

LEGACY *of* JAMES O. PAGE



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MAGAZINE



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At Home with Jim

Jane Page offers a glimpse at the man behind the uniform

Jim Page may have spent his life in the public eye, but there was a place he called home. Home was his haven, his inspiration and where his heart resided. A bouquet of flowers when he was away or a card under a pillow always reminded me that he missed being home and being together. Jim was my husband, best friend and confidant. We were blessed with four wonderful children and six magnificent grandchildren ... all made us so proud.

The fire/EMS world, although never far from our thoughts, never saw our enjoyment in walking on the beach, decorating a Christmas tree or taking

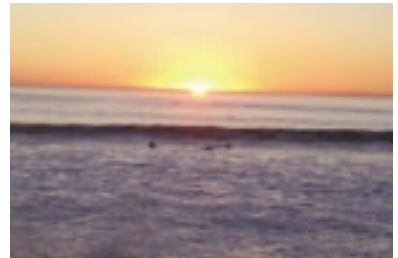
our grandchildren and friends for the Christmas afternoon ride in his fire engine. The world never saw Jim trying to be a "grill chef," walking the dog or enjoying the quiet times. We were fortunate to travel the many backroads of America in our RV and admire and bask in the beauty of our country. The silent moments when we could enjoy each other's company ... memories are priceless and never fade. They will remain in my heart forever.

Jim worked with his electronic assistant (his computer) daily, receiving messages and sending typical "Jim Page Pearls of Wisdom" messages.

Titles meant nothing to Jim. He



Jim and Jane attend a black-tie affair. Jim described Jane as, "the lady who has made it all possible. She has kept the home fires burning and cheerfully supported me through ... thousands of days and nights when I was away on the business of EMS."



Jim's favorite running path—the Carlsbad (CA) shoreline.


Jim's power of recollection amazed me. He remembered names; he remembered dates.



Grandpa Jim holds his very first granddaughter, Olivia Page. Grandma Jane holds their two littlest grandchildren, Megan Page and Dylan Ries. Pondering the new pecking order is grandson Derek Ries, sitting and playing by himself.

enjoyed people and sharing their messages, especially when they were receptive to new and proactive concepts. Jim's power of recollection amazed me. He remembered names; he remembered dates: Ask what he was doing June 16, 1984, and he could relate in great detail that particular day. Amazing!

Jim loved running miles in shorts and shoes on sunny winter days at the edge of the Pacific Ocean. He loved his life. He loved his family, and we loved him in return.

Jim left all of us a legacy to live and love life as he did. The smile, the laughter, the gentle touch. I'm so very thankful we had our time to share. He is missed. 

Lasting Legacy

The life & times of Jim Page

Shortly after the Sept. 16, 2004, memorial service for Jim Page, where 1,000 friends, family members and colleagues had gathered to honor him, I traveled to the East Coast to speak at a large conference. When Jim's death was acknowledged at a keynote address, I heard a young EMT sitting near me whisper to her friend, "Who was Jim Page?"

Answering that question in a few words is like trying to contain the mercury from a broken thermometer in one place. Yes, he was a lifelong firefighter, a dedicated fire chief, an innovative administrator, a prolific author, a commanding speaker, a generous and articulate attorney, and a loving husband,

in the Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACoFD), who often told him to stop his push for change.

But Jim was driven by his vision and continued to push. He was a crafty opportunist, restless and impatient with rusty traditions and relentless in his pursuit of changes that could save lives and improve the service we render to our "customers."

The TV series *Emergency!* is an example of how Jim seized an opportunity to showcase the new LACoFD paramedic teams, cement their role in the department and show the American public the level of prehospital care they could (and should) have available to them.


Jim was never afraid to move on when

his project in New York and moved to Basking Ridge, N.J., where he took over leadership of the Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT) Foundation and produced programs, documents and films that put ALS and CPR in front of, and on the minds of, the American public. It was here that Jim produced the award-winning film, *A Life in Your Hands*.

While at the ACT Foundation, Jim made a decision that would forever change the EMS profession. He decided to launch a professional journal to spread the word about good (and bad) occurrences in EMS system development. This decision resulted in the birth of *JEMS*.

Jim wanted *JEMS* to offer clinical and administrative content that readers could not get anywhere else. To do this, he recruited the sharpest, and sometimes most controversial, people to write for the journal. This led to watershed articles on such topics as emergency medical dispatch (1981), system status management (1982), do-not-resuscitate orders (1983), interim standards for AEDs (1985), provider stress and suicide (1988), the need for a reevaluation of the role fire departments played in EMS (1989), the impact of violence on emergency responders (1990), the evaluation of care through continuous quality improvement (1993) and many others.

JEMS also offered Jim a unique platform to use his wisdom, wit and experience to editorialize on employer injustices, bureaucratic quagmires, inconsistent curricula, innovative programs and boneheaded concepts. He had the rare ability to weave words into a powerful punch when necessary and earned the respect and admiration of both friend and foe. NAEMT honored him by dubbing *JEMS* "The Conscience of EMS."

This special legacy document allows us to give you a more complete picture of Jim Page and what his vision, devotion and achievements have meant for you, me and countless providers, administrators and patients throughout the world. He has left this earth, but his spirit and mission will remain with us forever. 

Jim was able to convince his peers that they could do much more.

father and grandfather. But for those who didn't know him, a few more words are needed to explain who Jim Page was.

Foremost, Jim was always a compassionate public servant who had an unparalleled vision for improving and expanding EMS and the fire service. Impressed as a child with the role firefighters played in his community, he longed to be one. With his trademark tradition of precision planning and timing, Jim filled out his application for the Monterey Park (Calif.) Fire Department on his 21st birthday. As a firefighter, he soon realized that the public often called us for assistance at the most unusual times and for the most unusual reasons.

As a visionary and innovator, Jim was able to convince his peers, in his subtle but calculated manner, that they could do much more than just quell the red devil at a structure fire. He led by example, showing that performing CPR, taking blood pressures and administering oxygen could enhance service and the public's image of firefighters.

While advancing these new techniques and tools, Jim was often viewed as a rebel by some of his fellow officers

he felt he had achieved as much as he could in his positions. In L.A. County, when his superiors told him his involvement in the show *Emergency!* and his push for paramedics and improved EMS delivery had likely cost him the opportunity for further advancement in the LACoFD, Jim left the department and moved on to another challenge as chief of the North Carolina Office of EMS.

Although not fully appreciated at the time, programs Jim launched in North Carolina would later become examples for the rest of the country. But when he would not back down on his push for EMT training and refused to allow oral examinations for EMT candidates who couldn't read, he was forced to resign under political pressure. Discouraged but not defeated, Jim took a position as executive director for Lakes Area EMS, Buffalo, N.Y., and served as chief administrator of a federally funded project to upgrade and improve emergency services in an eight-county region of upstate New York. This job left a lasting impression on Jim, showing him the unique aspects of EMS offered by volunteer agencies.

In December 1973, Jim completed

The Gravity of Charm

Never underestimate the power of sincerity

Try to describe the Grand Canyon to someone who's never seen it, and you'll likely fall woefully short. Words, pictures, movies—none of them truly capture the Canyon's impact. It's a mighty impressive natural phenomenon, and words just won't cut it. You have to stand at the edge of the Canyon with your own two feet and experience it in person.

We face similar difficulty when trying to describe Jim Page. Words can't present the entire, wonderful truth about him. It's easy to list the various aspects of his career and his numerous accomplishments, but the magic of his character existed in intangible traits that had nothing to do with his being a fire service/EMS legend but had everything to do with his becoming one. His charm, intelligence, wit and commitment to doing the right thing had just as profound an impact on the emergency response industry as fire-based EMS had. Anyone who knew Jim can tell you these things, but like any natural phenomenon, you needed to experience Jim in person to get the full effect. The people who contributed to this supplement had that honor.

Jim's amiable nature transcended his imposing physical stature. For that reason, people looked up to him rather than up at him. He exuded a magnetic charm, and his warmth tugged on people like gravity. I liked being in his orbit, and I enjoyed watching other people get drawn in. I saw it at countless trade shows. Shy, nervous or starstruck firefighters would approach our booth with great trepidation, excited to meet their hero but a little unsure about the rules of engagement. They'd hang back for a count or two, then Jim would break into a cheerful grin: "Hi, I'm Jim Page!

Where are you from?" After a five-minute conversation, those shy, nervous firefighters would leave the booth feeling proud, inspired and self-assured. Jim's time and attention helped people shed their perceived limitations. He never focused on past mistakes or indiscretions; he was all about what good things were possible. People walked away from encounters with Jim feeling better and more hopeful than before.

The gravity of Jim's charm wasn't limited to the little guys; it extended way up the ladder of success. I witnessed this firsthand at the 2003 Congressional Fire


helped the *über*-experienced relive the joy of seeing the fire department as a new thing. He always said he was a company officer at heart.

Jim was proud of his fire service heritage, and he's the only man I know who was big enough to plant one foot firmly in fire service tradition while having the other striving toward a better, brighter future. Magically, he did it without ostracizing anyone. In Jim's eyes, the best of the past and the hope of the future weren't mutually exclusive; they complemented one other. For that reason, he truly embodied the modern

He's the only man I know who was big enough to have one foot planted firmly in fire service tradition while having the other striving toward a better, brighter future.

Service Institute (CFSI) dinner in Washington, D.C. The cocktail reception preceding the dinner is a sea of hand-shakers, back-slappers and purposeful networking. But Jim wasn't the networking kind; he was far too unaffected. I watched—amused—as countless VIPs were sucked in by his broad smile. They'd approach Jim professionally, with a firm handshake and a formal greeting. But pretense was short-lived in his presence. Within seconds, they'd be doubled over, laughing with Jim—a fireman's fireman—who had just relayed a story about an engineer named Stubby and the unfortunate, accidental destruction of public property. Like it or not, he would transport old salts back to a time and place where change happened at the company level, where the true reward came after the call when you helped someone in a big or small way. He

American firefighter: respectful of tradition, but looking forward to the positive changes that lie ahead.

The following pages detail the imprint Jim left on our industry. Although we could write volumes about his contributions, I'll remember him mostly as my mentor and friend. When I think of Jim now, I'm taken back to the day following the CFSI dinner when he gave me a walking tour of D.C. A tireless tour guide, Jim dragged me up and down the length of the Washington Mall twice. I saw a week's worth of monuments in eight hours with a man who lived four lifetimes in one. As the shadows grew long, my legs grew weary, and I raced to keep up with this man whose stride was twice as long as my own. I'll spend a good portion of my remaining days trying to keep pace with the example he set. I think we all will. 

First, He Changed Everything

Jim's fire service colleagues celebrate his life, legacy & vision
of what the fire service could be



Kick the Big Door Wide Open

By Alan V. Brunacini, Chief, Phoenix Fire Department

The other day, I became transfixed and temporarily paralyzed. My wife and I were stopped at an intersection, and I watched in wondrous awe as a brand new Phoenix Fire Department pumper drove past us. Nothing in the world compares to the sight and noise of—and emotion evoked by—a full-dressed fire engine and all its response equipment clearing the way. Silver eagles, gold leaf and chrome bells set against high-gloss red paint, along with the sounds of an angry, impatient “Q,” a stuttering air horn and a downshifting, howling diesel engine create the most absolutely religious experience possible. Finally, my wife gently nudged me, “We can go now; they are gone.”

As I came to and drove on, the experience caused me to consider a set of ongoing thoughts I’ve been having regarding the loss of Jim Page. I’m trying to relate to what he has done for our service and how we must somehow continue his efforts. A lot has already been said, and I sincerely believe a lot more will be said as we all reflect on how he has changed what we do, how we do it and what we have become. I think it will take a long time for us to realize his effect.

