support at Supreme Court events.

Glenn chose to give his own comments about what his brother and guardian Jim meant to him. "He was an awesome brother," said Glen. "He would take care of you no matter what. He would give anybody the shirt off his back if they needed it. I miss him so much. He took care of me."

Jim was predeceased by his parents; a sister Linda "Cookie" Crochet Pete of Houma, Louisiana; and several beloved aunts and uncles in an extended Cajun family. He is survived by his brother Glenn, his aunt Nancy Villejoin of Crowley and her husband Daryl; a cousin Cindy Livaudais and her husband Joey; a niece Tessie Pete of Houma and her daughter Lanie Sapia; a nephew Todd Pete of Houma; and a nephew Toby Pete and his wife Tracy along with their daughters Penelope and Elsie, all of Biloxi.

The funeral service will be held at 3:00PM on October 15, 2024, at St. John's Episcopal Church at 211 N. Monroe St. in Tallahassee, The Reverend Susan Gage, Celebrant. Speakers at the services will include Nadine Smith of Equality Florida and Allison Tant, a member of the Florida House of Representatives.

The service will be livestreamed by the church on its YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/@stjohnstally>). To honor Jim's Louisiana heritage, a Cajun-style reception will follow on the church grounds in Alfriend Hall.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to Equality Florida at <https://www.eqfl.org/> .

Kelly Barber of Bevis Funeral Home (850-385-2193 or www.bevisfh.com) is assisting the family with their arrangements.

Previous Events

Funeral Service

OCT **15**. 3:00 PM (ET)

St. John's Episcopal Church
211 North Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Tribute Wall

JB

“ I will miss Jim, especially at our book club gatherings. He added a spark to any conversation. His memory will be a blessing.

Joe Baker - September 19, 2024 at 03:57 PM

BM

“ Jim was one of the kindest, most genuine human beings I have ever known. He was the very essence of a gentleman. I am so grateful that I had the privilege of knowing him and calling him my friend. I'll never forget the fun, wonderful times and great conversations that we shared. .

Brenda Mader - September 19, 2024 at 09:11 AM

CW

“ He. Was. A. Awesome. Brother. N. I. Will. Miss. Him. - From Glenn Crochet



Craig Waters - September 19, 2024 at 07:15 AM

TR

“ I will always remember your ready smile, your attentive eyes, and your listening heart. I don't have one moment I have many but I'll share a recent one where we discussed him getting another Halloween decoration Glen wanted, he leaned over to me as I proclaimed he should get the item and said “I hate to say this to you in your own house but hush” - with a gleam in his eyes and a small chuckle. He made me laugh because we knew it was going to happen regardless just when lol. I now know he got it for Glen because he always did. I don't know why I love this memory so much other than it conjures up his face and reminds me of his infinite patience.

tracy - September 18, 2024 at 08:06 PM

CW

“ 35 files added to the album Photos of Jim



Craig Waters - September 18, 2024 at 06:49 PM

CW

“ *Jim Crochet, you are the light of my life. I wrote this obituary with words that came from the love we shared, which still burns in my heart. It always will. I will never meet another like you.*

I'm watching the rain outside our home, wishing you were here right now, watching with me. Watching our yard full of bright caladiums we both loved so much and the azaleas that are waiting patiently for the next spring.

We enjoyed so many quiet moments like this when we were together, not needing to talk, enjoying each other's company and the safety of the love we will always share, even as nightfall comes. As it always will.



Craig Waters - September 18, 2024 at 06:31 PM