

OBITUARY

James Jim Gregory Broaddus

October 14, 1952 – April 11, 2015



James Gregory Broaddus, 62, died peacefully at home on Saturday, April 11, 2015, embraced with much love from his wife and family, finishing his brave two-year engagement with brain cancer.

Jim was born on October 14, 1952, in Kansas City, Missouri, to James Anderson Broaddus and Janet (Card) Broaddus. Growing up in Kansas City, where he was first known by his middle name, Greg, he attended Bryant Elementary School and Southwest High School (class of '71), took piano lessons from Wanda Labunski, and was a member of Second Presbyterian Church and Boy Scout Troop 66. Boy Scouts in Kansas City led Jim to what he called “urban hiking,” a practice that continued past scouts and into adulthood. By such intimate association with the main roads and side streets of his home city, Jim began an enduring study and appreciation of its history, especially its rich architectural history (he came to know a few buildings quite well, through a practice that might be called “urban mountaineering”). He graduated from Grinnell College, in Grinnell, Iowa, in 1975, with a degree in history, and later earned his Master’s Degree in Art History and Archaeology from the University of Missouri, Columbia, under the guidance of Professor Edzard Baumann.

Summer trips with his family to Estes Park, Colorado, and stays at the Y-Camp outside of Rocky Mountain National Park awakened a passion for the outdoors, and particularly for the mountains that eventually led Jim to migrate permanently to Colorado. Having enjoyed early mountaineering mentoring in Kansas City from Dr. William Eubank, he was inspired by Colorado’s heights and beauty to spend his summers during his college years climbing in Rocky Mountain National Park and other areas around Estes Park. During one of those summers he met and fell in love with his future wife, Deborah. The allure of the mountains drew him often to the summits of many of Colorado’s high peaks. Long’s Peak was always his favorite, though, and he looked out at the world from its summit at least twenty-five times.

Jim and Deborah were married in 1980, at the Moraine Park Amphitheater in Rocky Mountain National Park and made their home in Boulder. Together, they became the owners of Aion Bookshop, On the Hill in Boulder, in 1987, which quickly became their life's work. Jim's wide-ranging interest in and love for all things contained in books was infectious and inspiring and made the bookshop a place of endless delight, amusement, discussion, discovery, and even education for the university community, the people of Boulder and beyond, and, most importantly, for Jim and Deborah's two children, Claire-Maria and James Maxwell (Max), who grew up surrounded by the knowledge of the ages, cheerfully and wittily interpreted by their father.

In 2002, the wonderful bookshop on the Hill had to close. This heartbreak led Jim to a second career as a real estate agent, which allowed him to develop that love of architectural history begun in his youth in Kansas City. He became an expert on many of Boulder's most well-known architects and shared with many his enthusiasm for the buildings they created. The book business was his everlasting passion, though, and he kept it alive through an internet version of the shop and then created a little physical presence at the Lafayette Flea Market. Books, architecture, and real estate, as well as his devotion to his family and his church, kept him active and engaged throughout his valiant battle with cancer. Always cheerful, warm, witty, learned, and kind—and just a little bit weird and ridiculous—Jim touched so many people in the various circles in his life, from his church and neighborhood and his long-time friends who are as dear as family, to his book group, real estate and book colleagues, architecture buffs, his son's Boy Scout troop, and bus drivers all over the city of Boulder. He managed what we all should aspire to: he made his corner of the world a brighter and better place. We ache from missing him.

Jim is survived by his wife and life-long partner, Deborah; by his treasured children, Claire-Maria and Max; by his faithful and loving mother, Janet Keene, and his devoted and supportive step-father, W. Richard Keene; by his brother Tom Broaddus and his wife Beverly, from Danville, California; by his brother Philip Broaddus of Berkeley, California; by his step-sister Barbie Christopher and her husband Rocky, from Vail Colorado. Many more will miss his gentle and good-humored presence, including nephews Andrew, Jackson, James, Julian, and Stefan, and nieces Anna and Alison; his cousins in Oklahoma and Colorado, as close to him as siblings; and his wide and varied array of friends. He was preceded in death by his father, James A. Broaddus, and by his step-brother, Stuart Keene.

We will celebrate Jim's life among us, as well as his departure to be forever with Jesus, on May 2, 2015, at 2 pm, in the park behind his home at 112 Mineola Court in Boulder. There will be rockets!