



## James N. Finkelstein

May 4, 1952 - July 30, 2022

We announce the passing of James N. Finkelstein on Saturday, July 30, 2022, peacefully in his home at the age of 70. Jim endured a long-term illness for the past several years with as much grace and humor as anyone could muster, and he departed while still living fiercely independently. Jim was born in 1952 in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, to Seymour and Janette (née Sapiro) Finkelstein. He is survived by his brother, Robert Finkelstein of Pennsylvania, his sister Susan Kostin of Connecticut, his nephew Andrew Kostin of New York, his niece Jessica Finkelstein of Pennsylvania, his son Benjamin and daughter-in-law Indya of Virginia, and his arch-nemesis Geoffrey the goose of Lake Loretta.

Jim was a graduate of Westmont Hilltop High School (1969), the University of Pennsylvania (B.A. History, 1973) and the Duke University School of Law (J.D., 1976). Just after graduating from law school, he moved to Albany, GA, to begin his legal career. He first worked as an attorney at the Albany branch of Georgia Legal Services, an organization dedicated to providing free legal services to those with low incomes who could not afford quality legal advice. After two years, Jim launched a solo practice, continuing his life-long passion for social justice, representing the poor, and fighting for the civil rights of those who could not defend themselves.

Among his many friends, the family is grateful for the incredible support from

Glenn Zuern, Jim's political-debate sparring partner and basketball buddy; Howard Stiller, Jim's legal colleague and close friend; and Jim's neighbors and friends Ted and Marilyn Gibson.

In his forty-six years in Albany, Jim touched many lives in the courtroom, on the YMCA basketball court, while playing golf at Turner Field, Grand Island, and Stonebridge (among many other courses), teaching classes at Albany State University, and most recently by provoking spirited "discussion" on Facebook and in the Albany Herald editorial pages. Jim was involved in the local community in many ways, and took special joy in creating a peer-tutoring program in the Dougherty County School System, coaching youth sports at the YMCA, and even teaching Sunday School at Temple B'nai Israel when his son's behavior caused the departure of the regular teacher. This continued a family tradition, as Jim's behavior as a young man brought his father, Seymour, in as an impromptu substitute as well.

Above all, however, Jim's greatest joy was being a father. While he leaves many legacies, the one of which he was most proud was his son. Ben had the pleasure of living with Jim in Albany during the onset of the pandemic in 2020, an opportunity few adult children are afforded. Jim and Ben's wife, Indya, became close as well, and together the three of them enjoyed walks around Lake Loretta, many episodes of TV comedies, and debates about politics whenever it couldn't be avoided (which was most of the time).

Jim didn't want a memorial service, instead requesting any funds for such a service be donated to a charity, preferably one related to educating the indigent. However, like Jim, we are strongly independent, and his family and friends will gather to remember him at Kimbrell-Stern Funeral Home on Thursday, August 4th at 11am.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

AUG 4. 11:00 AM (ET)

Kimbrell-Stern Funeral Directors  
1503 Dawson Rd.  
Albany, GA 31707

# Tribute Wall

LE

“ Ben and family,  
I just now saw this and had absolutely no idea. My time with Jim as his secretary (and Ben demonstrating his magic tricks) was a growing and learning experience that I will never forget. I am sorry we lost contact.  
-Lorie Clements Everson

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**Lorie Everson** - August 05, 2025 at 11:12 AM

BA

“ "Jimmy" and I were friends and frequent playmates, when I lived on Club Drive, from the ages of 4-6 - often collecting worms by the side of our house. We continued as Sunday school classmates for another couple of years, until our family moved out of state. I recall some hair pulling incidents at Sunday school, but not my hair! We only connected once since then, when we were both freshmen in college, on opposite sides of the country, and that was by US mail. Sorry to see the passing of this mensch.

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**Barbara** - February 01, 2024 at 12:00 PM

DA

“ I love and miss you.

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**Dawn** - October 24, 2023 at 06:10 PM

AN

“ Jim was a special friend and attorney. We lost touch over the years, but we had a chance to catch up a few years ago. I'm saddened to hear of his health concerns passing. Prayers for him and his family.

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**Anita** - November 29, 2022 at 07:01 AM

GG

“ *GINA GRIFFIS lit a candle in memory of James N. Finkelstein*



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**GINA GRIFFIS** - August 26, 2022 at 07:49 PM

MR

“ Jimmy was a childhood friend in Johnstown. He got roughed up for bad behavior at Sunday school by the cantor and rabbi for being a wiseass but didn't have a mean bone in his body. Jimmy retired a few Sunday School teachers. He was a TV super star on High School quiz and even got a little hate mail. We were grade school classmates till Jimmy skipped a grade but he remained a pal. Jimmy had harmless obsessions with females and really was smitten by a girl named Marilyn in my high school class but couldn't close the deal. When I went to Penn for my med school interview, he was a college senior at Penn. We went to Gimbel gym and hooped. He loved hoops but was not very good and a 'me first' player. Big surprise!! He got 17 in an AZA championship game on about 25 shots. He obsessed about trying to be better than me at hoops. He was a better golfer than hooper by far. 6 years later, I was working in the operating room at Presbyterian Hospital in Pittsburgh when a nurse came back from vacation, told me she met Jimmy in the airport, and they spontaneously spent the vacation together (recollection so details are hazy). Her name was Lynne. I think Ben described her as a 'hippy' and she turned out to be Ben's mom. I watched the virtual funeral and Ben seemed to be a well adjusted, cognitive, smart, humorous guy in a stable marital relationship. It made me well up. After Jimmy married Dawn, he flew Dawn up to stay 5 days with me to be worked up extensively for a series of somatic complaints. Dawn stayed at our house. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to help her much but Jimmy seemed satisfied with the thoroughness of her work up. The last time I saw Jimmy he literally showed up at my house in Pittsburgh with a phone call 15 minutes before he was on my doorstep. I would say we were 40. He told me that he was playing basketball with younger accomplished basketball players regularly, was playing the best basketball of his life and felt confident that he was better than me. I had not picked up a ball in 6 months. We played 3 games of 1 on 1. He may have scored twice in the 3 games, telegraphed his shots for easy blocking and was slow as hell. His parting words were that he felt



