



James Chinik II

January 6, 1945 - April 15, 2026

James (Jim) Chinik, age 81, passed away peacefully with family by his side on April 15, 2026 at NE Georgia Hospital in Braselton after a battle with sepsis and heart failure.

Jim was born on January 6, 1945 in Johnson City, NY and he grew up in Binghamton and Albany, NY. He attended Christian Brothers Academy and Siena College earning a degree in Physics before joining the Air Force in 1966 as a 2nd Lieutenant. Jim met his first wife, Judy Jackson, a nurse in the Air Force, while stationed in Montgomery, AL.

After getting married, he was off on an extended remote-duty assignment in Turkey, tracking Russian space launches and re-entries, and the US Space program Apollo missions. He returned home and transitioned to civilian life working for BellSouth in North Carolina and Atlanta, settling down in Stone Mountain, GA where he and Judy raised a family, his daughter Pam and son Greg. Family life was always important to him and he found ways of weaving his personal adventure-seeking and hobbies together with the family.

Vacations in North Carolina included skiing in the winter and hiking up Grandfather Mountain in the summer and numerous beach trips to see his mother in St Pete. Judy was the heart of the family and Jim was the skipper of the ship.

Jim's love of sailing and the amazing friends he made at Lake Lanier had blossomed in the 70's and by the 80's racing had become central to his life. A brand new Beneteau First 29 named "Basair Francais" became his third boat,

and he was the captain of it for 40 years. In his prime racing years he traveled with it to Tampa Bay where he competed in the Kahlua Cup and Race Weeks, among other regattas, with his name on trophies displayed at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club.

After a difficult battle with cancer, Judy passed away in 1995. Jim married Penelope Pawling in 1998 and they moved to the Lake Lanier Sailing Club cabin colony to be closer to Lake Lanier and his sailing community. Soon after, he retired from a 30-year career with Bellsouth, where he had also volunteered regularly with Junior Achievement of Georgia, The Boy Scouts, and through the entire '96 Paralympic Games Sailing Events.

With Penny on the LLSC Anchor Committee and an integrated circle of friends, they had more time to plan loads of gatherings with friends and family. They complemented each other in numerous ways and split time between the lake and the cabin he built in the mountains of North Carolina as well as traveling around the world to explore new places. Whether hosting the Amaya family from Texas or Missouri, island-hopping on a cruise, or joining Greg and Hye-Joo on a tour in Italy, they always had open hearts for friends, family, and adventure.

Jim was also preceded in death by his second wife Penny in 2021. He was openly appreciative to his family and friends for getting through that second heartbreaking loss. Always an optimist and an adventurer at heart, he filled his last several years with a few more fun trips, the highlight being a cruise with his grandson Jacob up the Atlantic Coast to Canada. Even on tougher days at home where his body let him down, he kept his head up and often rang up others to try to stay engaged and hopefully brighten someone's day. He loved a good party, enjoyed cooking, and sharing a delicious meal. He always had a passion for meeting new people and enjoying warm conversations. Even as his body declined further, he continued to cook his own favorite meals for himself and others and kept the house in good-repair and amazingly, Basair Francais was always kept seaworthy and ready for the next outing.

Jim is survived by his daughter Pamela Lynn Chinik (husband Brian Hinson)

of Lilburn, GA; son James Gregory Chinik (wife Hye-Joo Kim) of Jacksonville Beach, FL; grandsons Jacob Alexander Hinson (23) of State College, PA and Wyatt James Hinson (19) of Lilburn, GA; step-daughters Melissa (Missy) Amaya and Melanie Elaine Vaneck of San Antonio, TX; and step-son Damon Amaya (wife Stephanie L Moczygemba-Amaya) of Blue Springs, MO. A Celebration of Life will be held at Lake Lanier Sailing Club at a later date.

Tribute Wall

PH

“ Had some good times at the falls and the American Legion. You are going to be missed by us all.



Pat Hall - April 22 at 06:16 PM

IM

“ Jim was a beloved brother in a group of senior singles at Prince of Peace Catholic Church in Flowery Branch, GA. The group is called Growing In Faith Together Single or G.I.F.T.S., and Jim was a major reason for our group to grow close together as dear friends. He never met a stranger because that person immediately felt welcomed by Jim!

We shared many events and memories together over the last few years, and Jim was dearly missed the moment he went home to heaven.

May he enjoy the peace, light and happiness of being reunited with his beloved Judy and Penny, as well as so many others he loved that went before him. He will always be missed with lasting and loving memories.

Blessings,
ileana



Ileana McCaigue - April 18 at 09:55 AM