



James Lackritz

1950 - 2026

Dr. James R. Lackritz, beloved husband, father, grandfather, professor, respected statistician, and lifelong athlete, passed away peacefully surrounded by family on March 27, 2026. He was 75 years old.

Born December 30, 1950, to Dorothy and Irving Lackritz of Columbus, Ohio, Jim was the youngest of their three children. He was a proud graduate of Shaker Heights High School, where he was a member of the Honor Society and played varsity tennis. He later co-captained the tennis team and earned his Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from Bucknell University, followed by a PhD in Statistics from the University of Florida. He built a life defined by intellectual curiosity and a deep commitment to helping others understand the world through numbers and evidence.

Jim spent his academic career at San Diego State University, where he served as Professor of Management Information Systems and later Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the College of Business Administration. Over more than three decades, he taught business statistics and mentored generations of students, as well as co-creating SDSU's Sports MBA program alongside the San Diego Padres.

Beyond the classroom, Jim was widely respected for his work as a statistical expert and consultant, applying his expertise to complex legal cases, business challenges, and public policy questions. His work reflected both his analytical brilliance and his deep belief that data, when used responsibly, could serve fairness and truth.

He was also a prolific researcher and author, publishing extensively in statistics, sports analytics, and management. His interests ranged from the mathematics of baseball and basketball performance to workplace behavior and decision-making.

Jim's passions extended far beyond academia. He loved tennis, skiing, golf, and mathematical games, and he brought the same enthusiasm and competitive spirit to recreation that he brought to his professional life. He was an active volunteer and served on the Board of Directors for both the Torrey Pines Men's Golf Club and San Diego District Tennis Association.

Those who knew Jim remember his fiercely competitive spirit, unwavering commitment to principled values, and his ability to make complex ideas understandable. He was a problem-solver by nature, and more importantly, he was someone people trusted.

He is survived by his wife of 48 years, Karen; his children Kristen and Robbie; his grandchildren Kendra, Leo, and Kaylee; his brother, Marc; and all those whose lives he touched as a teacher, colleague, mentor, and friend.

A Celebration of Life was held on Sunday, April 26th at Tula Community Center on the San Diego State University campus.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to the [Dr James R. Lackritz Memorial Scholarship](#), or that people honor Jim's legacy by supporting education, curiosity, and the pursuit of knowledge.

Tribute from JC Cochran

I met Jim very early on after I joined TPMGC in 2012. Along with Steve Kaplan & Don Ericson, we became a “winning” foursome.

I always looked forward to Torrey events, both “home” and away. In the last few years, we have had different players at times. Flint Locks and Jay Beach joined us often, but Jim was always the “glue” that held us together. He rarely missed our rounds.

It was a rare event in which Jim was not recognized. Always around the clubhouse, on the range or at the putting green, many players would come up and give him a hearty hello. Even out on the course, quite often, someone would yell hello to him from another fairway or green. Mostly players but quite often former students would welcome him. He always seemed to know their names and would tell us a little about them. He had quite a memory!

I have even heard from friends that saw him quite frequently at SDSU basketball games. Every year he would follow the team and even travel for the “March Madness” tournaments.

Jim was, along with golf, also an avid tennis and poker player. He was rated nationally in tennis and was an “A” flight golfer. My biggest regrets are that I was not in the group when he had his two great golfing accomplishments: His hole in one (the first of his career!) on the now 15th hole of Torrey Pines North as well as “shooting his age” with a gross score of 69 at Encinitas Ranch in a ChiliDipper event. Both of these happened just within the last few years.

A few weeks or so before he was diagnosed, he got his COVID and flu shots. The next morning, he had some intensive back pain and stomach discomfort. He initially just figured the stomach issue was a side effect of one of the injections.

Three days later, it was still there, but about every second or third day, it would ease up and he thought it was getting better. Eventually, when he did not improve, he told me about it at Torrey Pines golf course. I think this was the last round we ever played together. He told me he was going to go to the doctor, so on Friday October 10, he went to Urgent Care first thing in the AM.

He had a CT scan. It came back with bad news. He was admitted to the hospital, and they did a biopsy which confirmed the tumor. He was in fourth stage Squamous Cell Carcinoma, which is a very rare aggressive form of pancreatic cancer.

You can read about this cancer, but it comes in unannounced, and the only predictors are family history, smoking, and excessive alcohol consumption. He was the first in his family with cancer, didn’t smoke, and maybe had a glass of wine once a month. Ironically, He was the statistical rare event.

Jim visited with his brother and his son came down to play golf. The trip had been planned for months, and his hospital doctor told him to go. As Jim wrote to me about it, “At this point, my goals are to start doing the things I enjoy as long as I can, try to be more positive about things in life, reduce my stress level, and fight like heck against this disease to prolong the quality of my life. I've already realized a lot of things about my life that have been special.

His main priority was to enjoy his family and friends.

So, when you think of our Dear Friend Jim, raise a glass of Dr. Pepper (his favorite beverage?), go play golf or tennis and be kind to your family and friends.
May his memory be a blessing!!

Respectfully,
JC Cochran