No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.

The Lion and the Mouse
—Aesop
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The Lion and the Mouse
—Aesop
About 4-5 years ago Jim joined Engineering from NCPA. I could see that he had found the place that he always wanted to be. Jim has been one of the most active researchers, but we could see that his heart was with the students. He volunteered for so many things, including using his own research resources to organize K-12 summer camp working with middle school students on hot summer days, devoting his time to engage so many undergraduate students on research to give them an unique experience that will set them off for a great career, and working with mechanical engineering student society on their semi-professional activities. He also widely volunteered in community and church and I often received letter from outside praising his service. Jim was a jovial person, always in high spirit. We can see him in a Hawaiian T-shirt in the winter, and a red cap near holidays seasons, bring treats, and recently tons of girl scout cookies to share. He maintained such spirit even during the family crisis when Julie was fighting for cancer (and won). There is no doubt that he was a wonderful husband and father. Of all these, I have not mentioned that he was an outstanding teacher, outstanding researcher, a most generous colleague who share his resources, particularly with young faculty, and served as associate dean for the school. Sometimes I wonder how could he do so many things, and at ease. Jim has touched so many people in so many ways, I cannot imagine we can ever recover from the loss.

Alex Cheng
Dean of Engineering
“A tin of popcorn to the highest grade”

—Chambers
Jim had an impact on my life in a significant way. Back in 2000, I was teaching math at OHS. I received a wonderful invitation to join a committee spearheaded by NCPA to create an introduction to engineering high school class for Mississippi Dept of Education to help ignite interest in the field. Of course Jim Chambers was a leader in the initiative. I've had the privilege of knowing and working with him for 16 years now. He may not have known it, but his passion for engineering education directly influenced my career path to lead me to this very place. Seems like for everything he got involved in, he would invest himself fully ... my gosh he accomplished so much in his own life, not to mention the return on investment from his interest and involvement in so many other people. When he would jokingly refer to getting to be an old man, I would adamantly object, reminding him that we graduated from high school the SAME year! So humble, so kind, and always so much fun to be around.

What a rare jewel of a true friend, trusted mentor, respected colleague, inspiring teacher, brilliant researcher, visionary administrator, problem-solver, awesome father/family, and sincere gentleman who loved life, enjoying every moment of it! Instead of allowing ourselves to remain prolonged broken-hearted and hopeless over our loss, there are tremendous life lessons we absolutely should learn from this man. If you look around, his fingerprints are all over this school and this university and I believe we will continue to see evidence of his generous, kind, selfless contributions to this community and in many of our lives. Oh, if we could be a little more others-orientated like Jim in our precious few days on earth...

Marni Kendricks
Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Academics
Jim, did you honestly expect that to work? “I don’t know, I’m an engineer!”
I first met Jim about 25 years ago when he started graduate school at Georgia Tech. We shared an office and laboratory with two other students for about a year before I graduated. Jim was friendly with everyone and considerate. He had a keen intellect and was very disciplined in his studies. Our paths have crossed a few times since then, and recently we had the opportunity to work closely together. He still had the same outgoing personality, a stranger to no one. He was full of enthusiasm and had an infectious laugh and quick wit. I found him to be a very selfless collaborator. I enjoyed working with him and will miss him.

Dan Costley  
Research Mechanical Engineer, US Army Engineer Research & Development Center
I will share a short story with you that exemplifies Jim’s spirit of service and humility. One weekend in 2011, when Jim was Interim Director, Oxford received a series of heavy rains. As many of you know, the NCPA roof used to leak terribly. Without a second thought, Jim came in late on a Saturday night to set out trash cans to catch the many leaks. He didn’t delegate. He didn’t hesitate. He just saw a need and filled it. Jim had a passion for working with students from middle school to graduate school. He guided thesis work and organized Engineering summer camps (my daughter personally benefitted from one). He enthusiastically recruited talented students to participate in research at NCPA with an understanding of the mutual benefit. Jim’s Hawaiian shirts, positive attitude, and depth of experience will be sorely missed by all of us.

Josh Gladden
Director, National Center for Physical Acoustics
Interim Vice Chancellor for
Research and Sponsored Programs
Jim has been a great and generous friend for all of us at NCCHE. He helped us during our most difficult times and has generously shared his resources to help NCCHE in every way he could. Many times I conferred with him and sought his advice. He was a joy to work with, and he always helped us and uplifted our spirits with his positive attitude; even during our most difficult times. I cannot imagine we have lost him. He will be immensely missed by all his friends at NCCHE.