As I watched the red-lights-and-siren paramedic pumper go by, I realized they were going on an EMS call. (I was eavesdropping on the dispatch channel on my trusty old scanner.) It suddenly struck me that if I had watched that same company BJP (*before* Jim Page) respond on 10 calls, they would have been going to protect some piece of property on pretty much all 10 of those calls. AJP (*after* Jim Page), eight of those 10 responses would deliver service to a human. Before, the “customer” was a building that was hosting a physical problem. After, it was a person who was hosting a *human* problem.

Very simply, Jim persuasively and personally led us from within—as a highly credible insider—to use our decentralized resources, highly trainable personnel, red-lights-and-siren rolling stock, well-established local deployment system and (most of all) trust-based reputation to help Mrs. Smith in a new way. He took us to the next level of keeping the promise we make her when we become firefighters: We will protect her from

whatever is wrecking her day.

BJP, we pretty much selected out any problem that did not involve the products of combustion in some way. As a young, on-duty firefighter, I watched through the venetian blinds of a fire station as the local mortician unloaded a rolling cot out of the back of a hearse (!) to transport our across-the-street neighbor and his heart attack to the hospital. I asked my captain if we should help them. He said, “If they want us to respond, they will dispatch us. We open the big door when they tell us to open the big door. Sit down and shut up, kid.” (Sorry Mrs. Smith.)

My fire department’s reaction to helping our neighbor creates a historic picture of the system that Jim Page changed. In fairness to my old captain, he was just

He persuasively & personally led us from within—as a highly credible insider—to use our decentralized resources, highly trainable personnel & well-established local deployment system ... to help Mrs. Smith in a new way.

a reflection of the old-time system he worked in. Long-term, autocratic non-empowerment produces severe *psychosclerosis* (hardening of the head).

A lot of energy, attention and confusion are always directed toward the process of change. Not very much real change stuff gets packaged up and delivered until and unless some change agent actually shows up. I have noticed as I trudged through my career that change agents come in all sizes and shapes. A major part of change-agent effectiveness is based on their personal motivation. Asking someone else to change almost instantly becomes a very intense, interpersonal process. All bets are off during periods of major change. This is when uncertainty and vulnerability start flying around the people, places and things affected by that major change.

Based on the intensity of the process, it doesn’t take the *changees* very long to figure out where the changers are coming from. It also does not take those same changees very long to decide for themselves if they believe in and trust the

change agents. The changees develop a reaction based on how sane, self-serving and genuinely committed they think the change agent is. The change agent cannot produce an amount of change that is larger than the confidence of those who must act out that change.

Jim created the most profound transition that has ever occurred in the American fire service and has left an incredible legacy that will last virtually forever. The effect of his efforts produces an example of what an effective (and very special) change agent actually looks like. Most of us don’t have anywhere close to the personal tools Jim came from the factory with, but examining his approach might bring out the best in us—and cause me to miss him even more.

1. Jim’s foundation and launching pad was having been a street firefighter. He validated himself as a member of a very effective, active and progressive fire department (Los Angeles County Fire Department). He had great respect, knowledge, skill and affection for our service. His pride was lifelong and very apparent. Simply, he was one of us. He changed us because he loved us, not because he was ashamed of us. He was consistently motivated to do the right thing for the right reason. He did not want us to stop fighting fires—he only wanted us to use those same resources more creatively.

2. Like all really effective change agents, he was able to visualize in a futuristic way what we could be. He saw the potential for how our basic resources could be used to deliver an expanded level of service. He had the personal skill (brains and guts) to translate and transfer that vision to a wide variety of fire service and medical system players. He effectively was able to practice the “art of the possible.”

3. He increased his capability, qualifications and personal influence beyond his fire officer experience. Becoming an author, a lawyer, a publisher and a businessman all increased his influence and credibility. He was able to make a bigger deal, with a wider range of people, higher up the food chain. He maximized the personal gifts given to him and used those abilities to create a better world.

4. He created an enormous amount of fire service and medical system change over a long period of time. He was very patient. He connected to and converted one person and one fire department at a time. He quietly and effectively led the EMS parade by assembling all the paraders. Eventually, all of us found ourselves happily marching behind him to a better place.



Jim changed the fire service for the better one department—and one person—at a time.

5. Jim was a durable player who understood that making changes in the real world involves a combination of winning some and losing some. He knew the only place you could change the score was on the field, and that's where he played. We are effective to the extent we can keep going when we get set back. Pipsqueaks dance around the safe, no-risk edges of the system, making cosmetic changes. Jim took on the dangerous, exciting center of our day-to-day local routine and created a huge change in the most basic and durable part of our system—the composition of our local, up close and personal response activity. Simply, he changed what we'd opened the "big door" for. BJP—100% fire; AJP—80% EMS and 20% fire. Wow!

The next time you hear a siren, see the blinkin' lights, and pull over to let a lit-up fire truck go by, look real close. Somewhere on the truck, you will see the reflection of a bald-headed guy, with a twinkle in his eye and an impish grin. It's Chief Page riding with us to go help Mrs. Smith. He's there on every call.

You Can Go Home Again

By Tim Murphy, Chief, Monterey Park Fire Department

About 10 months ago, I was working uncharacteristically late in my office after the staff had gone for the day. Suddenly, I became aware of a presence. When I looked up from my computer, I saw through my window the face of an old acquaintance, Jim Page.

As the current fire chief in the city of Monterey Park, Calif.—a position the esteemed Mr. Page used to hold—I immediately considered whether to secure the premises more tightly, figuring he must have come to reclaim his former position. But I gave in to that bright, mustached smile and invited him in.

In typical Jim Page fashion, he wasn't there for himself, but wanted to say hello and to encourage me to take a good, hard look at some folks who were applying for a position within our department and for whom he had great accolades. We spoke about some of his days with Monterey Park, and he related anecdotes that brought me to my knees in laughter. Then as quickly as he arrived, he was gone. On to some other project, I'm sure. When Jim Page left your presence, there was always a momentary energy vacuum. Things seemed quieter than before his arrival, and you knew some-one special had just left the building.

Jim Page grew up in the city of Monterey Park, and he used to tell the story of walking by the fire stations here as a young man and stopping to speak with the firefighters. No doubt, the mind that was always working overtime made some insightful inquiries of those firefighters with regard to their chosen profession. He gave credit to those talks for driving him to become a firefighter. On his 21st birthday—the earliest allowable time—Jim Page submitted his application to join the fire department of the city of Monterey Park. To its credit, the city hired him on Aug. 7, 1957, and helped launch a career that would touch many lives and would change the face of the fire service in the United States.

Never one to pay too much homage to the status quo, Jim headed for new opportunities after spending slightly more than two years with our department. He accepted a position with our neighbor, Los Angeles County Fire Department, where he spent many years and where he advanced to the rank of battalion chief and became nationally

recognized for his work with the new fire department paramedic program. Jim eventually left Los Angeles County to head across the country to North Carolina and new challenges.

The old adage says, "One can never go home." Jim dispelled that myth by returning to Monterey Park as the fire chief on April 14, 1986. The Jim Page legend permeates the department to this day. Prior to his arrival, the city manager had suggested that a public safety director position could head both the police and fire departments. At this time, recruitment efforts for a new fire chief were well underway, and James O. Page was at the top of the list. His interviews were apparently persuasive. The public safety director concept was discarded, and Jim was given the reins of this outfit, which he immediately began to change.

Jim's organization and his ability to articulate his plans quickly won the confidence of the rank and file, as well as the city council. He borrowed and built upon his earlier experiences and proposed that the city purchase two rescue transport ambulances. Through a combination of hiring new personnel and sending some of the existing firefighters to paramedic school, he quickly established one of the finest prehospital care programs in the county. He recognized that with two acute care hospitals calling Monterey Park their home, patient care could only benefit from dedicated ALS units.

Jim wrote the ambulance subscription program we still employ today. This program gives the poor and indigent access to emergency medical care and transport for a fraction of the cost of a single patient transport.

Not one to let the grass grow under his feet, Jim Page led this department for approximately three years, after which he left to devote more time to his next venture, Jems Communications. But his pride and leadership remain. Many of the paramedic firefighters he hired are the current officers, and each one carries a portion of the Page philosophy, leadership and work ethic within him, and we are a better department for that.

Goodbye, Jim! Your friends at Monterey Park thank you for enriching our lives and will miss you.

The Glass Half Empty

By John Price, Captain (ret.), Los Angeles County Fire Department

On the morning of Sept. 5, while having breakfast with my wife, I received a phone call from a close friend on the Los Angeles County Fire Department. Chief Jim Page had died suddenly the previous day, my friend told me. The shock and disbelief were overwhelming. I could not believe that a man with Jim's passion for life and physical fitness could have died. This was the man I looked up to as a rookie firefighter and who served as my mentor on the Los Angeles County Fire Department. This was the chief I knew for 35 years and loved because of the differences he made in the fire service across this great nation.

I first ran into Captain Jim Page on a major wildland fire in the Malibu, Calif., area in 1969. Page was assigned as the strike team leader, and I was a firefighter on one of the engines assigned to that strike team. I can still remember Jim taking our whole crew and walking to get the layout of the surrounding area. He would quote his battalion chief, the legendary Harvey Anderson, and say, "You gotta get close to nature out here, boy. Nothing is learned from the seat on that rig. You gotta walk these trails and fireroads." Jim practiced what he preached and always led the way.

In 1970, I had promoted to engineer and was assigned to Station 36 in the city of Carson. Soon after my appointment, Jim arrived as the newly appointed

battalion chief. Page had been assigned to Battalion 7 and was charged with coordinating the countywide implementation of paramedic rescue services. Paramedic training was in full swing at Harbor General Hospital, and the paramedic program was expanding at a rapid rate throughout Los Angeles County. All of this was due to L.A. County Supervisor Kenneth Hahn and the vision of Jim Page. Jim could always see ahead of others and had the keen mind needed to guide programs through political and administrative quagmires. Firefighters love to fight fire, but Jim would always remind us that our ability to maintain

Jim always had the vision to see ahead of others & the keen mind to guide programs through political & administrative quagmires.

our wages and benefits would be driven by EMS.


During this same time, Jim was assigned as the technical consultant and writer for the *Emergency!* television series. (Also see "Lights! Camera! Sirens! Action!" p. 12.) Jim wasn't happy unless he had at least three or four irons in the fire. Jim involved everyone around him—and Station 36—in *Emergency!* I was the engineer on the pilot episode,

which was filmed at a burned-out lighting company. There we were in the middle of the night, fire burning, engines responding to the scene, and I was at the pump panel doing my thing. They called for a break, so I took the pump out of gear and ran the rig at idle. When we got back to filming, I forgot to put the pump in gear, so of course there was no water coming out of the hoselines. Bob Cinader yelled, "Cut! Cut!" I was mortified. Jim said aloud, "Don't worry. Even Jack Webb forgets a few lines on occasion." Thanks to Jim, I was able to participate in at least three other *Emergency!* episodes. Jim always knew

how to make people feel at home, comfortable and a part of the team.

By 1973, I had promoted to captain and was assigned to Truck 3 in East Los Angeles. The promotion was due, in large part, to Jim's mentoring and example. Around the middle of 1973, Jim left the department for the East Coast, where he remained for the next 10 years. Our relationship continued with occasional phone calls, cards or letters. In 1984, Jim returned to California. Soon after, he was hired as Chief of the Monterey Park Fire Department.

