



James "Coach" Martin

October 29, 1945 - August 21, 2018

James Martin was born and raised in Jacksonville, TX. The youngest of three, he was born into a large extended family full of love and a great appreciation for the simplicities of life. Those family ties became the foundation that led to his passion for family, friends, colleagues, athletes and students.

His love of the game became apparent when one of his older cousins was playing on a "real" baseball team for the first time. Despite being too young, he convinced the coach that he had it in him and would not let him down. From that point on Jim was focused on his single greatest passion... ALL things sports. Proving size didn't matter, he found success in track, baseball, basketball and especially football. It was in Jacksonville, TX that Jim played in the famous Tomato Bowl under the famed Coach John Clark.

From there he went on to graduate with degrees in Political Science and Engineering from the University of Houston. He was preparing for engineering career when a phone call from Coach Clark changed the path of his life. It was in that moment that Jim's real-life version of "For the Love of The Game" began. His acceptance tells his tale and defines his character. He was given the opportunity to shape kids into respectable young men under his role model, mentor and a true legend, Coach Clark.

While coaching in Plano Jim met Mickey Florence who brought him to Rockwall as a coach and educator. In true Jim Martin fashion, he credited his career to being surrounded by the best of the best.

- The upstanding men that he coached with in the locker room such as Stan Shannon, Dan Webb, Hobert Wisdom, Wes Skeeters, Jackie Anderson and Richard Norwood, only to name a few.
- Countless administrators, colleagues, staff members and school board members including, but not limited to Sharon Shannon, Mike Hopson, Jimmy Williams, Sue Cook, Sue Norwood, Tommy Hooper, Joy Bounds, Knel Gandy, Len Lowry, Brenda Parish, Coach Talley, Frank Dunlop, Archie Underwood, Tommie Smith, Leigh Plagens, Janet Carter, Robin Wentzel, Stan Springer and Mac Fleming.

- Those that had the greatest impact were the countless students, athletes and kids that simply came to him for tutoring. While that list is seemingly endless, they provided him the greatest moments of reminiscing and storytelling.

Jim's career in Rockwall started simply, but quickly went from coaching and teaching math to numerous administrative positions. Saying "no," was not an option to any student, teacher, colleague or superior. If he could help, he wouldn't sleep until the task was complete. From there he went on to complete 50 years in education at the end of the 2016-2017 school year.

Jim's true pride and joy of his family came from the foundation that was instilled in him as a child. He couldn't have had more pride in his four kids. While his three sons: Brett (deceased), Zack (41) and Tate (39); and his daughter: Kindle (36); were loved unconditionally and held a special place in his heart, it was his grandchildren that came along and stole his world: Skyler (28), Bella (8), Ryder (6), Sydney (4) and Declan (3). The pride that he found in seeing a part of himself in each one of them was undeniable. And with that, he knew that he had accomplished exactly what his lifelong mission had been all along.

Jim left behind a legacy that he would never accept credit for and would only want to share it with everyone that played a part in building that. Just as he impacted countless individuals, his greatest wish was that those individuals knew that they were the real playmakers in making him the man that he became. He left us in peace, with family by his side on his oldest son's birthday, August 21st. It is believed that he left on that day with the same unprecedented sense of purpose that he lived his entire life with.

A celebration of Jim's life will be held 2:00pm Saturday, August 25, 2018, at the Rockwall High School Performing Arts Center, located at Herman E. Utley Middle School, 1201 TL Townsend Drive, Rockwall, 75087, with Pastor Rick Donaho officiating. All guests are invited to join the family for a reception immediately following the service.

At the family's request, in lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in Jim's name may be made to the Brett Martin "New Beginnings" Scholarship Fund, c/o American National Bank, 1105 N. Goliad, Rockwall, TX 75087.

Comments



“ James was one of the neighborhood kids in Jacksonville. I lived on Henderson St. and he lived on Tyler St. We went to school together and played football together at Jacksonville High. As kids we played football, baseball and basketball in his yard and mine. He was ready to play whenever. He always played hard and was difficult to beat at anything. Lots of memories on those two streets. He was a great guy and a good friend that I will always cherish. May God Bless his family and give them comfort at this time.
Sonny Whatley

Sonny Whatley - August 25, 2018 at 11:59 AM



“ So sorry to hear of your loss. I went to high school with James and remember him with admiration and respect. May God comfort each of you as only He can.

Barbara Gammel - August 24, 2018 at 07:55 PM



“ James and I grew up together here in Jacksonville. We lived two blocks from each other and went to the same schools and were in a car pool when we went to TJC. Never will forget the time I shut the car door on his hand. I not only did it once but when the door didn't close I tried to shut it again before realizing his hand was in it keeping it from shutting. Don't know why it did not break his hand. He was always a great guy that could be counted on and was positive about everything. He will be missed greatly. All my thoughts and prayers are for him and his family.
Mack Bagley

Mack Bagley - August 24, 2018 at 06:47 PM



“ All my thoughts and prayers go to Coach Martin's family and friends. I had the privilege of serving as a math teacher at Rockwall High School under his leadership as Department Chair for seventeen years. His demeanor was always very positive and helpful. He was also a great teacher of upper level math--an asset to my daughter Tamara who later graduated from Baylor. His contributions to our young people were countless! Ruth (Manini) Greever

Ruth (Manini) Greever - August 24, 2018 at 12:26 PM



“ To the Martin Family,
We are so sorry for your loss.
Everyone here at iRide sends love and condolences to each of you.
By the comments and the outpouring of love from fellow friends, students, faculty members, and everyone in between, he will absolutely be missed.

