



## James Dean Jensen

February 26, 1943 - August 6, 2020

The Honorable James Dean Jensen, 77, passed away on Thursday, August 6, 2020. The son of Uffe and Mary Jensen, he was born in Denver, Colorado in 1943, and raised in Akron, Ohio, along with his three surviving sisters, Judy Schultz, Mary Kay Jensen, and Tina Sullivan. A loving and much-loved husband and father, he is survived by his wife of 27 years, Lynn (Blue) Jensen, children, Tracy Jensen, Tammy (Jeff) Lakatos, Tim (Joy) Jensen, and stepsons, Dean Moore and Tyler Stevens.

Jim graduated from Wittenberg University in 1966 before pursuing a legal career that would span half a century. He earned his Juris Doctorate from the University of Toledo College of Law, where he would later teach civil procedure, torts, and trial advocacy as Adjunct Professor, and also serve as Assistant Coach of the Mock Trial team. He often said that teaching and mentoring were among the most rewarding practices in his career.

In 1975, Jim joined the United States Department of Justice as Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio. His appellate and trial skills were widely respected, earning him the position of Senior Litigation Counsel—one of only 33 in the country—and later, the role of Assistant Director of the Attorney General's Advocacy Institute. During his time in the U.S. Attorney's Office, Jim lectured at the Federal Bureau of Investigation in both Washington, D.C. and Quantico, Virginia, often sporting a bow tie and braces, as was the fashion of D.C. at the time.

Upon his return to Toledo, Jim became a partner at the law firm of Spengler, Nathanson, litigating civil and criminal cases. He moved to the other side the bench in 1995, when he was appointed to the Lucas County Court of Common Pleas. He was elected to the seat in 1996, and re-elected in each subsequent ballot, ultimately occupying the same courtroom in which he first clerked. His love for the architecture and history of the courthouse was so great, he would often provide history tours to people who had been called for jury duty. In 2013, he was elected to the Ohio Sixth District Court of Appeals, where he presided until retiring in 2019. Judge Jensen was a vibrant member of the legal community, serving as President of the Toledo Bar Association and later on the Board of Governors of the Ohio

State Bar Association, where he made some very dear friends. He was also a long-time volunteer judge for Drug Court, a program which offered probation and community service rather than prison time. He generously offered support and mentoring to young lawyers and new judges. In recognition of his judicial integrity, legal acumen, and steadfast professionalism, Jim will receive the prestigious Moyer Award for Judicial Excellence in September, 2020. He responded to the news with characteristic humility, remarking to his family, "I'm not sure why I'm being rewarded for simply doing my job," a comment indicative of both his midwestern work ethic and Danish aversion to accolades.

Judge Jensen's distinguished career never took precedence over his roles as father and husband, however. He took profound joy in traveling with his beloved wife, Lynn, with whom he laughed every day. He attended and coached countless softball games, dutifully recorded splits at track and cross country meets, and cheered his children on at every opportunity, enthusiastically supporting athletic and educational endeavors alike. An accomplished athlete who enjoyed competing against himself the most, Jim became an avid golfer later in life and ostensibly relished the self-torture of constantly improving his swing. A consummate prankster and dedicated dad-joke teller, he brought laughter and lightheartedness to each day, even and especially in tough times (he liked to quip to nurses that cremation was his last chance at a smoking-hot bod). He handled his cancer with the same courage, candor, and wit he applied to all other areas of life. He will be missed, deeply and daily, by all who were fortunate enough to know and love him.

The family would like to recognize and thank Dr. Timothy Kasunic, Dr. Donald Vogel, Marci Catignani, Judy Siebeneck, and the wonderful nurses at Toledo Clinic Oncology, Toledo Hospital Interventional Radiology and Hospice of Northwest Ohio, all of whom treated him with such love and compassion.

Out of concern for those James Jensen cared for and who cared for him, memorial services are being delayed during the pandemic. When conditions allow, we will announce a gathering to celebrate him and a life well-lived. In lieu of flowers, friends who wish may contribute to Hospice of Northwest Ohio, the Toledo Bar Association, or the Melanoma Research Foundation. Arrangements have been entrusted to the Ansberg-West Funeral Directors, 419-472-7633. To send his family online condolences please visit <http://www.ansberg-west.com>.

# Comments

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“ My deepest condolences to the family of the honorable Judge James D. Jensen. I served as a juror in his courtroom. He was the most kindest, fairest Judge and it was an honor. He even thanked all jurors for serving after court was adjourned. He will be missed dearly. God Bless !