As I sit in my office today and reflect on one of the most rewarding professional relationships of my career, I thank God that he brought James O. Page into my life. I don't believe anyone can adequately describe in words this husband, father, lawyer, editor and brother firefighter. It's like trying to put your arms around the Empire State Building. He possessed so many wonderful traits: physical stature, a booming voice, knowledge, honesty and humbleness. Jim was a class act. He advanced the fire service, placed EMS in its proper place and will never be forgotten.

Without you Jim, the glass will be half empty. Thanks for 35 years. 



Jim served with the Los Angeles County Fire Department from 1959 to 1973. During his tenure, he worked as a firefighter, firefighter-specialist, fire captain and battalion chief.

The Road Less Traveled



Jim Page's amazing tour of small-town fire & EMS

It wasn't much of a surprise to those who knew Jim Page when he announced in 2002 that he was going to buy a custom, heavy-duty RV and spend the next few years visiting small towns and fire departments across the United States.

The image of Jim Page on a coast-to-coast RV trip may have struck some as odd. After all, Jim was so, well, worldly. He had accomplished great things, was well-educated, had a better voice than James Earl Jones, navigated Capitol Hill with grace and ease, had traveled 3 million air miles, visited each of the 200 most populous U.S. cities (in the years since launching the *JEMS* annual survey and report about the same cities) and more. He was on a first-name basis with anyone who was someone in fire and EMS. Jim always looked damn good in any one of his three-piece suits.

So what would Jim Page be doing driving around in an RV?

First, you have to know that Jim was an unmatched champion for the little

guy. You saw it every time he served as counsel (often *pro bono*) for an EMT, paramedic or firefighter being wrongfully charged, and you could see it in Jim's intolerance for corporate scoundrels and bureaucrats alike.

In the same way he was an advocate for the underdog, Jim was somehow drawn to smaller towns and departments. (Maybe it also had something to do with the fact he spent time in rural Kansas in his youth.) Jim saw that the smaller towns and rural areas were where the rubber literally met the road for the vast majority of fire and EMS agencies and personnel. He wanted to be there.

Jim's unyielding curiosity and drive simply wouldn't allow him to while away his retirement on a bass boat or the golf course (never!). He was among the most knowledgeable people I've ever met, and yet he was always pushing himself to learn more and impart that knowledge to others. (An example of Jim's insatiable appetite for self-learning was when, a

few years ago, after leaving his indelible mark on EMS and fire, Jim became a volunteer with the California Highway Patrol. He said he was partially motivated to find out "what makes cops tick," but it's not hard to speculate on what Jim's impact on law enforcement might have been if the state hadn't ended the program only months later.)

Of course, as noted elsewhere in this supplement (see "The Man & His Machines," p. 26), Jim simply loved both air (he was a pilot, too) and land-bound machines of all shapes and sizes. So it goes without saying that not just any RV would do for Jim; it had to be challenging to drive, and it wouldn't hurt if it was about the size of a fire truck.

Finally, Jim also related that this trip would be a way to spend quality time with his wife, Jane, their dog, Maggie, and other members of his family while on road trips. He knew that if he didn't get out of the office and on the road, he

would never break himself away from his tireless work of writing, speaking, practicing law, consulting and answering dozens (and sometimes hundreds) of calls, e-mails and letters a day from fire and EMS personnel all over the country. As usual, Jim's own writing says it best. Here's what he

wrote in his Burning Issues column in *FireRescue Magazine* in April 2004.

We realize most of you don't live and work in big cities. Instead you make things safe in small towns and suburbs rarely noticed by fire-service magazines. You explore new and better ways to fight fire and rescue people with very limited resources. ... This adventure is supposed to combine retirement and adventure with relaxation and just enough work to exercise the gray matter, satisfy my curiosity and share information with others.

Jim's itinerary was based on Norman Crampton's 1993 book, *The 100 Best Small Towns in America*. His goal was to travel for a few weeks, visiting towns on his list—and any other interesting sites along the way. He would return home for a couple of months and then begin the next adventure. At the time of his passing, Jim had visited 30 of the 100 small towns (see map).

It was important to Jim that the visits be unannounced. He wanted to see the firehouses and personnel in their "natural state." (Can you imagine mopping the vehicle bay and looking up to see the Chief James O. Page walk through the door?) So, when the Jems staff asked him if we could paint "*FireRescue Magazine* Tour" on the side of his rig, NASCAR-style, he politely declined.

Most often, what Jim saw on his journey impressed him. He saw fire and EMS personnel who took pride in their work, equipment, stations and apparatus. They were professional and represented the best of EMS and fire services.

But Jim also saw a side of modern fire and EMS he found disturbing—and he didn't hesitate to call out unprofessional behavior in the stories he wrote about his travels. Jim saw firefighters in the Pacific Northwest at a highway traffic accident arrive riding the tailboard, some without PPE. And he watched as they proceeded to wash hazardous fluids from the scene into a protected river.

In several states, he saw what he termed "recliner abuse": firefighters in untucked uniforms who wouldn't get up from their La-Z-Boys when Jim rang the bell. Here's an excerpt from Jim's November 2004 Burning Issues column (one of four he submitted prior to his death):

If members of a fire company routinely occupy the recliners between the daylight hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., their leader has failed them and the community they have the honor of serving. A harsh judgment? Maybe so. But watching Oprah or sleeping through an afternoon movie cannot prepare you for the harsh realities of a post 9/11 world.

Overall, Jim saw more positives than negatives. He called Jems from the first stop of his trip, the Northern California city of Ukiah. Jim was excited. He said the department had staged an impromptu demonstration, and that he would be spending time with the chief later in the day.

His enthusiasm was contagious. The rest of the staff of *FireRescue* and *JEMS* eagerly awaited his calls from the road. He was always quick to tell us which magazines he saw on station coffee tables and relayed feedback he gathered that we could put to use immediately.

Although most of us on such a journey would have simply met folks along the way and shared some stories and laughs, that wasn't Jim's style or ethic. Prior to setting off on his journey, Jim had developed a 57-page questionnaire, which he personally went through with each chief. The results of those surveys were compiled into a 66-column matrix. In addition to his anecdotal findings, Jim wanted to collect hard data that would help him (and *FireRescue* and *JEMS*) determine issues and trends in fire and EMS nationwide.

The information he gathered included the department budget, number of active paid and volunteer members, ISO rating, population, total square miles, response time, total annual responses, structure fires, EMS calls, hazmat, 9-1-1 system, average EMS bill, whether they'd received FIRE Act grants, NFIRS participation, and more.

At the time of his passing, surveys had been completed for more than half the departments he had visited. Our staff is still trying to determine how best to fulfill Jim's vision for the surveys going forward. In the meantime, we've collected Jim's writings on the site visits he completed



Jim Page with his 30-foot long, 2003 Haulmark MH-1 Motorcoach. In true Page style, this custom rig features a Caterpillar C-12 engine, 6-speed Allison transmission and a Jake brake.

and posted them at www.jems.com/jimpage/roadlesstraveled. We will post the survey data as more are returned and assembled.

While this project was, in context, only a sliver of Jim's life's work, it's telling about the sort of man he was. He was someone who wanted to hear *everyone's* stories. Someone who just plain loved big trucks and the sound of that Jake brake and Cat C-12 engine and the feeling of being behind the wheel. Someone who could have spent his time being wined and dined by big-wig politicians and VIPs exclusively, but instead chose to spend it with common folk like you and me.

Someone who was a fireman's fireman down to his bones. Someone who, after a lifetime of dedication to his professional calling, had finally found a way to bring his kids and grandkids along for the ride, to share his passion and joy with them.

It's sad that Jim's cross-country trip was cut short—for his family, for fire and EMS ... for all of us. I can't think of many folks who would dream up a far-fetched idea like personally visiting 100 small-town fire departments from coast to coast, gathering scores of data and stories, all with the intent of imparting that knowledge for the betterment of fire and EMS and the citizens we serve.

In fact, I can think of only one person. [TOP](#)

Jeff Berend is publisher/general manager of Jems Communications/Elsevier. Jeff was lucky enough to have the opportunity to work with Jim Page for 12 years and never took for granted how fortunate he was to be in Jim's presence.

Lights! Camera! Sirens! Action!

Jim Page's impact on *Emergency!* & its influence over early paramedic system development worldwide

On May 11, 1971, television producer/actor Jack Webb attended a meeting of NBC officials in Burbank, Calif., and proposed a new series about rescue. Two of his previous TV ventures, *Dragnet* (starring himself as LAPD Sergeant Joe Friday) and *Adam 12*, had been successful, so NBC planners gave him the verbal OK to start putting together a two-hour movie for television and to use the movie as the world premier of an ongoing series of weekly episodes.

Webb asked writer/producer Robert A. Cinader to get started on research for the series. Cinader contacted Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACoFD) Public Information Officer Dick Friend and told him they needed someone who could do some research and writing for them.

Coincidentally, Jim Page's manuscript for his first book—a text on fire company supervision—was on Friend's desk, waiting for official review before publication. So Friend gave Cinader Jim's name and told him he was on duty at Station 7 in West Hollywood.

Cinader meets Page

By 3 p.m., Jim, Friend and Cinader were seated at the kitchen table in Fire Station 7. Jim was the "C" shift captain at the station. The crew mesmerized Cinader with details of their first-in attack on the 1970, 10-story Playboy Club fire, the most challenging call of their careers. The fire was knocked down 28 minutes after they received the alarm. They immediately had Cinader's attention and respect.

Cinader then went to Jim's office to discuss his need for a researcher. Jim quickly realized that Cinader wasn't

really sure what he was looking for. In fact, he wasn't really sure what rescue was all about. Jim thought it would be difficult to present a variety of complex rescues that would keep a television audience excited on a weekly basis. So he wasted no time telling him about the department's exciting new paramedic program.

From the day the first six LACoFD firefighters started training to be paramedics (in September 1969), a lot of people assumed that they, and the entire program, would fail. So Jim wasn't surprised (or deterred) when he tried to tell Cinader about the six bright young firefighters who were reading ECGs, starting IVs, pushing drugs and defibrillating hearts and found Cinader wasn't interested. "America's not ready to watch people have heart attacks on TV," Cinader said.

The rescue stories began to emerge, and Jim wrote a short one- to two-page summary of each. But, before long, the limits of the concept became obvious. There were only so many kinds of cave-ins, building collapses and similar calamities that could be depicted without encountering potentially boring similarities.

After several frustrating weeks of research, Jim turned in his work, about 50 scenarios, around which fully developed stories of physical rescue situations could be written.

Opportunity knocks: Jim's promotion & EMS assignment

At the time, Jim was waiting for his bar exam results, and his name was at the top of the eligibility list for promotion to battalion chief. The promotion occurred on July 15, 1971, and he was officially licensed as a



Jack Webb and Battalion Chief Jim Page watch as firefighter "actors" perform flawlessly during the filming of the *Emergency!* world premier film.

California lawyer 13 days later.

His assignment was Battalion 7, headquartered at Station 36, about a mile from Harbor General Hospital. In addition to his other duties, he was assigned to work with the new paramedic program. It was his dream come true.

Station 36 actually had more paramedics than needed to staff its rescue unit so Jim assigned one of them, Dale Cauble, to serve as his aide for the first few weeks of his new assignment.

Jim hooks Cinader with a few ride-alongs

During his first week as a battalion chief, Jim received a surprising call from Cinader reporting that Webb and NBC were getting closer to an agreement on the proposed TV series, but had concluded it would be impossible to sustain a series about physical rescue situations; they were interested in Jim's proposal



Jim Page and a host of talented and dedicated LACoFD personnel worked with actors Randolph Mantooth (left) and Kevin Tighe (right) to turn *Emergency!* into a professional depiction of ALS that helped advance system development throughout the world.

that the series feature paramedics in field rescues and dramatic medical situations. America *was* ready to watch people have heart attacks on TV.