With love,
Your iRide Family

Kallie - August 24, 2018 at 12:13 PM



“ I was fortunate to work with James as my principal beginning at the Rockwall Middle School campus. One of my favorite memories of James was his role in the “Leader of the Pack” skit performed by some of the teachers for a football pep rally. Right on cue, in full leather garb, James rode into the gym on a motorcycle! Needless to say, the crowd went wild. I’m not sure if we won or lost that game, but I know those kids were inspired by James’ willingness to motivate.

He will be missed.
Marsha Johns

Marsha Johns - August 24, 2018 at 09:18 AM



“ All my prayers go out to family and Kindle. Went thru high school with James and thought he was a great guy. I told Kindle this, but when my husband passed away, James was so kind to call me and to let me know if there was anything he can do to let him know. And he shared many memories that he had of Sam in growing up. It was such a good conversation. I will remember this act of kindness and caring until the day I die.

Janie Campbell - August 23, 2018 at 11:58 PM



“ I thought more of James Ray as a brother than as my uncle. We grew up together as kids. We attended TJC together and shared an apartment while he attended U of H. We had many good times together. He was the smartest person I ever knew. He will be greatly missed.

Willard Martin - August 23, 2018 at 09:50 PM



“ My sincerest condolences to the entire Martin family. Mr. Martin was such a great man. I was always amazed at his intelligence, especially in Math. I know his kids were his pride and joy. May he Rest In Peace.
Michele McKnight

Michele McKnight - August 23, 2018 at 09:12 PM



“ Coach was one-of-a-kind and will be greatly missed.

Susan Mase - August 23, 2018 at 08:28 PM



“ Coach Martin taught me freshman math at RHS. He was an engaging teacher and I loved his class.

The offensive coordinator for my dad's RHS teams, one of Dads favorite stories was recounting how he told Coach Martin he was going to have to figure out how to outscore the Hooks Hornets, because there was no defense alive that could stop that kid - Billy Simms.

Coach, you will be missed and say hello to Dad for me.

Andy Florence - August 23, 2018 at 08:24 PM



“ Your love for kids will be remembered! Thanks for your interest and love for them! Diane and family, he is one of my favorite memories.

Judy Milby - August 23, 2018 at 04:46 PM



“ Dear Mrs. Martin and family,
It is incredible the number of kids you influenced through the years at Rockwall High. Coach Martin was a tough but fair teacher and even though I struggled he was always there to give me extra help. There was never a doubt he always had our back. He will be missed, but we all carry a little bit of what he instilled in each student.

Steve McClatchy - August 23, 2018 at 04:12 PM



“ Diane, I taught all 4 of the Martin kids and they were smart, kind and involved...all tributes to you and James...His pride in each of them was well founded.

Much love and sympathy,
Leigh Plagens

Leigh Plagens - August 23, 2018 at 03:01 PM



“ Martin Family,
Our prayers are with your family. Diane, you and Coach Martin have given Rockwall families so many wonderful memories. We are all so Blessed by knowing Coach. May your family's Hearts be full by the love that God has shared with us all.

John and Bonnie Grubbs Family

brenda grubbs - August 23, 2018 at 06:49 AM



“ James and I commuted to Tyler Jr. College from Jacksonville. We had played football against each other, he at Jacksonville and I at Carthage. He was the reason I came to Rockwall as high school principal. He found my application and called me to see if I were interested. What a great opportunity that turned out to be. He was the kind of friend everyone needs. He would do anything for you and never expect anything in return. He will be remembered and missed.

Mike Hopson

Mike Hopson - August 22, 2018 at 10:24 PM



“ To Kindle and all of James' family and friends, I want to express my deepest sympathy to all the family. Thank you, Kindle, for speaking with me. Went to school with James but the most touching thing was given to me when my husband, Sam Starkey, passed away suddenly. James called me and we talked for a long, long time and he told me many stores of his and Sam's childhood together. He was so kind and consoling and I will never forget it. My love goes to you all.

Janie Campbell - August 23, 2018 at 03:39 PM



“ Dear Diane and the entire Martin clan,
My love and prayers are with you all through this tough time. Jim was a wonderful man who gave so much to the children of this and all communities that he served. He will be truly missed.
Love and prayers,

Linda Mitchell Duran

Linda Duran - August 22, 2018 at 08:39 PM



“ I remember James from the very first staff development I attended at RHS. Called on him to share his math skills with me more than once. Much sympathy and love to the whole family.
Leigh Plagens

Leigh Plagens - August 22, 2018 at 08:20 PM



“ Our love and prayers are with you.
The Groves Family

Cecil Groves - August 22, 2018 at 12:37 PM



“ To the James Martin family,
I have been in Rockwall since 1992. Mr Martin was my first principal that opened the door to be a part of this community. He will be missed. Your family is in my prayers during this hard time.
Michele Jensen

Michele L Jensen - August 22, 2018 at 10:20 AM



“ Mrs. Martin and family, our prayers are with you all during this difficult time. May God give you comfort.
Mark, Jana and Rachel

Mark George - August 21, 2018 at 03:19 PM



“ Dearest Martin Family,
Your Dad was so special and made a difference in so many lives. His legacy of genius and compassion will live on. While he inspired generations of Jackets, his love of family is what I admired most. Kindly, we're so blessed to have been with him to mark the moment of his passing. While I ache for you, I am thrilled at the reunions that are taking place in Heaven today.
Love and prayers are surrounding you and your family,

Love,
Darlene Reed

Darlene Reed - August 21, 2018 at 12:25 PM