

Jim Brands Tribute

Graham Parker, May 13, 2015

This tribute is in memory of Jim Brands, a member of the Utility Energy Forum Planning Committee and long-time attendee and supporter of the Forum.

It was just a short year ago I was sitting at a table in the dining room enjoying one of my many exchanges with Jim Brands covering such diverse topics as our common faith and church affiliation, OSU Beaver baseball and general love of sports, the joys and heartaches of being a parent, the grand challenges and successes of over 35 years pushing the rope of energy efficiency up the long slippery hill, our engineering backgrounds, and reminiscing of the early days when we first crossed paths in this industry. I probably have known Jim longer than any of you having met Jim in the early 90s when he worked at the PGE Efficiency Center in Tualatin OR. Jim firmly believed that God has placed us on this earth to enjoy it and to take care of it. Energy efficiency was his contribution.

Little did I or anyone of the people around the table know that this was the last time I would see Jim or have such a broad conversation with him, for Jim passed into eternity a little over a month after the UEF from a very brief battle with demon cancer. It was the same cancer that claimed my own father at age 48.

As with his friends, colleagues, and family, I was crushed as Jim was taken with so much more in this life to experience and accomplish. Jim left behind a wife, Jennifer, and sons Peter and Dennis.

Dennis spoke eloquently about his father at his service which included: *“My heart today is to honor my Dad. Not just because I loved, not just because he was one of my closest friends, not just because he was our provider, and not just because he was an honorable man. I want to honor my Dad because it is good to honor a man who honored God, because by doing so, we are honoring God himself. My Dad left a legacy of generosity, and I want to honor my Dad by carrying on that legacy today.”*

In Jim’s honor, the UEF has established a Jim Brands scholarship fund that will allow those in this industry to attend the UEF where they would otherwise not have the means to attend. The UEF Board and Planning Committee hope that this scholarship and attendance at the UEF will enable others to perhaps follow in Jim’s footsteps and become an outstanding contributor to the field of energy and energy efficiency and make this planet a better place to live.

“Each man’s life touches so many other lives. When he isn’t around, he leaves an awful hole, doesn’t he?”

-It’s a Wonderful Life