Jim quickly invited Cinader to ride with him at Battalion 7. Cinader accepted the offer, and the trio began to show up at medical incidents throughout the district. Normally, chiefs didn't roll on medical calls, but Jim wanted to make sure Cinader saw enough to make his TV series accurate and authentic.

The ride-alongs excited Cinader and allowed him to see and hear about several incidents that would affect the design and content of *Emergency!* For example, he witnessed several encounters with a private ambulance service that were openly antagonistic to the paramedics.

Station 127, a short distance from the San Diego Freeway, was selected as the show's station. Coincidentally, an exact duplicate of Engine 127 was based at Station 60, on the grounds of Universal Studios. During the first year and a half of the series, this proved very convenient for the filmmakers.

What's in a name?

Early in October 1971, Webb made his major casting decisions. He selected his ex-wife, Julie London, to play the role of Carol Bebout, the real-life critical care unit nurse at Harbor General who had trained the first group of paramedics. Her TV name would be Dixie McCall.

Bobby Troup (London's current husband) was selected to play the role of a physician. The real-life role of Dr. J. Michael Criley was to be depicted by actor Robert Fuller. The two principal paramedics in the show were to be played by Universal contract actors Randolph Mantooth and Kevin Tighe.

About the time these casting decisions were occurring, Dale Cauble, who had been hired by Webb's staff to review the script, informed Jim that Webb had decided to name the "high-energy" paramedic (to be played by Mantooth) "Jim Page." Web had often used the real names of some LAPD personnel in the *Dragnet* series.

Jim met with Webb the next day, expressed his appreciation for the honor of having a TV character share his name, but explained that his boss already thought he was too visible with the program. Webb changed the subject without addressing his concerns. The next day, however, the character initially named "Jim Page" became "John Gage."

Those famous radio tones

During the filming of stock footage at Station 127, fire alarms had been received over the selective calling radio alarm unit, which was activated by a two-tone series of radio-transmitted signals that sounded like an out-of-tune organ. If the station's radio monitor was turned on, the first tone would be audible for the entire duration of the alarm.

When the second tone sounded, the selective calling unit immediately recognized it by pitch and set off a claxon-type alarm buzzer in the station. Specific tones for other stations would be audible for their entire length without setting off 127's alarm.

One of the sound technicians for the show was fascinated with the alarm tones. He asked Jim to arrange several alarm tests that he could record. The recording found its way to composer Nelson Riddle, who used the discordant notes as the musical theme for the series.

The first script

On Nov. 11, 1971, exactly six months after the idea for *Emergency!* was conceived, Cauble arrived at Battalion 7 headquarters with the completed world-premier script. It consisted of 113 pages and included 398 scenes. For more than two hours, Jim and Cauble reviewed it, and with each page, they became more concerned about their fire department's image—and their own careers.

In one scene, the writers had a battalion chief attending a cocktail party in uniform. Jim called Cinader and strongly objected. Now one of the gang at Battalion 7, Cinader listened and worked with Jim and Cauble throughout the series to keep the actors' portrayals professional, a bond of trust that has affected the public's image of paramedics and firefighters to this day.

Jack Webb, director

Jack Webb appointed himself director of the world premier. Problem was, Jim



From left: Kevin Tighe, Robert Fuller, Julie London, Bobby Troup and Randolph Mantooth—the actors at the heart of *Emergency!*'s success.



Left: Filming an action scene for an *Emergency!* episode. Above: As paramedics “Johnny and Roy,” Randolph Mantooth (right) and Kevin Tighe influenced a generation, leading many youngsters of the day to choose a career in EMS or the fire service.

felt the script for the industrial fire was unworkable. The depictions appeared to be the work of someone who had never seen a big structure fire. The dialogue that had been written for the incident commander and other fire personnel was overly dramatic and unprofessional. This time, Jim called Webb directly and pleaded his case. “Don’t worry about it,” Webb responded. “I’ll let you straighten it out when we shoot it.”

The first shoot

Early on the morning of Nov. 22, 1971, Fire Station 8 on Santa Monica Blvd. in West Hollywood became a hub of activity as dozens of studio technicians and craftsmen began setting up for the first day of filmmaking.

Webb had cast his long-time friend, Art Ballinger, as the chief. Ballinger had played the role of Capt. Brown (a real person) on several *Dragnet* episodes. Jim learned that Ballinger was 62 years old, two years older than the LACoFD mandatory retirement age. He mentioned that fact to Cinader. “I don’t give a s—!” he snapped. “He looks like a fire chief.” With silver hair, erect bearing and steely eyes, Ballinger *did* look like a fire chief, and his clear and commanding voice completed the image.

The big scene

Meanwhile, preparations continued for the big nighttime fire scene. The studio planned to use six cameras, all shooting simultaneously. The fire would be started, and the fire crews and equipment would arrive on cue and commence the attack while the cameras

rolled. Previously, Jim had visited with all the fire crews that would participate in the event. As they reviewed the pre-fire plan, he emphasized that there would be no margin for error. Even if scenes could be re-shot, the building couldn’t be rebuilt in time to meet the show’s deadline.

Webb arrived at the scene late in the afternoon. Jim briefed him on the plan that had been set up. He also reminded him that the script for this segment of the show remained very unrealistic. “To hell with the script,” Webb shot back. “You direct this thing; do it just like you would a real fire.”

Never timid, Jim headed straight for the TelePrompter operator. (The Tele-Prompter was to be placed off-camera and provide Ballinger with his speaking lines during filming of the fire scene.) It had already been set up with the script’s unrealistic dialogue. In less than 15 minutes, Jim had scrapped the dialogue from the script and replaced it with lines that would make Ballinger sound like a real battalion chief and the fire suppression operation appear more professional to viewers.

Ballinger accepted the changes without complaint. To help keep things under control, Jim also assigned another aide, Don Pierpont, to assist Ballinger and serve as his driver during the filming.

Finally, all was ready, and the fire crews were poised on the apparatus a block away. The special effects technicians lit several propane trays, and the building began to burn. Jim stood next to Webb with his portable radio in hand (see photo, p. 12). As the fire began to

radiate heat and fill the air with a roaring crackle, Webb nodded to Jim. LACoFD’s Frequency 1 suddenly carried an unusual command: “Roll it!”

Without a hitch, firefighters set up their hose lines. Jacks were pulled into place under the ladder truck, and the hydraulic pump whined as the steel ladder rose skyward. Engines moaned in harmony as pumps were engaged and throttles opened.

Minutes passed without a sign of error. Jim looked at Webb, who was grinning widely. Ballinger held a portable radio to his mouth and spoke his new lines as though he’d studied them for days. Finally, as firefighters advanced into the flames with water flowing in a fog pattern from their nozzles, Webb yelled, “Cut!”

Dozens of usually cynical filmmakers and technicians spontaneously let out a raucous cheer of appreciation for the firefighters. Six minutes had passed, captured by six cameras operating from different angles—36 minutes of film in all. “Print it,” Webb commanded as the congratulations and pats on the back continued.

The world premier

After weeks of editing, the world premier was completed with a soundtrack, expert editing and appropriate sound effects. A prerelease showing was scheduled at Universal. In attendance were local politicians, doctors and health officials, fire department representatives, a number of paramedics, members of the cast and most of the production crew.

Knowing that this was probably a once-in-a-lifetime experience, Jim sat

down the next day and wrote the following paragraph to help remember it:

After years of watching police shows in frustration, it was exciting to anticipate a professionally produced depiction of our fire department and our paramedics. When it finally came on the screen, bigger than life, heralded by Nelson Riddle's theme music, the result was emotional for most of us. We still thought the script was a little hokey, but the visual impact of the fire and rescue scenes made up for it. I was seated behind one of my bosses and, when the industrial fire scenes were on the screen, I could have sworn I saw goose bumps on his neck. I was covered with 'em.

On to the series

NBC ordered six one-hour episodes before the movie even completed shooting and scheduled *Emergency!* to start in the mid-season schedule. The one-hour episodes were filmed in a six- to eight-day shooting schedule.

Eventually, a total of 11, 60-minute episodes were filmed and aired that first season, plus the two-hour premier.

Jim's direct influence

Scripts for each of the episodes were sent for review to Chief Houts, Friend, Jim, the LACoFD training section captain and the LACoFD firefighter/paramedic technical advisor assigned to that specific episode. They would then send written

comments and suggestions to Friend for review.

Scripts were also sent to Harbor General Hospital (aka Rampart) for review by A. Jim Lewis, MD, in the paramedic-training department run by Dr. Criley, and by Ron Stewart, MD, medical consultant for the series.

Jim, Friend and a technical advisor would then meet with Cinader and the directors, unit manager, producers, writers, and special effects and wardrobe people every Wednesday for a final production meeting for the episode scheduled to start filming the following Monday. The purpose of this meeting was to review the script—page by page, scene by scene—and make any final changes.

Friend, Jim and the fire department technical advisor would make recommendations for editing, to ensure accuracy and to protect the department's image. Along those lines, Jim and Friend ensured adherence to the LACoFD rules and regulations throughout the development of the series to make it as accurate as possible.

As scripts were being reviewed, one area that Jim and Friend focused on, particularly during the first season, was the banter that occurred in the squad or engine, originally scripted to be filmed while responding to an incident.

In a memo to Cinader, Jim wrote, "Frivolous banter between the men while responding to an emergency situation is, in our opinion, inappropriate.

The fact of a possible life-threatening situation, coupled with the serious business of traversing busy city streets with red lights and siren, precludes light-heartedness, to indicate a possible unsafe response."

This firm stance set a tone of professionalism that reverberated throughout the world as viewers formed their first and lasting impression of paramedics and how they should act. It also set the bar for future paramedics in training. For example, LACoFD policy required all personnel to wear their

helmets while responding to emergencies. So you'll notice that whenever Squad 51 responded to an incident, Johnny and Roy always had their helmets on. This important policy, along with many other policies, was incorporated into the series thanks to Jim Page.

Prior to his retirement from LACoFD in September 1973, Jim penned two *Emergency!* scripts under the pseudonym Jim Owens (to keep himself out of trouble with LACoFD), and one that aired in season three under yet another name. His scripts attempted to show the actual problems within the LACoFD at the time, such as in his "Drivers" and "Trainee" scripts, both of which aired in season two.

During the 1973 writers' strike, Jim, a Writer's Guild member, couldn't submit any scripts under his own name. So, in order to continue the important momentum the show was having in EMS, Jim wrote the "Snakebite" episode and had his sister, not a Writer's Guild member, use an altered first name and her married surname (Carroll Christensen) to submit his script. The character's name in the episode is Ozella Peterson, Jim's aunt.

Emergency! becomes a hit

Emergency! premiered on Jan. 22, 1972, one week after the movie. The enormously popular program would air for six seasons (through September 1977), with 122 original one-hour episodes, and always remained at the top of the ratings, airing against such tough competition as *All In The Family*. By 1976, *Emergency!* was being seen in 41 countries worldwide and in the United States. ^{70P}

A.J. Heightman, MPA, EMT-P, is editor of JEMS. He became a fan of Emergency! at an early age and decided to become a paramedic because of the show. He didn't know Jim Page's major role in the series until he moved to California in 1995 to work for Jems. Jim never bragged about the part he played in Emergency! Contact A.J. via e-mail at a.j.heightman@elsevier.com.