Mustafa Altinakar
Director, National Center for Computational Hydroscience and Engineering

Jim was one of the best, if not the very best, undergraduate student at Georgia Tech in Mechanical Engineering in his graduating class. He took one of my senior classes and I actively recruited him to pursue a doctoral program under my guidance. I remember vividly his charm, wit, and intelligence, and easy-going ability to connect easily with everyone. His doctoral thesis dealt with outdoor sound propagation, specifically looking at diffraction and scattering effects caused by rough surfaces. His very clever use of time-domain models allowed him to make surprising predictions that he validated experimentally. Jim was truly a wonderful human being. He touched many people and he will be missed dearly.

Yves H. Berthelot, Vice-Provost for International Initiatives, Steven A. Denning Chair in Global Engagement, Georgia Institute of Technology
Today, I not only lost an esteemed colleague, but also a dear friend, guide and mentor. Jim had taken me under his wing since I joined Ole Miss and helped me navigate my career path. He has been a constant source of support and always been willing to offer advice—be it research, teaching or listening to my rants about how difficult it is to work full time and raise a child. He used to joke that he likes giving me advice and acting as a mentor since he was the youngest amongst his siblings. He has been a very good friend to me and my family and has helped us in so many ways. Julie and the boys almost came up in every discussion and so did my family. My heart goes out to Julie and the boys. My thoughts and well wishes are always with them. Thank you Dr. Jim Chambers for everything! We will always miss you. Amrita and Gautam

Amrita Mishra
Assistant Professor,
Mechanical Engineering
Jim was a beloved person by so many people and he truly made an impact on many people's lives. He came on board to the School of Engineering in the right time. He will be always in my heart as an outstanding person in all the regards: as a great leader, talented researcher and outstanding teacher, good friend and mentor. I personally always admired Jim. His way of living life with such a positive attitude, always energetic, optimistic, caring about people's personal and professional problems deserves such a great respect and admiration.

He was a great, great person and truly miss him......

Alex Yakovlev
Professor, Electrical Engineering
Jim was my joyous friend, and I loved him very much. He helped me in so many different ways, professionally and personally, especially unusual ways! He doted on you (Julie and the boys) - he helped show me what family means in all those little important ways. He brought us all much joy - I can only aspire to his level of confident weirdness. Always your friend as well.

Elizabeth Ervin
Associate Professor, Civil Engineering
Last Tuesday, in ME 101 with Dr. Raj, Dr. Chambers spoke briefly about what he did before coming to the university and what he does here at the university. He seemed like a very interesting and funny man, and I was excited to have the opportunity to be around him for the next three years. On Sunday when I heard about the accident I was saddened and could not believe it and had to ask some friends if he was the same man who spoke to our class.

Ben Maples  
Freshman, Mechanical Engineering
When I joined Ole Miss about a year and a half ago, Jim was one of the first people in the School of Engineering to greet me and offer his assistance with anything I might need. He was always quick to help you find an answer if he did not already have one. Jim had a servant’s heart for his students, colleagues, and profession. Most of all, it was always a pleasure to see him in the hallway — always full of cheer and a smile. An encounter with Jim always left you feeling better than you did before. That’s a special quality that cannot be measured, but you certainly know it when you see it. I feel fortunate to have known Jim.

Andrew O’Reilly
Assistant Professor, Geology and Geological Engineering

Dr. Chambers was always the teacher I couldn’t wait to have. He was a legend who I overheard people talking about during my classes, and he was the reason that second semester senior year wouldn’t be too daunting. After all, Dr. Chambers was a father to the students that I couldn’t wait to establish a relationship with.

While I only ended up spending half a semester with him, I thoroughly enjoyed every moment with him. Usually labs are a necessary evil, but with Dr. Chambers I thoroughly enjoyed the learning in listening in lectures, performing in the lab, and writing the report. This semester’s lab suddenly made sense as a truly hands on learning experience, and I am so grateful for his guidance. Dr. Chambers made lab fun.

During our last week of lab, Dr. Chambers brought in four freshman students from high school to experience the wonders of engineering. I was like, ‘how cool is this. These kids get the opportunity to experience something that took me four years to experience.’ Later, while I was eating lunch at the Pavilion with some of my buddies, Dr. Chambers walked by with the kids in tow and some other engineering students and professors towards the Pavilion entrance. He gave me a wave, but me being super awkward thought he was waving at somebody behind me so I was delayed in my return wave. He proceeded to return about twenty minutes later with a giant box of steak and shake. He handed out the patties, and the whole group had a rambunctious time making the high school freshman feel comfortable and loved.

