



James Donald Patton

September 2, 1947 - August 5, 2022

A six-generation lifelong resident of Walker County, James went to work at the Courthouse as an assistant in the county Auditors office on October 1, 1976. He was elected County Clerk in June of 1978, and was sworn in on July 14th of that year. He was elected each time without opposition until he retired on December 31, 2010 after serving for 32 ½ years.

Prior to his tenure with the county, James attended Huntsville Public Schools and Sam Houston State University. He managed a local sporting goods business for several years before entering public service.

While serving as County Clerk, he attended every A&M County Clerks Seminar for 32 years as well as all of the University of Texas law schools for County and District Clerks. He served on numerous committees and chaired a number of them as well.

He was elected County Clerk of the Year in 1999 by the County and District Clerks Association of Texas, and in April of 2000, The Forrest Lodge #19 in Huntsville selected him to receive the Community Builders Award.

A strong supporter of heritage and civic organizations, Mr. Patton served as the Chairman of the Walker County Historical Commission for 27 years before stepping down at the end of 2010. He has been a member of this organization since 1978 and was reappointed every two years by the Commissioners Court as this is a County Department and all of its members are likewise appointed. He served as the Director of the County Museum which is located in a 1862-Greek Revival House that is leased to the County (Gibbs-Powell House). He

is a member of the Sons of the Republic of Texas and is a charter member of the Descendants of Austin's "Old 300" and was a former board member. Governor Ann Richards appointed him to the Sam Houston Bicentennial Commission for the term of 1992-1993. He helped to direct Huntsville's 150th Birthday and Walker County's 150th birthday. He has been involved in Celebrating Huntsville and Walker County's "Texas Independence Day, General Sam Houston's Birthday Celebration" since 1981.

James came from a long line of public service. His paternal grandfather was elected as a member of the Texas Legislature in 1912 and served for several terms. He later served as County Judge, and then State Senator and finally as United States Congressman for 10 years. His son (James' Father) served as County Judge in Walker County and James' uncle served as County Attorney in Houston County for 30 years before retiring. So you can see that Public Service is in their blood. He says that they simply "Love People" and enjoy serving!!

He is survived by wife, Liz Patton; son, Troy Keeler and family; nephew, Woody Johnson; nieces: Cassie Brizendine and Courtney Woodruff and numerous other family members and friends.

A visitation will be held on Tuesday, August 9, 2022 from 5:00-8:00 pm at the Sam Houston Memorial Funeral Home. A funeral service will be held at the First United Methodist Church on Wednesday, August 10, 2022 at 10:00 am to be followed by a graveside service at Oakwood Cemetery.

Memorial condolences can be made to the family at www.shmfh.com

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 9. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Sam Houston Memorial Funeral Home - Huntsville
1700 Normal Park Dr
Huntsville

Funeral Service

AUG 10. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

First United Methodist Church of Huntsville
1016 Sam Houston Ave.
Huntsville, TX 77340

Graveside Service

AUG 10. 11:30 AM - 12:00 PM.

Oakwood Cemetery Huntsville

Tribute Wall



“ *James Donald Patton*

November 15, 2022 at 08:33 PM

CB

I was getting ready to send a photograph of Cousin Nat Patton to James and was looking up his address only to find his obituary. We met when I was representing the Texas County and District Clerks at the Legislature. We became friends and James had me speak at the 2022 Sam Houston Birthday and Texas Independence Day celebration. I am so sorry to hear of his passing. The day I spoke, he was ill but we communicated a few weeks later. As the late Lt Governor Bob Bullock's Executive Assistant , I recognize good public servants. And after a long career in law and politics I recognize good men. James Patton was both. Chuck Bailey , Austin

Chuck Bailey - August 24, 2023 at 10:29 PM

KL

“ *I always enjoyed running into James in town and hearing him talk about various aspects of Walker County history. He always had time for a kind word. He will be sorely missed in Huntsville.*

Kent Lucad - August 19, 2022 at 10:35 PM

GG

“ *I had the privilege and pleasure of working with James to develop a pictorial brochure of the historical structures of Walker County for publication in the Visitor's Center. His keen intellect and knowledge of each photograph added richly to the project. Such a fine gentleman and friend who will be missed dearly.*

Gregory Gathright - August 11, 2022 at 02:28 PM

DP

“ James will be missed I always enjoyed discussing history with him

Dennis Peters - August 11, 2022 at 09:27 AM

RS

“ We loved him! He was so helpful to us with our old house at 917 9th. He visited it during renovations and gave us a lot of history regarding it. Beyond that, he was funny and energetic. I would often run into him at Oakwood Cemetery while he was caring for the family plot. He always had beautiful flowers growing there. It was very common to see him putting brochures out at the cemetery information center. We were extremely fortunate to have known him! God Speed! Rose & Marty Stuber

Rose Stuber - August 10, 2022 at 01:30 PM

PF

Yes Rose, he definitely knew the history here in Walker County. He enlightened us about our property one evening at Los Pericos. He will be missed 🙏

Penny Fowler - August 10, 2022 at 03:02 PM

PF

He also identified county officials in some pictures I had from 1972 at my dad's inauguration. He didn't have to think on it either. He was so very knowledgeable! Prayers to his wife and family.