Richard Yokley joined the Bonita-Sunnyside (Calif.) Fire Department in 1972 and retired in December 1999 as an operations chief. Yokley is the author of TV Firefighters and the soon to be published book, tentatively titled, Rampart, This is Squad 51—Everything Emergency! Contact him via e-mail at RichardYokley@comcast.net.



Jim with the restored Squad 51 on its way to the Smithsonian. Also see "The Man & His Machines," p. 26.

Bucking the System

As North Carolina's first state EMS director, Jim faced down politicians & changed the face of EMS

Described by *USA Today* at the time of his passing as “an emergency medical services pioneer,” James O. Page’s lifelong contributions to EMS are unparalleled. A knowledgeable, visionary, articulate and courageous leader, Page was an original thinker, a talented public speaker and a prolific writer whose words reached around the globe. Few people, however, know much about his decision to move to North Carolina in 1973 or his short, but significant, 14-month stint as chief of the North Carolina Office of Emergency Medical Services (NC OEMS). With years of experience as both a firefighter and a chief officer and with a relentless passion for improving patient outcomes, he transformed EMS practices in the tarheel state.

Changes in the wind

In the 1960s, few communities in North Carolina, or the United States, provided adequate emergency medical care. But several years later, the need for a nationwide EMS system became clear. Many factors brought about this shift in focus, including advances in battlefield trauma care and transportation in Korea and Vietnam; material and technological breakthroughs in the U.S. space program; research in automotive safety, cardiac care and resuscitation; and the introduction of new government funding programs, such as Medicare and Medicaid. Several complex EMS system elements were identified by the federal government and were included in the EMS Systems Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-154), which called for the development of comprehensive systems of pre-hospital and hospital-based care.

In the 1970s, North Carolina became one of the first states in the country to begin a statewide, compre-

hensive effort to establish an EMS system in every community, which involved the identification, selection and recruitment of a full-time leader for the newly established NC OEMS.

Jim didn’t come to the attention of North Carolina officials through the routine application process. Instead, he arrived via Hollywood. In 1971, as a newly appointed Los Angeles County Fire Dept. (LACoFD) battalion chief, Jim was responsible for implementing the department’s new paramedic

program and was assigned to interface with Jack Webb and his team. By 1972, all of America had an opportunity to see the LACoFD EMS program in action through the series *Emergency!*

Folks in North Carolina were among those watching the popular program. In fact, much of North Carolina’s work to implement a comprehensive EMS system can be traced to the show.

Because of the nationwide popularity of *Emergency!*, requests flowed into NBC and LACoFD for speakers. At first, the actors in the widely popular program were dispatched. But “... they started passing it down to directors and on down ... to the writers and technical advisors,” Jim said. As a result, when North Carolina’s Buncombe County Rescue Squad called LACoFD for a speaker for the 1973 North Carolina Association of Rescue Squads Convention in Asheville, Chief Page was assigned to the task. But he admitted, “... Quite frankly, at the time I didn’t even know what a volunteer rescue squad was. There were volunteer firefighters, of course, but none that I knew of at the time who specifically did



James O. Page, Chief, Office of Emergency Medical Services (second from left), and North Carolina Governor James Holshouser (right) meet prior to an award event on May 17, 1974.

rescue.” He added, “I jumped at the opportunity since I had never been east of the Mississippi River.”

Of his meeting at the convention with rescue squad volunteers from across North Carolina, Jim said, “They all told me they really wanted more and better training, and that their state wasn’t providing what they needed. I was told about a new state EMS law, and someone in the audience urged me to contact [state officials] about a job.”

Jim was going through some hard times at home in California. He was also concerned about management issues back at the LACoFD, where not everyone was a fan of EMS or the new paramedic program.

“Page, with this paramedic thing, your name is mud,” one senior LACoFD chief had told him. “You really shouldn’t take any more promotional exams. Every time I hear about that paramedic program and you, it’s a problem.”

With this in mind, Jim called a state official about the chief’s role in the NC OEMS while on his trip to North Carolina and was invited to Raleigh for a

briefing on the new state EMS agency and the open leadership position. The briefing came from David Warren, a young attorney from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Institute of Government, who was serving as interim chief of the NC OEMS.

“... I looked at it [the job of chief],” said Jim, “but I was very noncommittal and I went on from Raleigh ... and didn’t think much more about it. I had no interest in the job.”

A near-tragic incident involving an explosion in his motor home on Oct. 11, 1973, caused Jim to rethink his decision. “I started thinking about everything that had happened, mulling it over and over ... Then, it was just like there was a message to me—like things were happening that were driving me toward that job. I said, ‘I’m going to call North Carolina tomorrow morning about that job.’”

Building a team

Jim assumed the role of chief of the NC OEMS on Dec. 19, 1973. To implement the North Carolina EMS program, he needed skilled central and field staff. He inherited some dedicated and talented individuals from various state agencies and recruited several new team members from varied backgrounds and localities. Using fire service titles, assistant chief positions were filled in communications, education, information systems, hospital consultation (i.e., trauma center designation) and similar specialty areas.

With a population of approximately 4.5 million in 1960, North Carolina’s residents were spread between the Appalachian Mountains to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the east, with a distance of some 500 miles separating the two. The state had 100 counties, many of which were extremely isolated. Accordingly, the NC OEMS recruited and based field coordinators in each major geographic region of the state.

From the start, Jim and his team appreciated that EMS field coordinators with local experience would play key roles in generating county-level acceptance. But the state bureaucracy was difficult. A July 12, 1974, memo from Gerald Hinson, Manpower Manager, North Carolina Division of Facility Services, to I.O. Wilkerson, Director of North Carolina Facility Services (to whom Jim reported), states: “Mr. Page’s reaction to the decision I relayed [not to hire a candidate proposed by Page] comes as no surprise to this office, as it

has been consistent with his previous reactions and his incredible lack of regard for established personnel policies and procedures.”

During Jim’s early meetings with state officials, he warned those around him about his leadership style. “I told them I was a hard-driving person that was very impatient—that I wanted to get things done,” Jim said. “I had little patience with bureaucracy and why things couldn’t get done, and I would expect the members of the staff and the EMS advisory committee to support me.”

The good, the bad & the ugly

The system developers knew their task was significant. The NC EMS Act of 1973 called for a statewide system of EMS that included development of and upgrades to training, vehicles, equipment, communications, trauma center designation, medical records and research, air ambulances, etc.

Some elements were far easier than others to implement. Upgrading vehicles and equipment, for example, was encouraged and supported by new federal standards in ambulance design and subsequent nationwide vendor compliance. Federal and state grants in full or

“Page, with this paramedic thing, your name is mud,” one senior LACoFD chief had told him.

partial support of new equipment and vehicle purchases across North Carolina helped many local EMS agencies throughout the 1970s and early 1980s in upgrading or replacing rolling stock, clinical equipment and rescue gear.

But implementing other elements wasn’t as easy. One early agency priority involved training statewide ambulance personnel to be emergency medical technicians (EMTs). Based on federal standards, the EMT course was 81 hours long at the time. In the April 1974 issue of *North Carolina EMS News*, Jim stated: “Creating a comprehensive EMS system in a small, compact, urbanized state would be mainly a matter of dollars. Creating such a system in North Carolina, one of the most rural states in the nation, cannot be accomplished with dollars alone. It involves the personal commitment of nearly 10,000 people, many of who serve their fellow citizens as volunteers.”

Resistance from the start

Political issues surrounding training requirements and the pace set by state law for implementation eventually cost Jim his job. In fact, the EMT training standard almost destroyed the NC OEMS and North Carolina’s overall EMS program.

The NC OEMS’s task of training and certifying EMTs was monumental. No state-sponsored course of its kind had ever been conducted in North Carolina. With the passage of the NC EMS Act of 1973, state government actively enforced ambulance crew training standards for the first time, but a firestorm of opposition grew almost instantly.

Tom Harmelink, Jim’s deputy chief, notes, “Rescue squads and some funeral homes were at the onset the largest problems. In the rescue squads, because they were volunteers, they saw this [EMT training] as an extra burden on many of them. ... There were a large number out there supporting us [NC OEMS], but a very vocal minority saw this as too much to ask.”

But some of Jim’s political supporters and the NC OEMS clearly agreed with the new training requirements. Former North Carolina State Senator O’Neil

Jones says, “You just had to work your way through it with these guys. ... Their response was human nature, and you had to understand that. And it hurt them to be told, ‘Well friend, even though you’ve done this and you’ve been noble, and you are definitely going to heaven when you die, you don’t know a damn thing about CPR.’... What we were trying to do was see that when someone has a wreck somewhere, if you come to the scene, I’ll be glad to give you a medal, but I want somebody working on me who knows how to do it.”

Jim agreed with the overall requirement and quickly proved he was a strong and highly visible champion of EMT training. Several EMS providers responded favorably and began EMT training. But Jim’s pro-training and education posture, as well as the innovative nature of the overall EMS concept, accorded him, as the point man, the unenviable role of political lightning rod.

"What if I [had] arrived, and there was no standard?," Jim reflected. "I think I would have dealt with it like I dealt with a lot of other issues on a fairly informal basis. I would have been much more comfortable not having a deadline, but instead going out and selling the program and having it occur naturally."

EMT training programs were developed throughout the state, with much of the instruction occurring on community college campuses or at EMS stations. In July 1974, *OEMS News* reported, "In a new state EMS program not yet six months old, the NC OEMS will soon certify its 1,000th [EMT]."

But pockets of resistance developed in and around a few rural communities. According to state officials, "Local opposition was organized, highly vocal, media intensive and politically active."

Senator Jones puts the politics in perspective: "The minute we started talking standards, out of the woodwork came the rescue squads. The urban folks gave up pretty much without a fight, but volunteer rescue squads are political powerhouses. And the next thing you know, state senators [were saying], 'Man, you done made the rescue squad mad, and that crowd's worth 5,000 votes. What are you doing to me?'"

NC OEMS field coordinator and volunteer rescue squad member Max Wesson says, "Most of the resistance came from squads that wanted the training, but didn't want anybody telling them they *had* to have it. ... They couldn't determine the difference between providing volunteer service with good training and just providing volunteer service, I guess you would say. You know, they felt like they were volunteering, and they didn't have to be trained any better."

North Carolina Secretary of Human Resources David Flaherty says, "There was a lot of reaction against it, and [State Senator] Nancy Chase was a real advocate for the rescue squad boys, and they weren't hesitant to get her involved against this thing. ... And there was [State Senator and funeral home ambulance owner] Ollie Harris. He was a very strong and close advocate for the squads in his area. ... Right away, this thing went in the face of their people, and Ollie Harris and Nancy Chase saw their volunteers being threatened, and so did a lot of other people. We didn't want that to occur. We wanted their buy-in,

and, frankly, the state would never have enough money [to replace the services provided by volunteers if they were forced out of EMS].

"I was close to Nancy and Ollie and a lot of legislators who were close to their fire departments and rescue squads," Flaherty continues. "They were saying, 'Help, this is gonna hurt us.' ... The thing that gave Ollie and Nancy particular punch was the fact that they weren't looking statewide; they weren't ambitious to run for any office; they were just so damn dedicated that local issues were all powerful with them."

The shame of illiteracy

In retrospect, many officials believe that illiteracy fueled resistance to the new EMS training standards in North Carolina. For the first time, ambulance personnel were required to attend formal classes, read an EMT textbook, and pass written and practical EMT examinations. Early NC OEMS team member Steve Acai points out, "We did have some people [on rescue squads] who couldn't read and write."

