



## Mr. James Francis Thorpe

December 4, 1940 - January 6, 2016

James Francis Thorpe, 75, life-long artist and professor passed from this earth as he was held and embraced by his adoring family on January 6, 2016 at Upstate University Hospital in Syracuse, NY. Born December 4, 1940 in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Jim was an avid nature enthusiast whose most favorite activities included walks with his Golden Retrievers through the woods of Central New York, and fishing and swimming the crystal clear waters of his lake in Northern Michigan.

Jim began his career studying fine art at Michigan State where he received his bachelor's degree, and then later at Yale University where, working directly under leading art figures such as Frank Stella, James Rosenquist, and Jack Tworkov, he received his MFA in painting ('68). He would go on to teach at Yale and the Cooper Union College of Art in NYC before he became a treasured member of the Fine Arts Faculty at SUNY Cortland, where he taught painting, drawing, and design for 33 years.

Jim was a proud descendent of Norwegian and viking heritage, and like his ancestors before him he had a deep passion and appreciation for the natural beauty of the outdoors. He also loved cooking and preparing lavish meals, building furniture, the NY Yankees, launching fireworks, hunting mushrooms and climbing sand-dunes, but most of all he loved and treasured his family

and devoted his life to his wife and best friend Molly Thorpe, their two sons James Noah Thorpe of Cortland and Luke Thorpe of Brooklyn, three daughters Tess Walsh of Baldwinsville, Tracy Thorpe of Martha's Vineyard, Laurie (Martin) Cary of Anchorage, Alaska, and his six grandchildren Ashley, Zachary and Jacob Walsh, Thorpe and Kieran Karabees and Haley Cary. Jim is also survived by his loving siblings; brother Denny Thorpe of Lake Ann, Michigan and two sisters Patti Thorpe and Linda (Greg) Jaris,, both of Frankfort, Michigan, many nieces and nephews and his beloved, devoted Golden Retriever Remy.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Monday at 10AM in St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church with Rev. Joseph Zareski presiding. The family will be present to receive friends on Sunday from 3-5 p.m. in the chapel of Riccardi Funeral Home 69 N. Main St. Cortland, NY. Contributions in Jim's memory may be made to Catholic Charities 33-35 Central Ave., Cortland, NY, 13045 or St. Mary's Parochial School 61 N. Main St., Cortland, NY, 13045. Condolences may also be sent to the family by visiting [www.riccardifuneralhome.com](http://www.riccardifuneralhome.com)

# Tribute Wall

AM

“ *The Art and Art History Department at SUNY Cortland sends our condolences at this very difficult time.*

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**Anne McLorn** - May 18, 2018 at 11:01 AM

CS

“ *Jim was a huge influence upon our lives. He opened our eyes to the art world in unique ways and helped me on a path that shaped my life and that of Martha and our family. Later our families came together through the friendship of our children. You are in our hearts today Jim, Molly and your children. We are sorry we are unable to be present in person but know that you and Jim will be in our hearts forever.*

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**Claude and Martha Schuyler** - May 18, 2018 at 11:01 AM

JD

“ *Professor Thorpe was my first Drawing & Design teacher in college. He was a very kind teacher, but continually challenged me to be a better artist. I remember him fondly and send my sincerest condolences.*

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**Jenn Dixon** - May 18, 2018 at 11:01 AM

AG

“ *I first met Jim when I was in high school and my sister Pat Crandall was secretary in the Art Department. Little did I know that in 1977 I'd become secretary in the Art Department. It definitely took me a while to get used to Jim's dry sense of humor. First week there he had me convinced that if I couldn't find him a figure model I'd have to model nude for his class. He got a laugh out of that for sure. My sincere condolences to Jim's family.*

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**Alice Greene** - May 18, 2018 at 11:01 AM

DB

“ I am sorry to hear of your loss. Mr. Jim Thorpe was my design and photography professor at SUNY Cortland. Professor Thorpe was kind and soft spoken, thoughtful and professional in his instruction and direction. I was greatly influenced by his teaching style as I was by a number of his colleagues and friends. SUNY Cortland Art Department was extremely fortunate to have Jim Thorpe, Steve Barbash, and Gerald DiGuisto as Fine Arts Professors...All Graduates from Yale's Fine Arts School as well as Art Historian Dr. Fred Zimmerman. I have worked in education for over 20 years and 20 years in industry and rarely would a day pass, when I did not use an idea, or information and skill that I learned from my time at SUNY Cortland. There is a special place in Heaven for College Professors like Jim Thorpe and friends! Thank you so much Mr. Thorpe!