Penny Fowler - August 10, 2022 at 03:07 PM

SM

“ James' uncle, Nat Patton, was U.S. Congressman from Texas 1935-1945. During that time, FDR's Works Progress Administration authorized building post offices in the nation's rural areas. Trinity qualified to have a post office. Rep. Patton was instrumental in that process for Trinity. Cornerstone was placed in 1940. When our post office was finished and dedication was held, the first letter ceremoniously postmarked was addressed to The Honorable Nat Patton. Rep. Patton and my grandfather were friends. Several years ago James and I exchanged copies of correspondence between them. With James' passing, his family and friends, Huntsville, Walker County, and State of Texas are greatly diminished.

Susan Madeley - August 10, 2022 at 12:38 PM

CD

“ Connie Decker lit a candle in memory of James Donald Patton



Connie Decker - August 10, 2022 at 08:34 AM

BN

“ Prayers and comfort for the Patton family. James will be missed and all his knowledge.

Beverly Conner Niederhofer - August 09, 2022 at 11:52 PM

BL

“ Sending my deepest thoughts and prayers to the Patton Family. I have wonderful memories of Mr. Patton and all of his knowledgeable conversations during my years as County Clerk of Houston County. He was a great friend and a remarkable man.



Bridget Lamb - August 09, 2022 at 09:08 PM

NB

“ What a loss for Texas history. He will be greatly missed by many, especially every March 2nd when we gather for the annual ceremony. I know he'll be watching to make sure everything is done correctly. He was a true Texas treasure.

Nancy Burch - August 09, 2022 at 06:53 PM

PJ

“ Penny And Luther Joiner lit a candle in memory of James Donald Patton



Penny and Luther Joiner - August 09, 2022 at 05:45 PM

CH

“ So many memories to share about James. He was a good friend to many and a tireless worker for capturing the history of Huntsville. Rich and I send condolences to his wife, Liz, and other members of the family.

Wish we could be there, but our move to Pennsylvania did not mean we don't often think of so many great friends in a town where we lived and worked for almost 18 years! And again, so sorry to hear of James' passing. Rest in peace, dear fellow.

Constance R. Heiland - August 09, 2022 at 02:57 PM

AJ

“ I will never forget the first time I heard James "baptizing" someone as a Texan. He had everyone almost rolling in the isles with laughter. Rest In peace James. You will be missed.

Alice Speaker Jones - August 09, 2022 at 11:53 AM

ML

“ Martha Le purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of James Donald Patton.



Martha Le - August 09, 2022 at 11:05 AM

DC

“ Dessie Cherry lit a candle in memory of James Donald Patton



Dessie Cherry - August 09, 2022 at 10:55 AM

LH

“ We were so sad to hear the news that James had passed away. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Patton family.
Tom and Lynda Henry

Lynda and Tom Henry - August 09, 2022 at 02:03 AM

LM

“ 12 files added to the album Murrah Photos



Lee and Cec Murrah - August 08, 2022 at 09:26 PM

MG

“ My deepest condolences to James’s family. I have known James seems like forever. He knew almost as much as I did about the Martinez family. He will surely be missed.



Martha Grisham - August 08, 2022 at 08:54 PM

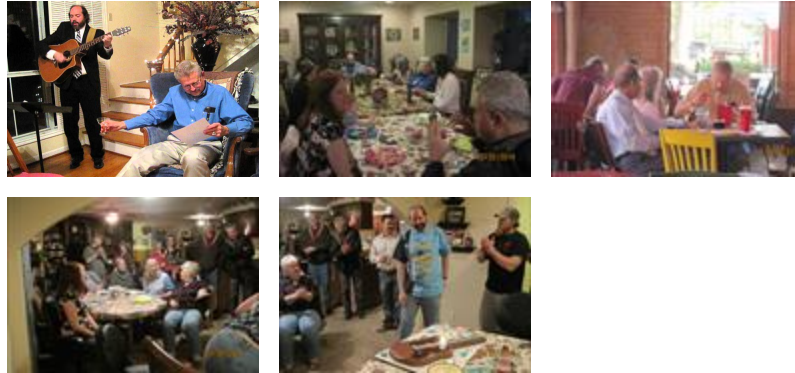
NF

“ Mr. Patton was the best boss I ever had and I will miss him dearly! My heartfelt condolences to his wife Liz and the rest of his family.
Ninfa Fuentes