**Abby Ohms** - August 21, 2020 at 05:10 PM

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“ Cyndie S. purchased a sympathy card for the family of James Dean Jensen.



**Cyndie S.** - August 17, 2020 at 01:05 PM

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“ My sincere condolences to Judge Jensen's family. Working for the courts, I used to enjoy conversations with him, especially political conversations. He was a well respected Jurist and very smart when it came to the law. He also was a very compassionate individual. He will most certainly be missed by many. Celebrate his life and all that is him.

**Larry Loutzenhiser** - August 14, 2020 at 01:34 PM

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“ My condolences to Judge Jensen's family & many friends. I had the opportunity to work in Judge Jim's courtroom as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney more than once. Judge Jensen always treated everyone with kindness, fairness & dignity. He will be missed by all of us who were touched by his life.

**Bruce J. Sorg**

**Bruce Sorg** - August 12, 2020 at 10:12 AM

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“ Lynn, I am thinking of you and the family. You are in my thoughts and prayers and I am so sorry for your loss. He was such an amazing man in all aspects of life.

Nancy Thomas

Nancy Thomas - August 12, 2020 at 09:12 AM

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“ I had the pleasure of serving on a jury in his courtroom and Getting full tour inside & out of his brilliant historic knowledge. I know a few Judges and Judge Jensen has been my favorite! He was a kind, caring person to everyone! My sympathies to his family.

Sue Hess - August 10, 2020 at 09:36 PM



“ Well said!!!

Abby - August 21, 2020 at 07:55 PM

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“ I knew Jim in a variety of Toledo legal settings and considered him a friend. He was always in good spirits and humor. He was always supportive of the University of Toledo College of Law and was often a source of sage advice. It was an honor and a pleasure to have known him. He will be missed. My sincere condolences.

DANIEL STEINBOCK - August 10, 2020 at 04:44 PM

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“ Judge Jensen was a respected jurist by the entire Ohio Judiciary. Always enjoyed his programs, comments and insights and sense of humor at the Common Pleas Court Conventions . We all will miss him. Richard K. Warren. Retired Judge. Allen County Ohio

Richard Warren - August 10, 2020 at 03:41 PM

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“ Judge Jensen retired shortly after I began working at the Ohio Sixth District Court of Appeals. During that brief period I found he deserved every accolade and honor bestowed on him by, well, everyone. Add me to that long list. May his memory be eternal.

**Joyce Anagnos** - August 10, 2020 at 11:17 AM

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“ Please accept my heartfelt sympathy and prayer on the death of Judge Jim. I knew him when his stepson, Tyler Stevens, was a student at St. Francis. I know him only as a very good man. I shall remember Jim and all the family in my prayer.

**Rev. Ronald Olszewski, O.S.F.S.** - August 10, 2020 at 10:49 AM

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“ Lynn and Family,  
So sorry to hear of your husband's passing. My thoughts and prayers are with you.  
Sarita Meeks

**Sarita Meeks** - August 10, 2020 at 10:49 AM

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“ I was a recipient of Judge Jensen's largesse many years ago when I was a common criminal. He was one of the few judges, along with Judge Osowik, who were consistently fair and kind. I didn't know he had such a great sense of humor (e.g I'm gonna use that cremation smokin hot bod myself now). I'm glad he had a good, loving family and career.

**kathleen wallace** - August 10, 2020 at 03:39 AM

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“ I just wanted to share with the family my memories of the Honorable James Jensen. He taught in the Legal Assisting Technology program that I ran. He was a magnificent teacher and his students really liked him. He will always be remembered as a true gentleman. My heart goes out to his entire family. Sincerely, Nancy Robon

**Nancy Robon** - August 09, 2020 at 12:42 PM

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“ To Lynn and the Family of Jim Jensen:

Please accept my heartfelt condolences on Jim's passing. He was a consummate gentleman, great jurist and wonderful friend to all of us in the Highland Meadows family.

His was the definition of "a life well lived!" He will be greatly missed!

May God be with you all during this time of great sorrow.

**Tom Crothers** - August 09, 2020 at 12:34 PM

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“ Lynn and family, my deepest sympathies go to you for the loss of Jim. He was a funny, delightful person who brought both levity and wisdom to his work. I'm glad I had the opportunity to know him. Alison Belfrage

**Alison Belfrage** - August 09, 2020 at 10:02 AM

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“ Rosemary F. purchased a sympathy card for the family of James Dean Jensen.



**Rosemary F.** - August 09, 2020 at 07:57 AM