*sure on arrival that I would be out of shape ( which I was). He was humiliated but was an unsympathetic character so I rubbed it in. I never saw or heard from him again until Kris Svitchen told me that he was on the ropes with pulmonary disease and Jimmy was on a group chat with other 1969 Westmont grads. Jimmy was a well intentioned and extremely good guy that had an almost incomparable gravitas about him. He was an unforgettable guy no matter at what stage of life interaction occurred. He had the intellect to be whatever he wanted to be and lived life how he wished. He was argumentative without being a grudge holder. He deserved a longer life but touched anyone who interacted with him at any stage. Jimmy could really make my Mom laugh. Rest In Peace Jimmy. Nothing but respect.*  
*Mike Rogal*

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**Mike Rogal** - August 21, 2022 at 12:00 AM

WK

“ *Wanda K.Sanders lit a candle in memory of James N. Finkelstein*



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**Wanda K.Sanders** - August 04, 2022 at 09:54 PM

DS

“ *Donald Sweat lit a candle in memory of James N. Finkelstein*



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**Donald Sweat** - August 04, 2022 at 09:07 PM

DG

“ *Dawn Green lit a candle in memory of James N. Finkelstein*



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**Dawn Green** - August 04, 2022 at 01:58 PM



“ *The impact that Jim on our community cannot be overstated. He will always be remembered for his quick wit and tenacity as an interlocutor, as well as his professionalism and ability as an attorney. But I hope he is also remembered for his kindness, his generosity, and his willingness to help others or champion a worthy cause.*

*I truly appreciate the impact he had on me and my family, from helping me out of jams that I had gotten myself into, to helping me see things from a different perspective. To me, he was a professional, a role model, a teacher, and a friend.*

*I'm certain that my sentiments are echoed by many others in our community.*

*I am grateful for the privilege to have known him and call him my friend.*

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**Michael Burrows** - August 04, 2022 at 10:23 AM

Janie  
Fink

“ Jim has been a friend both socially and professionally since he first arrived in Albany 46 years ago. My late husband and I knew him as a neighbor in Lake Park and as a fellow congregant at Temple Beth Israel as well as members at Stonebridge. We watched Ben grow up and Jim was prouder of nothing more than his son and the outstanding young man that he became. Jim was an amazing dad. Professionally, I crossed paths with Jim on a number of cases over the years in my work with public welfare and as a licensed clinical social worker. Sometimes we were on the same side of a case and sometimes not. Jim was always respectful and professional. It was never about the money for him and he always fought for each one of his clients with everything he had. He had a brilliant mind and unstoppable energy. Well done, thy good and faithful servant. May his memory be a blessing.



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**Janie Fink** - August 03, 2022 at 11:38 PM

JB

“ Bruce & I have known Jim for many, many years and he was a kindhearted man, who will be missed. Our love and prayers go out to the family. By the way, I was Ben' Sunday School Teacher!  
May his memory always be a blessing to all. Love, Janie & Bruce Bitterman



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**Janie & Bruce Bitterman** - August 03, 2022 at 06:45 PM

EM

“ Jim dedicated his legal career to help those less fortunate. He did not care about making money. He cared about people and bringing attention to faults in our legal system. He will be missed.

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**Eddy Meeks** - August 03, 2022 at 06:24 PM

RY

*A very good man who helped many young black men at the Albany RYDC. Get your rest*

RYDC - February 07 at 10:49 AM

Jl

*“ Mr. Finkelstine will truly be missed. Whenever they heard the name “Finkelstine” they knew they had to have there duck in a row when it came to him. He helped many families, people throughout his legal career. I will truly miss him!!!*

jill - August 03, 2022 at 12:14 AM



*“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of James N. Finkelstein.*



August 02, 2022 at 08:20 PM



*“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of James N. Finkelstein.*



August 02, 2022 at 11:44 AM

SC

*“ Jim's dear father was our dentist in Johnstown, PA. We were very close to the Finkelstein family when we lived in Johnstown. May his memory be a blessing. Sheldon Clare*

Sheldon Clare - August 01, 2022 at 08:05 PM

HW

“ I was saddened to hear about my good friend Jim passing. I have known Jim for several years and enjoyed his company. Jim was a giving and good hearted person. I will miss him dearly. My sympathy goes out to his friends and family. He will be missed

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**Herman Wesley** - August 01, 2022 at 07:11 PM

RM

“ Jim was my good friend for 30 years. It included his campaigns for DA and US Senate. He always gave me good advice and had a brilliant mind. He left a legacy of fairness and kindness in the area.

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**Roger B. Marietta** - August 01, 2022 at 06:37 PM

GH

“ James or Jimmy was a high school classmate of mine. We reconnected during the 2020 Presidential Campaign and a group of us developed a close bond with James. We enjoyed many zoom sessions together. I always looked forward to his face book posts and comments on my daily quotes. James was a great guy who touched so many lives. He fought the good fight and is now at peace.

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**Geoffrey Henry** - August 01, 2022 at 04:00 PM