Ninfa Fuentes - August 08, 2022 at 07:50 PM

JJ

“ 12 files added to the album Johnson Photos



James and Pam Johnson - August 08, 2022 at 07:44 PM

EC

“ *Cousin James was one of a kind! There will never be another like him and I miss him already!*

Earl A Carter - August 08, 2022 at 06:09 PM

RH

“ *I cannot begin to share a memory of James. There are too many. He was a treasured friend and a gift to Walker County. That we have managed to catalog and retain so much of the county's history will be James's lasting legacy. Best to Liz and his family. Rich and Connie Heiland*

Rich Heiland - August 08, 2022 at 05:08 PM

MH

“ My prayers to James family and friends. I met James when I got to Huntsville and shared many memories on local level, Texas history, national, and so much more. James could recall families by name and much more. I always enjoyed speaking with him and so many stories. He was there many and always helping people coming to the courthouse (even on the street) looking for information because you could hear then say they had been referred to one place or another. I his happy personality and always had time for people/ This community will miss him.



M. Hyvl - August 08, 2022 at 05:01 PM

BH

So sad Huntsville has lost James, he will be dearly missed by many in the community!

Belle Hansen - August 16, 2022 at 12:52 PM

BB

“ Bonni Bowden purchased the "On Angel's Wings" Sympathy Gift Wind Chime to Send for Funeral Or Memorial for the family of James Donald Patton.



Bonni Bowden - August 08, 2022 at 04:25 PM

JJ

“ Such a loss to all who knew this incredible person. James was a kind and knowledgeable man and will be missed. A Huntsville treasure. My prayers are with the family during this difficult time.

Jeannine Jacoby - August 08, 2022 at 02:55 PM

SC

“ While working at the County Clerk's office in Crockett, Texas, I had the privilege and pleasure of meeting and visiting several times with Mr. Patton. Such a great person to talk with and very into the history of not on Walker County, but surrounding Counties as well. He will be missed on earth, but what a joy Heaven received.



Shellie Cross - August 08, 2022 at 12:15 PM

RK

“ Ramona Ready Koch lit a candle in memory of James Donald Patton



Ramona Ready Koch - August 08, 2022 at 07:00 AM

JJ

“ I was saddened to hear about James' passing, (or "Cuz", as we always called one another), each time we'd meet. My prayers of comfort are with the family and the many friends he had. We all have "James Stories".
Talk about a Great Reunion; Not only is James in Heaven with his family members and old friends, but he has my aunt, Willie Powell Costilow and cousin, Lucy Alice Stewart to talk history and genealogy for eternity! They both thought of James as their son.
Goodbye Old Friend, I'll see you on my Great Reunion Day.



Jim Jones

Jimmy M. Jones - August 07, 2022 at 11:28 PM

BR

Blessings and prayers to all the family and friends !

Betsy Rather - August 08, 2022 at 03:21 PM

DW

“ *my condolences to the family and a funny story about James:*

when he was county clerk, one of his duties was to record marriage licenses. every time we saw him, he would remind us of how many years we had been married (40 years to date!). And he was always right!!

that was how he was. mind like a steel trap.

Doug Wright - August 07, 2022 at 10:42 PM

PO

“ *I have known James Patton for forty years. He has done so much for preserving the history of Huntsville. He is sorely missed. My heart goes out to his wonderful wife. They will be reunited someday. He loved her dearly.*

Pam Olson - August 07, 2022 at 06:49 PM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of James Donald Patton.*



August 07, 2022 at 02:13 PM

BP

“ Beverly Pegoda sent a virtual gift in memory of James Donald Patton



beverly pegoda - August 07, 2022 at 02:04 PM

KH

“ Katherine Hill lit a candle in memory of James Donald Patton



Katherine hill - August 07, 2022 at 02:01 PM

GB

“ Gus, Leonard, Billy and Bonni Bowden purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of James Donald Patton.



Gus, Leonard, Billy and Bonni Bowden - August 07, 2022 at 10:31 AM

JO

“ I remember him when he was county clerk and helped my husband Jim help a couple of our children find data for school science projects. He was very helpful. - Jim and Judy Olson

Judy Olson - August 07, 2022 at 09:37 AM

BW

I Loved James, He was dear friend. My Aunt Bessie raised JAMES. James was the most beautiful man of God. JAMES LOVED people. KNOW matter who they were. James Patton was just like my Family. RIP

Barbara Walker - August 07, 2022 at 12:01 PM

JJ

“ *Huntsville has lost a true treasure. Such a kind, friendly gentleman. He will be missed. I am truly sorry for the loss of James Patton.*

Jeannine Jacoby - August 07, 2022 at 09:24 AM

MW

“ *I am so sorry for your loss. He was such a wonderful man.*



Mellicent Wiley - August 07, 2022 at 08:48 AM

MG

“ *Mary Joyce Archie Gilford lit a candle in memory of James Donald Patton*



Mary Joyce Archie Gilford - August 07, 2022 at 07:53 AM

MG

Will truly miss James Donald Patton's oftentimes hurried, fast pace yet community sensitive spirit. Sharing precious memories of his personal knowledge and close relationships with and of my family relatives. REST now precious....