Dr. Chambers truly loved the teaching process and helping his students out. His girl scout cookies as rewards for high grades inspired me to continue working hard. His approachable personality helped me find a thesis adviser. He pushed me to apply to graduate school, and I never really got a chance to talk to him about Georgia Tech like I was planning to.

When we were at the ASME competition at Georgia Tech, he told us the best places to visit and the best bars to frequent. He was brimming with stories that will continue to live on through us. He truly was a legendary figure at Ole Miss and the best teacher in Mechanical Engineering. Ole Miss lost an exemplary teacher. Ole Miss lost an outstanding man.

I just really wished I could have gotten to know him better.

Shawn Skinner
Student, Mechanical Engineering
Hiking on the Elwha River, July 2010
Jim has provided substantial and constructive helps to the NCCHE since 2014 when the Center needed helps from him and School of Engineering. Since I have worked with him during this period, I have learned a lot from him on troubleshooting and problem solving, and his integrity and policy compliance. I am deeply saddened by loss of my colleague Jim.

Yan Ding
Research Associate Professor, Interim Associate Director of Administration, National Center for Computational Hydroscience and Engineering

He was an incredibly gifted professor and such an advocate for the students. I was always impressed with his ability to make people laugh and to engage students from all backgrounds. He was such a valuable team member to the entire University family and his loss is devastating.

Ryan Miller, Programs Manager and Assistant Director, Center For Manufacturing Excellence
It deeply saddens me to find out the best professor and the reason I graduated from Mechanical Engineering passed away this morning in a fire. Ole Miss loss one of its best professors. Dr. Chambers was my favorite professor and he always went above and beyond for me. I will always be thankful for that one summer he was willing to teach three students, Jordan Patrick June and I, to help us graduate. He will be deeply missed by so many of his current and past students.

Sadie Clarice Carrillo
former student, Mechanical Engineering
"I'm a Libertarian, I don't care what you do in your private life, I just don't want to know about it."

—Chambers
Dr. Chambers has been one of the most influential people during my time at Ole Miss. I will be forever grateful for his mentorship, his passion for research, and his fun attitude about everything he did. He taught me about everything from being a good academic, to politics, to how to solder, to the value of a well placed box of Girl Scout cookies and a Hawaiian shirt, and encouraged me to be better every day- he saw potential in me that I did not see in myself. I am so thankful to have worked for him and learned from him every day of the past two years, and I will miss him dearly. I plan to teach in the future, and Dr. Chambers showed me through his example and his devotion to students exactly the type of teacher I want to be. Thank you Dr. Chambers- you changed my life for the better, and I cannot express how much I appreciate you and your powerful impact on my life.

Bennett Barr
Student, Mechanical Engineering
Jim’s energy and enthusiasm for the school, embracing every department as if it were his own, will be sorely missed.

Gregg Davidson
Chair, Geology and Geological Engineering
Jim was such a kind person. I never saw him without a smile, always with a friendly greeting, with a keen interest in others. I only knew him for a few months, but felt like I knew him for years. I suspect he had that same positive impact on many, many others. It was a great privilege to get to know him.

David Pittman
Deputy Director, US Army Engineering Research and Development Center

As a new Assistant Professor I have experienced how much he helped young faculty in engineering. When I came to Ole Miss last August, he was one of the first who came to my office and kindly introduced himself. He made himself available for anything I needed and later on I kept receiving emails from him regarding funding opportunities and helpful suggestions. This is certainly an enormous loss to our University and School.

Esteban Urena-Benavides
Assistant Professor, Chemical Engineering

Though I had only a few interactions with Jim, I remember him as a very helpful and generous person. One occasion is a late request of non-resident fee waiver for one of our graduate students. His response was immediate and very considerate. Another one is during a white paper preparation in which he volunteered finding out some much needed agency information for us. His help was extremely warm and prompt. I just can’t believe we had lost such a great colleague.

Lei Cao
Professor, Electrical Engineering
If I was asked during my college career who was the most influential professor I would have to say it's Dr. Chambers. When I first met Dr. Chambers I was in shock about much enthusiasm he endowed. When I was planning my schedule for senior year, he suggested his ME 405 (power) class. I am gratified I took that class because I got to know how kind hearted he was. Dr. Chambers was understandable which made him one of the most approachable teachers to talk to. A few times I reached out to him for help concerning other classes he was eager to help. I am extremely thankful I got to enjoy having Dr. Chambers as an instructor. He will definitely be missed.