David J. Baluta  
SUNY Cortland  
Class of 1972

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David J. Baluta - May 18, 2018 at 11:01 AM

SL

“ I was an instant admirer of Jim's art work which I was introduced to years ago when he came to SUNY Cortland. Not long after this, I met him and was so impressed with his vitality and passion for life and goodness. It is such a sad loss. I am sad and send my condolences.

Sue Lehr

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Sue Lher - May 18, 2018 at 11:01 AM

KB

“ Dear Molly,  
I am so very sorry to hear of Jim's passing. I have such good memories of good times with you and Jim and our friendship as young couples and new parents, back in the day when Peter and Tess, and Maria and Noah were best friends.  
I hope your cherished memories of a wonderful husband, father, artist and friend will comfort you.  
I send my love and prayers .---Kathy

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**Kathleen Brainerd** - May 18, 2018 at 11:01 AM

AA

“ To Molly and family,  
The four years I spent at Cortland befriending and being mentored by Jim and George and Gerry and Steve, et al was truly the crucible that formed me as a person and as an Artist. Though I hadn't seen Jim in a great long time, I considered him, still consider him and will always consider him a true friend, great Artist and all round good guy. I am so saddened to hear of his passing. He leaves a substantial void in the world and in my heart of hearts. Please accept my most profound condolences.

Molly, I don't know if you remember or not (I know many hundreds of students have darkened your doorway over the decades) but besides sharing delicious dinners with you and Jim at your house, you and I also shared several runs together and you and Jim even came to my (first) wedding in Syracuse in 1981 (I still have one of Jim's assemblages you both generously gifted us; I demanded it in the divorce and won!)

He will be missed by all.  
Your friend,  
Alan

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**Alan Adin** - May 18, 2018 at 11:01 AM

BM

“ To the surviving family of Prof. Thorpe, Please accept my sincerest condolences for your loss. I was formerly a student of Mr. Thorpe's when studying painting and art history at SUNY Cortland from 1990-1993. It was, in large part, due to Mr Thorpe that I chose to continue my arts education. Our late night studio conversations and class studio critiques sharpened both my wits and artistic vocabulary. I remain grateful for the years I knew "Jim" (as he insisted I call him after receiving my MFA in painting and Design from the Univ of Texas...yes, the "place I'd learn to paint cactus and cowboys" , as, Jim mused before my departure from his Cortland studio classes). To this day, I often think of my former mentor, and I believe 'friend', and only hope the void of his absence from your lives can be filled with the wonderful memories of the man he was to so many...and remains in memory to this day. With much sympathy, Bradley D McCreary MFA, BFA (Hons), BA (Hons), AA (Hons) ... SUNY Cortland Class of '92

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bradley mcreary - May 18, 2018 at 11:01 AM



“ Dear Ms.Thorpe and Family, I'm sure youre saying to yourself," Who Is This!?" and are right to do so. My deepest and most sincere condolences for your loss. I am also an Artist,when I can be. and had recently discovered James' work and lost my father in April just before the afore mentioned discovery. I wanted to say thank you to all of you. The family that has to share their father with the world, The wife that misses her man but loves him for it. and most of all... James for not only bringing true beauty into this all to often harsh and indifferent society but, enabled others to do so. and even if the student doesn't use the knowledge they still hold the BEAUTY. Thank You for your time. James Burdin Sr.

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July 06, 2016 at 12:00 AM