

Celebrating 70 years of barbershop harmony in Lansing

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Dr James K Hall

Dec 1942 - July 2010

Music and Service – One Man’s Story by James R. Hall

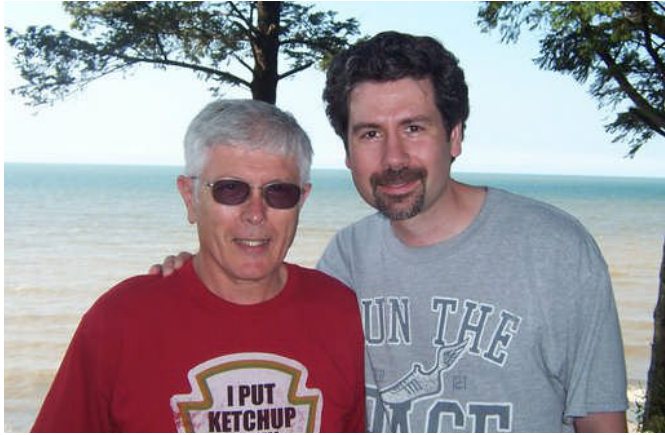
If you have been watching the news this last week, you may have seen the story about the Cessna passenger plane that crashed in Lake Michigan on Friday, July 23 where only the pilot survived. The plane was taking a cancer patient and his wife from mid-Michigan to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota.

My father, Jim K. Hall, was the physician on the plane, and he, the co-pilot, and the cancer patient and his wife are still missing and presumed gone. The authorities are still searching for the plane with sonar. They were all from my hometown in Alma, Michigan. I wanted to share my father’s story and philosophy about barbershopping and service and life and how they intertwine. He wasn’t one of our many barbershop heroes who have won gold quartet medals or directed famous choruses, but he sure was mine.

My Dad was a member of the Gratiot County Chapter based in Alma, Michigan, which is right in the middle of the state. I believe he became a barbershopper 1978. Besides a quartet man, he was past chapter president, young men in harmony chairman, singing valentines coordinator, assistant director, section leader, learning tape maker for all 4 parts, sold 400 tickets to annual show, was a tag teacher, made the chorus and quartet props, etc, etc, etc. He sponsored me as a chapter member at age 16.

He felt that vocal music programs in schools were VERY important and not only brought in many middle schoolers and high schoolers to barbershopping, but I believe his chapter donated ALL of their singing valentines profits every year to local music programs and also donated many show tickets each year to schools. He felt that our barbershop music should be used to comfort and uplift people, especially in nursing homes,

churches, family gatherings, schools, etc. His quartet and chorus often did that, probably most of the time for free.



One of his goals was to get one man of note FOR EVERY YEAR of his BHS membership. He was a 32-year member with 38 Man of Notes, so he was ahead of schedule! Don't we all wish we could come close to that sort of goal? He was probably best known for the crazy props and silly antics he dragged his quartet into. Whether it was building an elephant for the circus show, dressing as a garpike fish in a "Gar-Goils" quartet, or wearing that ugly wig as the mother during "Daddy Sang Bass" he sure had a lot of fun. I think he did those silly things to entertain himself and fellow barbershoppers as much as the audience.

Outside of barbershopping, he grew up in Ohio, served in the Peace Corps in Ethiopia from '64-'66 as a math and science teacher where he married my mom, Ann, another Peace Corps teacher. While over there, he was inspired to become a doctor, and when he came back, he went to Ohio State University Medical School and became a family physician. He moved to Alma, Michigan and was a family practice physician who worked 90 hrs a week and delivered hundreds of babies. But he was just as comfortable serving in nursing homes and attending funerals of his patients to help comfort the families. He often gave free services to those in need.

He was a quiet man of faith and very active in his local Presbyterian church. He and my mom, a Red Cross volunteer and Girl Scout Leader, both individually were awarded the prestigious Order of the Tartan, given to a citizen of Alma who has significantly served the community. He was a dedicated husband and loving father and grandfather. He loved so many in the community and they loved him.

Back to the tragedy: as a last ray of light, a note my dad wrote was recovered from Lake Michigan from inside a waterproof medical bag. As the plane was going down, he scrawled out the following on a medical progress form "10 am Dear all, We love you. We lost power over mid Lake Mich. and turning back. We are praying to God that all will be taken care of. We love you. Jim" I truly believe that he meant this as a comfort to family and friends who would read it, if the note was found. That's just like him - always thinking of how to serve others and comfort and help them.

Really, his is the story of so many other barbershoppers - wonderful, dedicated men who just happen to share a harmonious hobby. We don't always know who they are outside of the chapter meeting, except that they are our friends. Well, here was the story of one of them. I really miss him today and the tears are flowing. Thanks for listening, gentlemen. Keep singing and serving - whatever your faith - your music CAN be part of your personal ministry, whatever you choose that to be.



Some of his favorite songs were "Smilin' Through," "Gospel Medley," "Little Girl," "At the End of a Cobblestone Road," "That Old Quartet of Mine" "Grandma's Feather Bed" and of course the "Ohio State University Fight Song." He was unable to find many others in this state who were willing to sing that last one with him, though. His favorite tag was "Danny Boy."

The main memorial service for Dr. Hall will also be at the Masonic Pathways, and it will be on Sunday, August 8 at 2pm in the Chapel. All are welcome to attend that service also.

Thank you to so many of you who have sent kind words of comfort in this difficult time to me and my family. It is really appreciated. Peace and Blessings, James Lansing, MI



CELEBRATION OF JIM HALL'S LIFE

Date/time: August 3, 2010, 7:00 p.m.

Place: Masonic Pathways Conference Center (seats 126 people)

- Cynthia Harabel – 466-3806 (primary)
- Vicki Johnson – 466-3805 (alternate)

Our chorus contact: Denny Wissinger

Master of Ceremonies: Chuck Moerdyk

Attendees: Mt. Pleasant, Lansing, and several others from each chorus via PioNet

Need a response on who will attend by 5:00 p.m., Friday, July 30, 2010.

Refreshments (compliments of Masonic Pathways):

- Cheese & cracker trays
- Veggie trays
- Fruit trays
- Drinks (punch, etc.)

Bring photos, videos, stories, etc. to share.

PLEASE NOTE :

Memorial Service for Dr. Jim Hall on August 8 at 2: p.m.
At Masonic Pathways Chapel

Aug 3

**Chapter Visitation to Gratiot County
And Dr. Jim Hall Tribute**

Aug 8 2:00 p.m.

**Memorial Service for Jim Hall ,
Masonic Pathways, Alma**

NEW

Aug 1 - 8
 Aug 10 - 12
 August 20,21
 August 24
 August 28
 August 31 Tues
 September 18
Oct 15 - 17
 Sept 14
 October 23
 November 6
 November 6
 November 6

Harmony University - St Joseph, MO
 Harmony Explosion Camp, CMU
 Bush League, Gaylord
 Jamboree
 Kalamazoo Chapter GOLF Scramble
 GR/Baker Corn Roast 7:00
 Kalamazoo Chapter Show
Pioneer Fall Convention, Grand Rapids
 Lansing Chapter Ladies Night
 Rochester Chapter Show
 Pontiac-Waterford Chapter Show
Rockin' Barbershop Youth Workshop
 Muskegon Chapter Show