Zandra Milosavljevich
Student, Mechanical Engineering

I am quite new to the faculty of Engineering, but Jim has helped me considerably in navigating around the multitude of proposals and putting me in touch with likely people that share similar research interests. In the short time I have known Jim, I can certainly vouch for his in-depth assistance to new faculty and incredible energy in STEM promotion to under-represented groups. He was a lovely person with a great personality and generous nature, and his huge input and wealth of knowledge to the University will be greatly missed.

Brenda Prager
Assistant Professor, Chemical Engineering
“Got some Shipley’s donuts left over from class... How else do you think I get voted teacher of the year?”

—Chambers

I wanted to share with you why Dr. Chambers was such a great man and how much he influenced me over the last 4 years.

What made Dr. Chamber such a great professor and mentor is that he truly had a passion for his students and for what he was teaching. He made class fun by always joking and actually interacting with the students. Jim is also the one person who convinced me to continue my engineering degree into graduate school. If not for him, I would have graduated last May and said goodbye to OleMiss; he opened my eyes to the everything I could accomplish by continuing my education. Aside from being my professor, he was also my friend. I recall one night that the power in my apartment went out, I texted Jim (he gives all of his students his personal cell number) and asked him if his power was out too; he said no and offered to come pick me up and let me hang out at his house until the power was restored. I thanked him for the offer, and just thought how great it is to have a professor willing to do something like that for one of his students. I owe so much to Dr. Chambers, he will be forever remembered as my greatest teacher and mentor.

Cody Berrey
Graduate Student,
Mechanical Engineering

August 2014
Colorado, 2014
Teaching and inspiring “students” of all ages!

Engineering Camp, June 2014
Me and my family are in a very deep shock, we have known Jim, Julie, Will and Phil for a long time. They are a wonderful family who are loving and caring. Jim was a great mentor to the students as well as the young faculty. He would help me with Ahmed in every engineering gathering. Mohamed, Hunain, and Ahmed.

Hunain Alkhateb
Assistant Professor, Civil Engineering

The School of Engineering has lost a leader, outstanding teacher, researcher, friend, colleague, mentor, and a wonderful person. An irrecoverable loss to all M.E students. He had so much potential to elevate the department to its new heights.

Arunachalam "Raj" Rajendran
Chair, Mechanical Engineering

I had few interactions with Jim in the past two semesters, but I remember how caring he was, especially of new faculty. He personally gave me words of encouragement now and then and made a great impression on me. I will always remember him as an honest and nice person.

Sasan Nouranian
Assistant Professor, Chemical Engineering

I never saw him unhappy, he was the type of person who could brighten anyone’s day. He also took time from his schedule to help anyone with anything ranging from understanding assigned work the night before a test, to helping with a capstone project.

Daniel B. Terral
Student, Mechanical Engineering

Dr. Chambers was an amazing professor. I never knew electrical power generation could be so interesting until I took his class. The knowledge I gained from him sticks in my head till today. He will always remain in my memories as an amazing professor.

Elena Rajan
Student, Mechanical Engineering
Jim was always very cheerful and brought a sense of warmth during Dean’s meetings. He is a very nice person who was ready to help in whatever capacity that he could. I recall during last year, he had readily agreed to my request to include one day of electrical engineering activities for the school kids’ summer camp that is to be held this year.

“Vish” Ramanarayanan Viswanathan
Chair, Electrical Engineering

In fall of 2013, I was working on a project in the computer lab when someone behind me asked what class it was for. I explained that the project was for systems class and he replied “Okay, so you’re a junior. I’m Dr. Chambers. You’ll be in my fluids class next semester. Let me know if you need any help with that project.” I thought “So this is the Dr. Chambers the seniors are always talking about.” I was surprised by how nice and outgoing he was. At this time, I had no idea that he was going to have such a huge impact on my life. I went on to take every class he offered, I worked for him to build lab equipment for the fluids and energy lab, we taught boy scouts to get their engineering and electronics badges, he helped us collect scrap metal for society of automotive engineers, he taught me how to make paper rockets with the cub scouts, he encouraged me to pursue a graduate degree, he wrote me numerous letters of recommendation, and he even taught me how to smoke a cigar and how to play craps. I will forever be thankful for all the Dr. Chambers taught me.

Chastity Massengill
Student, Mechanical Engineering
Vienna, October 2014
Vegetables are what food eats!

—Chambers
Reed Mosher, left, director of ERDC Information Technology Laboratory, February 2016

At ERDC Briefing with Alex Chang February 2016
UM Leadership Team visiting ERDC Supercomputer Center
Commencement 2014

Jim with Jordan Klocke, 2014

Commencement 2014
“Girl Scout cookies anyone?”

—Chambers
1968-2016