The issue extended to volunteer squad leaders. Another NC OEMS official, Bob Bailey, reports, "There were several members who had minimal reading and writing skills. ... [But] it didn't come up formally because, obviously, squad members aren't gonna stand around saying, 'I have a problem reading the newspaper,' or 'I'm not comfortable signing my name to a check.' ... We [the younger members] were not in a position to ask [that] kind of question [of] the elder statesmen."

Political pressure mounted to extend the EMT certification deadline, which Jim was willing to do, and to allow oral examination for EMT candidates, which Jim was not willing to do. Jim told me, "[Secretary Flaherty] really poured on the pressure for a compromise by the NC OEMS on the issue of oral exams."

Deputy Chief Harmelink recalls, "They saw the law as a threat, and they were afraid they couldn't pass the test. Therefore, [they] would not become certified and would lose stature. ... They didn't mind sitting through the program, but they sure didn't want anybody to test their competence. ... I knew people that wanted an oral exam, but we [the NC OEMS] held firm on the issue of no oral testing."

As a direct result of political pressure from isolated rescue squads, I.O.

Wilkerson, on behalf of Secretary Flaherty, asked Jim to resign on Jan. 29, 1975. Jim refused and was therefore terminated.

The aftermath

Colonel Charles A. Speed, former commander of the North Carolina Highway Patrol, replaced Jim Page as chief of the NC OEMS. Like Jim, Colonel Speed was a highly principled man and likewise refused to compromise the EMT training program through oral exams.

At the time of Jim's termination, only months after the EMT training program began, 2,500 EMTs had been trained and certified, and several technical elements of the statewide EMS system were being successfully implemented. By March 1975, the number of certified EMTs statewide climbed to 3,500. By 1977, 13,000 EMTs were certified, and, by 1984, the number of certified North Carolina EMTs had climbed to 50,000.

Reflecting on his firing years later, Jim told me: "Making the rescue squads mad was not a good political thing to do, but I wouldn't do what [some elected officials] told me to do about the EMT testing. ... [They] wanted me to authorize an oral exam to cater to the illiterates, and I wouldn't do it. If I had, I suppose I might still be there. But I would have lost the respect of everybody who'd done it the hard way. I knew the risks involved, and it was really a question of whether I acted like a bureaucrat and avoided risk or believed in my program."

"We pushed and pushed and pushed until it finally got some momentum. I had to offend so many state and elected officials that they fired me. Now I realize my role was to be an ice-breaker to elevate the public's attention to the subject and create enough visibility for EMS that it became a high-priority item."

Being a pioneer means leading from the front. Chief James O. Page did just that all his life. And, in so doing, he forever changed the face of emergency health care in North Carolina and around the globe. ^(TOP)

William K. Atkinson, PhD, MPH, MPA, EMT-P, is president and CEO of WakeMed Health and Hospitals, Raleigh, N.C. Atkinson was mentored by Jim Page and has devoted more than 30 years of his career to improving our nation's emergency care system. The first-person accounts in this tribute were drawn from research he conducted for his dissertation.

A Class ACT

Jim Page's push for improved cardiac care

It was 1980, and I had just completed EMT training in Boston and then moved to New Jersey with three small children in tow. I began to volunteer as a CPR instructor for the American Heart Association (AHA) and also attempted to volunteer on the local first aid squad, which shunned me at first because I didn't have a husband, brother or father in the fire department.

Then I received a complimentary issue of *JEMS*, the *Journal of Emergency Medical Services*—an event, it would turn out, that would change my life. I noticed the *JEMS* office was located in nearby Basking Ridge, and I called to see if I could get a job interview. I was looking for an opportunity to be involved in EMS and write, while still being with my children as much as possible. I sent in my résumé and writing samples and soon received a note from Jim Page, who invited me to come to his office the following week.

I was in awe of Jim from the moment I met him. He had so much intelligence and expertise, and such a commanding presence. At the same time, he connected instantly with everyone he met—no matter their stature—with his broad smile, twinkling eyes and genuine interest.

Jim was publisher of *JEMS* and also executive director of the Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT) Foundation, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving the emergency cardiac care (ECC) capabilities of EMS agencies across the United States. I remember Jim smiling in our first meeting and saying something to this effect: "Wait, you're a CPR instructor, you like to write, and you're willing to fight the system so that you can volunteer as an EMT? You're in!" Jim, as I would come to find out, had a tendency to challenge the system himself, always championing the truth and what was correct, even when it was politically incorrect and would stir up controversy.

In short order, I joined the team,

which then consisted of Jim, Jane Seymour, Brad Smith and Keith Griffiths, who was operating the West Coast office of *JEMS* out of his California home. In an era when it was unheard of, I was able to work part-time in the office and part-time at home, with Fisher Price people and Legos underfoot and "C is for Cookie" playing in the background.

One of my first assignments for ACT was to write a report on the first Conference on Citizen CPR held in Houston earlier that year. The conference was hosted by the National Heart Center at Baylor College of Medicine, and co-hosted by the ACT Foundation, the Junior League of Houston, and the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute at the National Institutes of Health. The keynote session was "Citizen CPR: The Past, the Present and the Future," and the keynote speakers were Jim Page, Leonard Cobb, MD, of the University of Washington, and Kevin McIntyre, MD, of Harvard Medical School. Other luminaries speaking at the conference included Archer Gordon, MD, A. James Lewis, MD, Mickey Eisenberg, MD, PhD, C. P. Dail, Royce Britton, and Michael DeBaakey, MD.

Another of my early assignments was to serve as program manager for a Technical Support Services for EMS program, sponsored by the U.S. Fire Administration and administered by the ACT Foundation. The program matched fire departments across the United States that were interested in initiating or upgrading their basic and advanced life support capabilities with experts who served as mentors. Jim developed and cultivated the program, which provided free technical assistance to thousands of fire departments over the next several years.

During these early days of EMS, I marveled at Jim's visionary leadership, his strong sense of ethics, his incredible talent for persuasive writing and motivational speaking, and his pure passion for



Over the years, Jim racked up millions of frequent flyer miles while traveling to speaking engagements that would advance EMS.

saving lives. Although I didn't realize it at the time, I was incredibly fortunate that James O. Page was my first boss and mentor. He introduced me to many of the nation's movers and shakers in EMS and provided great opportunities for learning and growth. He taught me not only about EMS and ECC, but also about the importance of staying focused on the goal—saving lives—despite the obstacles.

In the early 1980s, Jim fostered many important contributions to ECC, including:

- Delivery of countless speeches calling for widespread citizen CPR training;
- Publication of *CPR Citizen*, beginning in 1978 as a quarterly newsletter and then, in 1981, as a monthly column in *JEMS*;
- Development of a widely distributed booklet, *CPR and the Law*;
- Launch of the *Born of Necessity Fire Service/EMS Management Seminar* series, presented by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and organized and conducted by ACT;
- Publication of *The CPR Bluebook: A Program Management Guide*;
- Working with the Writers' Guild of America and the television industry to promote citizen CPR training through the mass media and to ensure the accuracy of its depiction;

- Development of nationally distributed videos, including *A Life in Your Hands* and *Cavalcade of CPR*;
- Guiding research projects that evaluated the status of CPR training in schools and businesses nationwide;
- Sponsorship of the 1982 Conference on Citizen CPR in Kansas City, Mo., and the 1984 Conference on Citizen CPR in Omaha, Neb.; and
- Launch of ACT's own "first major educational conference," EMS Today, in 1982.

In December 1983, Jim announced the closing of the ACT Foundation with an editorial in *JEMS*. Unlike many not-for-profit organizations that "forget the noble goals of their founders" and "become protective bureaucracies," Jim and his board of directors had reviewed ACT's accomplishments, and determined it had achieved its original goals and it was time to move on. "It's been the best job I will ever have," Jim said.

His return to California with his new wife, Jane, marked a change in venue, but not a change in passion for the cause. Jim continued to play an active role in the Conference on Citizen CPR, which was held on a biennial basis and continues today in the form of the Citizen CPR Foundation's Emergency Cardiac Care Update. It was always his dream that it would be a forum for CPR instructors that would emphasize the need for every citizen on earth to learn these basic life-saving skills. His impassioned pleas resonated during speeches he delivered at these conferences over the years.

Jim continued to promote innovative ideas about emergency cardiac care through *JEMS*, including the early papers on EMT-defibrillation, "Phone First!" and the Chain of Survival.

Jim also helped create the Citizen CPR Foundation's newsletter, *Currents in Emergency Cardiac Care*, which became a joint publication of the foundation and the AHA and continues to enjoy a wide readership today.

I last saw Jim in January 2004 when he received the Ronald D. Stewart Award at the annual meeting of the National Association of EMS Physicians. We spoke a few times after that. Our last communication was particularly noteworthy: Jim called to discuss a case in which a man had died suddenly during his daughter's wedding reception, held in

Crusade for Improved Cardiac Care

"If it were possible to elect a small handful of people who could remain at their prime forever because of all they bring to the world just by being themselves, one of my votes would have gone to Jim Page. Jim was a very big man who achieved much, not through ego and personal ambition but by having room in his enormous personality for everyone else who was out there achieving. There is only one beginning for every movement, and only one opportunity for the right person at the right time to assume the role of 'father,' or now 'grandfather,' of that movement. For EMS, it was Jim Page. By definition, there can never be another."

—Ken Stults, *Health Services Integration Inc., Santa Rosa, California*

"Jim was not only a visionary, but an excellent speaker and communicator. The one thing that always impressed me was Jim's ability to effectively challenge the norm whether it was you as an individual, an organization or local, state or national direction. These challenges resulted in many lifesaving improvements and innovations in the field of emergency medical services and emergency cardiac care."

—C.P. Dail, *American Red Cross, Falls Church, Virginia*

"I am proud to have received Jim's help in founding the ACT Foundation of Canada in 1983, when he passed the torch as executive director of the original American ACT. We were years behind the United States in the area of citizen CPR training and EMS at that time. Jim's wisdom, vision, mentoring and endless enthusiasm and encouragement helped lay the foundation for the achievements we are so proud of today."

—Sandra Clarke, *Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT) Foundation of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario*

"Jim had an incredible impact on the CPR crusade, in particular in the second half of the '70s, as training of the lay public caught on. The role of the ACT Foundation and Jim's personal contributions in lobbying the case for public CPR training can hardly be overestimated."

—Tore Laerdal, *Laerdal Companies Worldwide, Stavanger, Norway*

"I first met Jim Page at the 1980 Conference on Citizen CPR. It was there that I realized what a visionary he was. His founding of the ACT Foundation created a model that many could emulate to perpetuate educational activities, particularly for CPR instructors and those in the emergency medical professions. He was instrumental in advising those who founded the Citizen CPR Foundation as we know it today."

—William Montgomery, MD, *Citizen CPR Foundation, Lenexa, Kansas*

a hotel without AEDs. The widow was considering filing a lawsuit.

When Keith Griffiths called me with the news of Jim's sudden death, I was incredulous. How could it be that one of the preeminent national leaders in emergency cardiac care, with no known heart condition, one who vigorously pursued a healthy, active life, could die from sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) while swimming in a health club that had no AED on site? How could this happen to Jim?

When I heard his memorial service was to be on Sept. 16, I realized with regret that I would be unable to attend. Still, I knew in my heart that Jim would be smiling from above to know the reason: I would be in Washington, D.C., at a meeting of the SCA Survivor Network, surrounded by dozens of people of all ages from across the country—survivors who would not be here today but for the passion and dedication of champions like Jim. I could not help but notice that one of the survivors present at this meeting was another James, James McCooley, 11, who also suffered SCA while swimming, but who survived, per-

haps because, in his case, an AED was readily available.

