

James F. Egger dies

2/07/13

James F. Egger of 184 Elm St., Stonington, CT died peacefully at Lawrence and Memorial Hospital on Feb. 5, 2013.

Jim was born on Feb. 2, 1945 in Ridgway, PA, the son of James M. Egger and Dorothy (Young) Egger. He graduated in 1967 with a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Alfred University (NY), where he was an outstanding scholar and athlete. He was named to the Division III All American Football Team as a Senior and is a member of the Saxon Athletic Club Football Sports Hall of Fame.

In 1967, Jim continued his studies at the University of Pittsburgh where he developed a passion for organic chemistry. He was one of the first students of Samuel Danishefsky, one of this country's scientific leaders in organic chemistry research. His work led to the preparation of the anticancer drug camptothecin, which is used in cancer treatment today. After obtaining a Ph.D. in 1971, Jim did a year of postdoctoral research involving prostaglandins at Columbia University in the laboratory of Gilbert Stork, another renowned scientific leader in organic chemistry.

In 1972, Jim joined Pfizer and had an outstanding career as a research scientist. He has numerous patents and publications and was responsible for a number of important discoveries at Pfizer leading to advances in the treatment of pulmonary disease, inflammation and diabetes. He enjoyed designing new medicines and working with teams of scientists to make them. He retired in 2002 as a Research Advisor, one of the top scientific positions at Pfizer, after working for 30 years in the organization.

Jim was quite the cook. He often entertained special guests with his specialty: rack of lamb. Jim had a dry sense of humor and had a remarkable knack for coining nicknames for his fellow colleagues. So fitting were these names that, after many decades, most of these names have become more entrenched in our memories than the actual names themselves.

As a natural athlete, Jim was an avid skier and golfer. Clearly he relished the challenges that each provided and faced those challenges with typical quiet determination. In golf, Jim practiced and sought advice from all sources including various professional instructors. The result was a fine game, always in the state of potential improvement. To his golfing friends, he was both the perfect partner and respected opponent. All over the world, from Ireland, Scotland and Spain, to Myrtle Beach, and Scottsdale, Jim challenged himself and treasured the quality time spent with his many friends. In golf, as in life, Jim never gave up, and he never picked up.

Jim is survived by his mother, Dorothy, of Johnsonburg, PA, his brother, Gary Egger and his wife Rebecca of Indiana, PA, and a niece, Erika Egger of Pittsburgh, PA. His father, James M., predeceased him.