

WELCOME! My name is Cindy Reed Hunter. I am Chris's sister. Chris has asked me to say a few words on his and James behalf today. The first words that come to mind are " LORD HAVE MERCY!"

This is a day to celebrate and not to mourn and feel desperate. Thank you all for coming. The farm is a very special place for Chris and James. This is the place James chose for his life celebration

Pastor Swan will say a prayer now.

Cindy - Eulogy

WE are gathered here today to celebrate the wonderful life of James Allen Harper.

James was known as James to some, however, his family referred to him as Jamie. His work family knew him as Jim. Some called him Jimbo, Jimmy Jam or Boogie. He was Uncle James to many nieces and nephews. Most importantly though..he was called "Kiddo" by his life partner Chris.

Some of you have known James his entire life. Others here James knew you YOUR entire life. Many of you have never heard James name spoken of without the name Chris right next to it.

"Chris and James". Almost as if "Chris and James" was one person. This pretty much tells you the kind of couple the two of them were. Always together, planning their next project, planting their latest garden, planning a trip, collaborating on a future endeavor, looking forward and expecting to grow old together.



Chris and James told me a story that always reminds me about how much Chris and James were at times like one.

Living next door to their house in Atlanta was a young family. They had two small children. One day the son Eric was outside one of the with her mother. He called over to James and said “hi Chris and James”! His mother explained “NO, Eric , that’s James”. Eric and his brother thought that Chris and James was one word that referred to both of them.

Last Friday morning Chris and James were having their morning coffee. James suddenly complained of a severe neck and head pain. He asked Chris to help him to the sofa to lie down. Chris called the ambulance. While waiting for the ambulance James was still coherent and alert. He was taken to the Piedmont hospital where he was immediately taken to surgery. The neurosurgeon determined that James had had a type of stroke. He was born with some weak blood vessels in the back of his brain. Possibly an episode of high blood pressure caused the weak vessels to rupture. He was then taken to the ICU where he spent the next four days. He had wonderful care by the doctors and nurses at the hospital. Many of you here today spent time either visiting James at his bedside or holding a vigil in the waiting room. Everyone’s time rallying around James was appreciated so much. The support for Chris has been unmatched by any I’ve ever seen. Chris thanks each and every one of you and wants you to know that he will continue to need your love, support and prayers. Chris was so fortunate to be able to hold James’s hand and repeatedly tell James how much he loved him for the entire time that James was lying in the hospital bed. I know that James felt Chris’s constant re-assurance. On Saturday there were a few glimmers of hope when James seemed to respond to a few conversations, however, James’s health declined slowly over the next few days. On Tuesday morning it was determined that James was not able to survive. The medical professionals today can keep someone alive in similar situations for a very long time, however, the quality of life is very sad. James and Chris had talked a lot about this very situation. The “what ifs” we all at one time or another think about. “What if I had an injury or illness that left me without my faculties?” James made it very clear that he did not want to be kept

alive by artificial means just to end up in a bed requiring full time care. Many years ago Chris and James took time to go to an attorney to make plans for their future “what if’s” and made out their wills, Power of Attorney’s and living wills, They spelling out exactly what they wanted if something like this ever happened to one of them. This made it a little easier on Chris knowing that they had made it clear what each other wanted. Chris and James would both want me to take this opportunity to tell you all to “get your business in order and make it legal.”

As many of you know, James and his family lost their brother Ray about a month ago. After Ray’s service Chris and James came back to the farm. They were sitting out back once again making it clear what each other wanted for their selves when it was “their time”. James said that he wanted to be cremated. He wanted a party at the farm. He wanted everyone to come and have a good time remembering him. He didn’t want everyone to sit around and be sad. Let’s keep that in mind today.