Maybe Jim's legacy is not only what he taught us through his life, but what he taught us through his death. We've made major strides in the national crusade to improve ECC, but we need to do so much more. It is unacceptable in this day and age that most SCA victims still die because early intervention measures do not occur or effective treatment arrives too late.

It is my hope that we can continue Jim's work and reach the threshold of promise he envisioned, when survival from SCA becomes the norm, not the exception. It is the least we can do in his memory. ^{70P}

Mary Newman is executive director of the National Center for Early Defibrillation (NCED) at the University of Pittsburgh, home of the SCA Survivor Network. Newman worked at the ACT Foundation in the early 1980s and has been a contributing editor to JEMS since then. For information about NCED, visit www.early-defib.org.

A Real Page Turner

Jim's vision & persistence result in launch of *JEMS*



In the late 1970s, at least four publications claimed to serve the national EMS market: *Emergency*, *EMS Magazine*, *The National EMT Journal* and a little quarterly called *Paramedics International*. The latter was published erratically by Los Angeles paramedic Ron Simmons, who had enlisted Jim Page as a contributing editor and gave him his first taste of the magazine business. It was a crowded field for the young EMS publishing industry by any measure, but

Jim wasn't deterred.

Emergency was owned by the inventor of the Hare traction splint, Glenn Hare, and published by DynaMed Corp. in Carlsbad, Calif. It began life as a newsletter, *Emergency Product News*, in 1972, largely to help DynaMed market its own growing stable of emergency care products. I was hired as an assistant editor there in 1977, straight out of journalism school.

After a few weeks on the job, Linda Olander, the general manager, sug-

gested I call and interview Jim Page, executive director of the Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT) Foundation and an already growing legend, for an article I was writing. To this day, I recall that first conversation with Jim. He had that signature resonant voice, so confident, so articulate. He was willing to take a stand, unlike many others who would waffle on answers, afraid they might offend someone. What a great interview!

Jim contributed in a number of ways to *Emergency*, including writing an article in our December 1978 issue, which won *Emergency* its first award for best magazine in its category. By that time I was managing editor. Jim confessed to me his frustrations with the current EMS publications. There were real problems in EMS that needed to be confronted, he said. Jim admired Simmons' efforts to try to tackle problems head-on, but felt that *Paramedics International* didn't have the circulation and reputation to make a real difference. He felt the other publications were too timid, unwilling to investigate the topics that most needed to be addressed (and which may not have made advertisers and some industry leaders happy).

Jim asked me if I thought Glenn Hare would be willing to sell *Emergency* to him. When I told him that Hare would not sell, Jim bought the failing *Paramedics International* from Simmons for \$1. He planned to turn it into a new monthly publication and asked me to be the managing editor. How could I refuse?

I vividly remember the warm summer afternoon in Cardiff, Calif., in 1979 when we sat at my hand-me-down kitchen table, going over the budget for our first issue. I showed him



Jim and Keith celebrating the fifth anniversary of *Rescue Magazine*, that was later folded into *FireRescue Magazine*.

detailed expenses that I'd already cut to the bone.

"Can you do it for half that?" he asked. I didn't know how we were going to pull it off, but I knew I couldn't resist the challenge of being part of something so important, and for a man so compelling. And so *JEMS*, the *Journal of Emergency Medical Services*, was born. (Jim purposely chose an acronym and the term *journal* to connote the serious nature of the endeavor. He would spend the next 20 years correcting people who referred to his creation as *JEMS Magazine*.)

Looking back, it was an unexplainable act of faith that Jim would allow me, a 25-year-old kid, to shepherd his dream to life. I'll be forever grateful for his confidence. We put out the final issue of *Paramedics International* in the fall of 1979, with a cover depicting a hardened paramedic against a backdrop of actual newspaper headlines calling out controversy and problems. Although not always bylined, and sometimes under his pseudonym of Sinclair Germaine, Jim wrote many of the articles in that last issue of *Paramedics International* and in the first issue of *JEMS* (March 1980) to make sure we set just the right editorial tone.

At first, money was extremely tight. The country was in a recession in 1980, and interest rates hovered around 14%. Jim drew on his ACT Foundation funding to cover expenses as best he could. For the first year, our editorial "offices" were the extra bedroom in my rented condominium and Jim's ACT Foundation office in New Jersey. We lived

issue to issue, just happy to get the next edition out, hoping that success might be just around the corner. One good thing about living on the financial edge was that you didn't really have anything to lose. We could afford to be bold and contentious without fear that advertisers would pull out ... because we didn't have any!

As we gained subscribers year after year and as advertisers saw the value of associating with a magazine their customers respected, it became obvious that Jim

had read the audience correctly. There was a market for this combination of investigative journalism and cajoling editorials. We attracted bright, energetic paramedics who believed in this vision, who knew our audience and who knew how to write—people like Jim and Kate Dernocoeur, Thom Dick, Mike Taigman and Keith Kneely, to name a few.

Through *JEMS*, Jim gave EMTs and paramedics a voice and, just as important, recognition. He had high expectations of the people who cared for the ill and injured, and his fundamental respect for them and their duty showed in his writing.

When you're trying to influence people, writing matters. Jim was the most gifted writer I've ever worked with. He

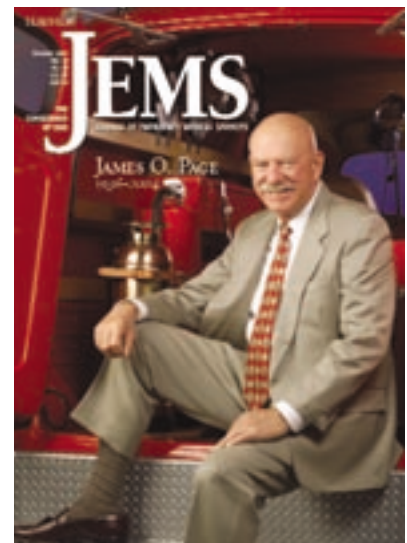
had the natural instincts to be a *storyteller*—to allow the information he wanted to deliver to emerge from a *story* that had a beginning, a middle and an end, with conflict and resolution—and always involving people. He included all the elements that keep readers engaged and make abstract principles more relevant and accessible.

Jim shut down the ACT Foundation in 1983 and moved to California, where we could consolidate offices. He took a little apartment in the coastal town of Solana Beach near our office—quite a difference from the beautiful, spacious home he was restoring in New Jersey when I first met him.

For 18 years, we worked side by side on an assortment of challenges, from trying to change the culture of EMS to figuring out creative ways to pay the printer and get our next issue out. Jim made me a partner in the business after a few years, and, as with any partnership, there were high points and low points.

We also had our share of disagreements. Years later, when I began a new business, I found myself reflecting on and using lessons that Jim had patiently (and occasionally impatiently) impressed upon his young editor during those early years—lessons that I hadn't been able to absorb originally, but which had been percolating for years, waiting for the right time to make their debut.

In my last e-mail to him several months before his death, I made a point of saying so and thanking him. I was inspired to do so while at a confer-



Jim founded *JEMS* in 1980 to serve the information needs of the prehospital EMS community. He wrote much of the first issue (left) in March 1980 himself. He continued to write for *JEMS* until his death. His final column appeared in October 2004 (right).



Jim's publishing empire included *FireRescue* magazine. *FireRescue* was launched in March 1997, after Jim merged *Firefighter's News* and *Rescue Magazine*. The result: a publication that served the needs of modern-day firefighters.

ence of cardiac arrest survivors. No irony there ...

Jim's legacy of inspiration

One of Jim's greatest gifts was his ability to find good people with good values, point them in the right direction and then say, "Go get it," with hefty doses of encouragement along the way. His peo-

ple embraced their work. He trusted his employees to go beyond his expectations, and he was repaid in spades. In the early years, he was blessed to have such employees as Rick Miner, Gary Williams, Mary Newman, Dana Bies, Betty Till, Tami Valencia, Betty Scalice and Vivian Griffiths, to name just a few.

So many people at the memorial service—and many more who could not attend—could point to an interaction with Jim that led to crucial decisions, new career paths, new opportunities and

sun broke out as if on cue to welcome three medical and rescue helicopters in a fly-by, featuring the missing-man formation, and a procession of dozens of EMS vehicles and fire apparatus. It was a show of respect that he had truly earned.

Not long before his death, Jim told me he loved retirement, but missed actively helping to build an organization. By that, I think he meant recruiting people and mentoring them to find personal fulfillment in the service of a worthwhile cause.

Jim was a man of many talents, many accomplishments and many roles. I believe his career as a publisher was particularly important to him, and to the EMS industry. He was able to reach thousands of people that he would have otherwise been unable to connect with.

"Never argue with someone who buys ink by the barrel," he wrote in his first editorial for *JEMS*. There were those who disagreed with Jim, but I don't recall anyone who ever won the argument. ^(TOP)

I didn't know how we were going to pull it off, but I knew I couldn't resist the challenge of being part of something so important for a man so compelling.

ple embraced their work. He trusted his employees to go beyond his expectations, and he was repaid in spades. In the early years, he was blessed to have such employees as Rick Miner, Gary Williams, Mary Newman, Dana Bies, Betty Till, Tami Valencia, Betty Scalice and Vivian Griffiths, to name just a few.

As with anyone willing to take risks, Jim didn't bat a thousand with all his decisions on people or projects, and he would be the first to admit to, and laugh at, his blunders. More importantly, he was willing to take risks and encouraged risk-taking in all who worked with him.

Bill Atkinson, PhD, president of WakeMed, a North Carolina hospital system and one of the speakers at Jim's memorial service, told how Jim had inspired him, beginning in high school with the television show *Emergency!* (See p. 12.) Starting as an EMT, Bill rose

a passion for what they did. Jim's dedication to improving patient care was so potent that you couldn't resist climbing aboard his bandwagon. It made your work—your life—more meaningful. If you were "just an EMT" or even a lowly assistant editor, Jim's personal attention filled you with confidence, pride and a passion to prove him right.

One sign that you've built a great organization is that it can live on without you. Even after selling Jems Communications in 1993 to Times Mirror Corp., Jim's vision has flourished. His legacy lives on, largely because his personal philosophy has been so ingrained in the fabric of his creation—so much so, in fact, that the *JEMS* tagline now reads: "The Conscience of EMS." (In contrast, Glenn Hare sold *Emergency!* in 1998, and it folded a few years later.)

As Jim's memorial service ended, the

Keith Griffiths is the founding editor of JEMS. He is currently president of The RedFlash Group, a firm that provides strategic marketing services for associations, not-for-profits and commercial firms in public safety. He is chairman of the board for the National Academies of Emergency Dispatch and sits on the advisory boards for the National Center for Early Defibrillation, the National Institute for Urban Search and Rescue and the Western Publications Association.

Tipping the Scales

As an attorney, Jim fought to protect the interests of the individual provider & firefighter

Many of the tributes to Jim Page in the days and weeks following his death seemed to summarize his life with sequentially ordered terms: “James O. Page—fire chief, *Emergency!* technical advisor, attorney, state EMS director, author, publisher, father of modern-day EMS ...” The term *lawyer* or *attorney* would almost always find its way into the mix. But for a man with so many accomplishments and titles, referring to Jim Page as a lawyer seemed almost anticlimactic.

Not only was Jim an attorney—night schooled and admitted to the California bar while serving in the Los Angeles County Fire Department—he was an extraordinary one at that. Jim embodied what it means to be an attorney. He had a passion for justice and a commitment to public service; discharged his duties with fidelity, civility, competence and integrity; and maintained a lifelong desire to grow, learn and improve.