Mary Joyce Archie Gilford - August 07, 2022 at 08:02 AM

CH

“ James you will truly be missed. Every time we ran in to each other we chatted for at least 30 minutes.
You will be missed telling all past and present Walker County happenings.
You were Walker County’s historian for sure.
Heaven gained another wonderful man.

carolyn cooksey hanselman - August 06, 2022 at 11:52 PM

GK

“ Gayle Spears Kelly lit a candle in memory of James Donald Patton



Gayle Spears Kelly - August 06, 2022 at 10:17 PM

SS

“ Prayers for the family. A remarkable man. RIP James.



Sue Sprott - August 06, 2022 at 09:17 PM

NH

“ I will miss all the Walker county history talks.
Rest in pease James.



Nancy Hopper - August 06, 2022 at 08:09 PM

TD

“ Teresa Dickey lit a candle in memory of James Donald Patton



Teresa Dickey - August 06, 2022 at 06:46 PM

Charlotte Efird

“ Charlotte Efird lit a candle in memory of James Donald Patton



Charlotte Efird - August 06, 2022 at 06:43 PM

VP

“ Vicki Pledger lit a candle in memory of James Donald Patton



Vicki Pledger - August 06, 2022 at 06:21 PM

JB

I will remember James for his great love of this community and the people that have established it throughout the years. He always had a great spirit about him and never met a stranger. He was a great encourager to me and my family. Jesus said to love God and love people, James did both well. Well done thy good and faithful servant! I'll see you soon "cousin".

*- Jason Bay
FBC Huntsville*

JASON BAY - August 06, 2022 at 10:39 PM

VP

“ I first met James when I moved here in 1980. Over the years having run into him at different things and talking to him I have always been amazed by his knowledge of the local history. He always was smiling and spoke to everybody. James was a good Christian man and Huntsville has lost a precious part of Walker Co. May he rest in Peace. Prayers to his family as they mourn the loss of the kind gentle gentlemen.

Vicki Pledger - August 06, 2022 at 06:21 PM

DM

“ Wonderful memories of James during my 16 years of service as Trinity County Clerk. James was a great friend and mentor to all clerks. He will be missed.



Diane McCrory - August 06, 2022 at 06:04 PM

LA

“ My most sincere thoughts and prayers with this family. I always loved having conversations with this truly remarkable man. May you rest in peace, James.



Linda Andrews - August 06, 2022 at 04:45 PM

ME

“ There is no way to share all the wonderful things about this sweet soul of a man. His wit and humor and his compassion for others was second to none. I loved working along side him in county government and being his friend. We love you James. ❤️

Michele Estes - August 06, 2022 at 03:10 PM

JB

“ I have known James most all of my life. He was amazing of all the Walker County knowledge and of the families that started our community. James was very well known and loved by all that knew him. Sending love and condolences to his family.
Jamie Sue & Don Brinegar



Jamie Brinegar - August 06, 2022 at 02:05 PM

HJ

“ Condolences and Prayers to the family and many friends of Mr. Patton. He always had time and a smile to share with everyone. RIP Mr. Patton your present will truly be missed in Walker County



H Jones - August 06, 2022 at 01:02 PM

SH

“ Steve & Dianna Holbrook lit a candle in memory of James Donald Patton



Steve & Dianna Holbrook - August 06, 2022 at 12:46 PM

DP

“ Please know that we are praying for your family. James was a wonderful friend and such a fine example of a Christian man. We love you. Donna and Walter Paschall



Donna Paschall - August 06, 2022 at 12:16 PM

CR

Will miss James on our annual pilgrimage to Huntsville on March 2. James was a terrific individual, a great historian, and a true Texas patriot. Our family dearly loved his boundless energy and good humor.

Claude Rost - August 06, 2022 at 03:56 PM

RB

James was a remarkable man he always had time for others he will be missed by so many Prayers for the family in the loss of James.

Rebecca Byrd - August 07, 2022 at 03:43 PM

MC

I just wish history teachers could have made history as interesting as James ! He knew my aunts and uncles from oldest to youngest ! He helped me MANY times and we will all miss him.

Mark Chalker - August 07, 2022 at 07:42 PM