



## James Allen Erdman

December 20, 1935 - February 4, 2015

James Allen Erdman, was born December 20, 1935 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to Robert and Esther Erdman. He died peacefully on February 4, 2015 at his mountain “hermitage” high in the Rocky Mountains near Red Feather Lakes, Colorado. He’d fought a brief struggle against Mesothelioma, cancer of the lining around the lungs. He was 79.

In the early 1960s, Jim was a member of the Wetherill Mesa archeological team that helped expand Mesa Verde National Park (near Cortez, Colorado) to include some of the most remarkable ancient Pueblo cliff dwellings, including the famed “Long House”. There he completed his research in botany and earned a PhD in plant ecology from the University of Colorado, Boulder. Later, he taught at Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado, until he became a geobotanist for the United States Geological Survey in Lakewood, Colorado, a position he held until he retired in the 1990s. Jim’s scientific research contributed to non-invasive and more environmentally friendly techniques for mineral exploration, the control of noxious weeds in prairie ranch lands, and the management of wetlands and other natural resources. A pioneer in his field, he presented his research in the Soviet Union, China, Scandinavia, and at symposiums across North America.

A writer, activist, and provocateur, Jim was deeply concerned about the environmental challenges before us. He contributed generously to political

causes he felt would contribute to the flourishing of the natural world. In later years, he combined a keen understanding of natural science with insights drawn from history and anthropology in order to address the cultural and political mistakes he felt certain are leading us toward disaster. His final paper, “A Sketch of Three Cultures—Past, Present, Future—Weld County, Colorado” (2013) focused on the interaction between the natural world and its human inhabitants and directly challenged the threat posed to both by the fracking industry. He concluded that paper with a quote from an unknown author, typical of his outlook: “The human spirit needs places where nature has not been rearranged by the hand of man.”

Jim was above all a naturalist, in love with the all things wild and wonderful. Only months before his death he was still climbing fourteen thousand foot peaks, and curating nature walks at the Soapstone Prairie Natural Area in the wilderness north of Fort Collins.

Jim was preceded in death by his wife, Mardi Erdman (died 1994), whom he adored. He is survived by his sister, Betsy Germanotta of Boston, Massachusetts (married to Dante, deceased), brother, John Erdman of Milwaukee, Wisconsin (married to Maritsa), and sons, Chris Neufeld-Erdman of Fresno, California (married to Patty) and James F. Erdman of Blackhawk, Colorado (married to Karen). He is grandfather to seven grandchildren: Josh, Jeremy, Katy, Sarah, Hannah, and their spouses/partners (from Chris and Patty), and Jake, Kasey Rose, and their spouses/partners (from James and Karen); he also has three great-grandchildren: Mason, Carter, and Ellie.

A service of celebration is being planned for sometime this spring. If you're interested in receiving information about the gathering, please add a comment here and provide your email information. Thank you.

For extended information, stories, and a video of Jim Erdman in his mountain

home, please go to <https://chriserdman.squarespace.com/blog/2015/2/6/rip-james-allen-erdman-1935-2015-father-naturalist-teacher>

# Tribute Wall

BK

“ I first became acquainted with the trio of Erdmans (Jim's music director father, and Jack's twin brother in Washington High School's ( Milwaukee, WI) within the band and orchestra. I'd never been in a music program before. Jim's father was a dynamic leader and will always been my favorite teacher. He suggested I try horn and within that brass section I observed Jim. What with my steep learning curve and Jim's shyness we did not converse much.

*BUT*

*Just a few years ago I re-discovered him after I re-located to CO. Jim shared photos, memorabilia, conversation, and linkages generously after a close to 60 year interval. I am grateful for that. He had much left to contribute on earth. Sad to have lost him.*

*Bernice Nickolaisen Kwan*

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**Bernice Nickolaisen Kwan** - March 22, 2015 at 10:19 PM

BG

“ 15 years ago Jim asked Jamie to help him install my gas log stove in Crestone. An enduring friendship, this year we shared some auspicious sainte terres. 719-256-4747

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**Brooke Gomo** - March 17, 2015 at 12:57 AM

JD

“ 1 file added to the album *New Album Name*



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**Jerry Dowling** - March 13, 2015 at 01:06 PM

JB

“ *I met Jim in 2008, and we shared some wonderful "ambles" together. It was my privilege to know him. He was such a knowledgeable companion and teacher. My sincere condolences to his loving family.*

*Joan Bondy*

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**Joan Bondy** - February 20, 2015 at 09:10 AM

LR

“ *With our Deepest Sympathy,*

*The Staff at Cache Bank & Trust  
Fort Collins, CO*

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**Lorna Reeves** - February 09, 2015 at 04:01 PM

EH

“ *Edie Houston sent a virtual gift in memory of  
James Allen Erdman*



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**edie houston** - February 08, 2015 at 01:19 PM



“ 1 file added to the album New Album Name



Chris Neufeld-Erdman - February 07, 2015 at 11:40 PM

BG

video removed ?

Brooke Gomo - March 17, 2015 at 01:00 AM



Love the video! Thanks Chris or Jaime? Takes me back to the walks and talks I was privileged to share with Jim.

Marcella Skogen - June 08, 2015 at 10:24 PM



“ 1 file added to the album New Album Name



Chris Neufeld-Erdman - February 07, 2015 at 11:38 PM



“ *To Jim: May you have more joy and love now than you have experienced in some years! May you saunter in a sweet peaceful way and continue your love of nature, botanical identification, geologic formations, and all that your spirit resonated with. May you have no situations which cause agitation, anger or strife --- may Grace intervene always in your new realm of the Sacred. May you be happy and may you feel unconditional love.*

*Jacqueline (Jacquie) and Edward Arnold, Boulder, CO*

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**Chris Neufeld-Erdman** - February 07, 2015 at 11:17 PM