James was born on December 4th, 1961. He was #5 of 8 children born to Raymond and Lizzie Mae Harper. His older siblings at the time were Janice, Shirley, Vivien and Ray. After James came Kenny, Kathy and Patty. They are all here today. He grew up in this beautiful community of Madison, Georgia. The family home was across the street from this farm. I have been witness to the selfless love and dedication to each other. They openly love and accept one another for who they are. The love and support they have shared with Chris has been amazing. James left Chris with a beautiful family to call his own.

James was an outstanding student. He was the valedictorian of his high school graduation class. He attended The University of Georgia and Georgia Tech. He had a thirst for knowledge that was never satisfied. When he was a young boy he read all of the encyclopedia books in a large set of books cover to cover. I’m pretty sure he had some sort of a **photo graphic** memory. It seemed that no matter what subject was being discussed James could always add to the conversation. When watching Jeopardy more often than not he knew the answers to the questions. (Yes, THOSE

questions). About a year ago I was sitting out back with James talking about my husbands and my house in Costa Rica. I was going on about all of the difficulties etc...I said "I don't have any regrets, it's just a lot of work". James piped in and said emphatically that one should NEVER have regrets. That you should move forward, learn from your experiences or mistakes and make the best of it. Then he said "DO you remember that quote by Oliver Wendell Holmes, the one about "...then he almost verbatim said this quote.

"I find that the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are moving: To reach the port of heaven, we must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it - but we must sail, and not drift, nor lie at anchor."

This pretty much sums up what kept James going in the right direction with the right attitude.

James was an amazing cook. James could cook up a STORM. He made it all look so easy too. It didn't matter if it was for 5 or 50 people. He just had a special knack for making everything work out perfectly. He made it all look so easy too. He would just quietly putter around the kitchen and then "poof" a fabulous dinner was on the table. Of course this couldn't have happened without the help of Chris. Chris kept things cleaned up and looking like no one had even been in the kitchen. It was Magical!

James loved to shop at those great kitchen stores to look for the latest and greatest gadget or thing that would make the next barn party just that special little touch better. Everything he did was thought through. He always had a plan. Just a little adjustment of a chair or a flower made everything look just perfect.

(I would be the one who would look at his puttering around and think "what difference does that adjustment make...and then WOW! It was

EVEN better!” James knew just what to do to make everything look just right.

James was a master gardener. Again, Chris was the other half of the project but James always had an idea of what should be done to get the best yield out of the plant. Just look at the garden and the produce in the baskets. I’ve never seen so many peppers or tomatoes on one plant in my entire life.

James and Chris were so fortunate to travel the world. They visited over 30 countries and 5 continents. James had such a love for other cultures. He and Chris immersed themselves in each and every country they visited. They decorated their house in Atlanta with so many artifacts from other parts of the world. Walking through their home is always like a museum and a history lesson combined. James was always up on the history of the countries they visited and love sharing his knowledge with anyone who showed an interest.

James loved the children of all cultures. He enjoyed interacting with them regardless of knowing a common language. He loved to give small gifts to those less fortunate around the world. Chris and James travelled with a suitcase full of gifts every time they went somewhere around the world. Of course this would come as no surprise to those of you who know Jamie. He has his own closet here at the farm where all the children know he has his supply of gifts.

James had an especially keen interest in the stars, all of the universes and the belief that we were all here for a reason. Chris and James loved to gaze up to the skies at night and wonder where it all went and what it all meant. He understood black holes and celestial wonderments. Things that most of us never would spend the time to try and appreciate. When you look to the stars---think of James.

James had many nieces and nephews and great nieces and nephews. You all know that James wants all of you to do your best in school and to go to college if possible. He wants all of you to be the best YOU can be.

Keep on keeping on. NEVER Quit! He loved you all so very much. You are the future. Make Uncle James Proud!

I'd like to finish today with a quote that all of us should have on our refrigerators, by the door as we leave the house or at our work place desk.

***"IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE EVERYTHING CAN CHANGE.
SO FORGIVE OFTEN AND LOVE WITH ALL YOUR HEART.
YOU MAY NEVER KNOW WHEN
YOU MAY NOT HAVE THAT CHANCE AGAIN."***