Although some may have looked at Jim’s status as a lawyer as merely another credential, no doubt reinforced by the fact that he was never a full-time practitioner, Jim had a brilliant legal mind, and legal adversaries who underestimated him did so at their own peril.

Practicing law was no casual hobby or secondary venture for Jim. When he took on a case, whether or not he was being paid (and often he was not), he studied and prepared vigorously. As anyone who attended one of Jim’s presentations knows, he was an exceptional orator whose presence dominated every room he entered. That presence carried into the courtroom, where Jim, through a combination of civility, competence and his mere presence, effectively and ardently presented his case while retaining the respect of judges, juries and

even his opposition.

Over the years, and particularly so after we became law partners with Jim, we came to appreciate not only his extraordinary mind, but also the passion of his heart. Jim always encouraged us to evaluate the impact of a solution or strategy on the front-line EMT, firefighter or paramedic.

Like many attorneys, Jim developed particular interest and expertise in certain areas of the law. He studied, wrote and passionately worked to ensure that “due process” was brought into all decisions affecting individuals—within EMS organizations and fire departments, as well as in the state systems that certified and regulated EMS personnel.

He was as knowledgeable as any attorney in the United States on the application of labor and employment laws to the fire and EMS sectors and was one of the leading experts on the complex California laws dealing with exclusive operating areas and market rights for EMS agencies.

Through his writings, teaching and legal practice, Jim became the nation’s first “EMS attorney,” and holds the distinction of being the prototype for this discipline. Those of us who became lawyers with an eye toward serving EMS, public safety and the ambulance industry, did so only after Jim showed us that such a career choice was a worthy calling. Jim “blazed the trail” for the rest of us and helped us along that trail if we faltered or stumbled.

Jim was a firm believer in giving something back to the EMS community. After years of struggle and incurring personal debt while building Jems Communications, Jim, in his words, “realized every entrepreneur’s dream” when he sold Jems in 1993. But instead of sitting on a beach sipping piña



Over the years, Jim conducted more than 100 mock trials to educate prehospital personnel on the importance of quality patient care and complete documentation.

coladas, Jim continued his personal tradition of helping EMTs, paramedics and firefighters on a *pro bono* basis—meaning that he took their cases and took up their causes without taking their money.

He volunteered his time, energy and expertise to help those he believed were being unfairly treated by their employers or EMS agencies. Jim was personally offended by the notion that arbitrary or capricious administrative action could deprive a worthy provider of his or her livelihood. He fought to protect the interests of the individual provider, the party who was often at a significant disadvantage in terms of money, resources and power. Jim helped level the playing field, and when he was involved, it most often tipped the scales in the provider’s favor.

In the summer of 1999, we (Doug and Steve) were both working in the Harrisburg, Pa., offices of large, 400+

attorney law firms. We got together at an EMS conference (in fact, it was the first *EMS Insider* Symposium, held at a resort in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania). After a dinner filled with pleasant discussion about the need for attorneys dedicated to EMS, we solidified our mutual desire to strike out of the bureaucracy of the large law firm and concentrate our legal practices on EMS law “on our own.”

Jim was at the conference, too, but that weekend, we kept the idea to ourselves. A few days later, the two of us had lunch and talked about calling Jim to pick his brain about the idea of forming a new national EMS law firm. We also thought about asking Jim to join us as a partner in the firm, but figured that he’d say he was too busy to seriously consider it.

The two of us sat in the home office of the Wolfberg residence one day in late summer 1999 and placed a call to Jim on a speakerphone. We told him of our idea and asked whether there might be a market for such a firm. Jim relayed the history of the still-nascent development of EMS law as a discipline and traced the past efforts of those who made a go of it.

Jim was pleased and enthusiastic that we were discussing such an undertaking. As the call progressed, we casually inquired as to Jim’s interest in joining such a firm, if we were ever to form it. Our exact wording was a bit vague so as not to feel embarrassed for bringing it up. It went something like, “Uh, Jim, to what degree could you see yourself becoming aligned with such a venture?”

Much to our surprise, Jim said that he’d love to be a part of it! Having started several successful ventures, he was, at heart, an entrepreneur. He loved the creativity and challenge of forming a new business out of nothing but the raw materials of vision, energy and a few dollars of seed money. He told us that being part of a firm would give him the ability to formalize his legal work more—and provide a conduit through which he could practice law in his “retirement” years. He didn’t ask for time to think about it or to reflect on the decision—he said yes immediately. We talked about having his name lead the firm banner, recognizing that we were asking him to pledge the most valuable collateral he possessed: his name and the impeccable reputation attached to it. He did so without hesitation.

Although Jim was semi-retired and never practiced law full-time after we



The Three Amigos: Steve Wirth, Jim Page and Doug Wolfberg.

launched the firm, he participated in many of the firm’s decisions and was involved in several cases. Jim also worked as an expert witness in EMS malpractice cases and other types of litigation. He played a role in numerous seminars, workshops and mock trial programs we conducted or participated in across the country. He took his involvement with the firm seriously and was always there to provide guidance, business experience and a lifetime of wisdom. Being able to call Jim our law partner was the honor of our professional lives.

A few days after Jim’s death, we were commiserating with a mutual friend in California who knew him well. In the

we have a special responsibility in upholding it. Jim would always tell us how proud he was to have his name as part of Page, Wolfberg & Wirth. We would respond that the pride was ours and that we would continue to represent our clients in a way that would impress him. Now, more so than ever, our desire to make Jim proud infuses our every word and deed. We are committed to upholding the honor and memory of this phenomenal man and his legacy as a pioneering attorney in our field.

Jim Page was many things to many people. To us, he was a colleague, confidant, mentor and friend. He will continue to serve as a role model for

Jim embodied what it means to be an attorney. He had a passion for justice & a commitment to public service.

course of the conversation, the friend noted that Page, Wolfberg & Wirth was the only surviving entity that Jim ever put his name on. This was a powerful statement, and we immediately recognized the weight of it. Professionally, Jim created many things that survive him: Jems Communications, *JEMS* and *FireRescue Magazine*, the EMS Today conference, books and articles, and countless other programs. But this comment drove home the fact that we were actually heirs to something special: the legacy of Jim Page, the lawyer. Jim gave us his name, and it will remain on the door of this firm as a living testament to his legacy.

As heirs to Jim’s legacy as attorneys,

generations of lawyers who practice EMS law—a legal specialty that likely would not exist had Jim Page not lived. We are pleased to help Jim’s legacy live on through the work of the James O. Page Charitable Foundation. ^(TOP)

Doug Wolfberg and Steve Wirth, along with the late Jim Page, are attorneys, former EMS providers, and founding partners of Page, Wolfberg & Wirth LLC, a national EMS, ambulance and medical transportation industry law firm. Visit the James O. Page Memorial on the firm’s Web site, www.pwvwemslaw.com, for more information on the life and career of Jim Page, the lawyer.

The Man & His Machines

Showcasing Jim's passion for the preservation & restoration of antique fire apparatus

It was Jim Page's nature to immerse himself in his trade, hobbies and personal life. He accomplished many things in his life, but at his core he was a firefighter. He had a passion for fire service history and fire apparatus that was simply an extension of his passion for the profession. Jim had a wealth of knowledge about apparatus, pumps, engine configuration and more, and he put that knowledge to work through the preservation and restoration of antique fire apparatus.

Rescue 11

Jim's "baby" was Rescue 11, a 1947 Ford panel wagon that was a twin to his first assigned rescue vehicle. In mid-1959, Jim's first assignment upon graduating from the training tower of the Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACoFD) was at Fire Station 11 in the city of Alta Dena. On completion of his six-month probationary period, he was assigned to Rescue 11.

Jim loved his involvement in the rescue program and always cherished his memories of racing throughout the district in the well-equipped (for the time period), one-seat, underpowered panel truck.

Years later, after he had retired from LACoFD and become successful in the publishing business, Jim began a search for the old Rescue 11. Unable to locate the original, Jim found and bought two identical models, each in a state of deterioration, and began his re-acquaintance with an old friend.

The "new" Rescue 11 is equipped with a modern chassis and a high-performance power plant, but the exterior and equipment area are accurate representations of the original. Jim drove Rescue 11 all over the country, visiting countless fire stations along the way. It was his pride and joy.

Project 51 & the restoration of Squad 51

In one major project, Jim spent two years working with actors Randolph Mantooth and Kevin Tighe and several committees to restore Squad 51 of TV's *Emergency!* fame to its original beauty. He also helped organize a cross-country tour of the restored vehicle in conjunction with the placement of key equipment and *Emergency!* artifacts in the Smithsonian Institution in 2000.

Jim helped form Project 51, a not-for-profit organization, to share with the public the history of EMS in the United States and the vital role that the television series *Emergency!* played in creating a demand for on-site medical treatment. Project 51 worked toward this objective by sponsoring a national tour. Randolph Mantooth volunteered his time for this project and traveled across the country, making personal appearances to promote EMS. The tour also featured the completely restored Squad 51 and the original medical equipment and wardrobe used on *Emergency!* Money raised through the sale of merchandise and memorabilia was donated to benefit fire service charities.

The highlight of the Project 51 tour was a stop at the National Mall in Washington, D.C., in May 2000 to officially launch EMS Week. In recognition of the impact of *Emergency!* on fire service history, the show's original artifacts (donated by Universal Studios) were inducted into the Smithsonian Museum of American History.

The old hose carrier & Jim's last restoration project


In 2000, Jim bought a 1956 Ford hose wagon from the Vernon (Calif.) Fire Department and asked fire apparatus restorer, Mike McDonald of Valley Center, Calif., to restore it for him. When the job was complete, Jim sur-



Jim with his "baby," the restored Rescue 11.

prised McDonald by giving the rig to him—with the stipulation that Jim could "borrow" it whenever he wanted to give his grandchildren rides on the majestic old truck, something he did his last two Christmas seasons.

At the time of his death in September 2004, Jim was in the process of restoring a 1924 R.E.O. fire engine with the assistance of his long-time friend, Randy Clark. Clark had restored Rescue 11 for Jim. The old R.E.O. once served the Montebello (Calif.) Fire Department, which appealed to Jim because of his early history with that department.

Jim's wife, Jane, has donated the R.E.O. to the Los Angeles County Fire Museum, and the staff is in the process of completing its restoration in Jim's honor. Currently only about 50% complete, the restoration won't be finished until 2006. Much work lies ahead, but every effort is being made to complete the project and produce a restoration that would have made Jim happy. 

Paul Schneider is a third-generation firefighter with LACoFD. He serves as president of the LA Fire Museum board.

Jim's Role with the L.A. County Fire Museum

In late 1999, Jim attended a board meeting of the County of Los Angeles Fire Museum Association at the request of museum board member Dave Boucher. Jim was impressed with the museum's collection and goals.

Jim was president of the board at the time. Jim became involved with the board and soon became the vice president. His knowledge of the law was quickly put to use in reviewing and updating the museum's bylaws. Jim became a member of the board of directors in January 2002.

Jim brought a level of respect and prestige to our museum that had not been witnessed before. His keen business sense and leadership skills assisted greatly in pulling together pre-existing projects and creating new ones that have resulted in a brighter financial position for the organization. It was Jim's desire to have the collection tell the story of firefighting and EMS in the United States, while highlighting the history of the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

The museum is now structured far more efficiently due to Jim's guidance and is poised to make its first real effort toward realizing its goals. The museum association hopes to acquire a new facility conducive to public visitation and large enough to house its collection of more than 40 pieces of apparatus and growing collection of fire and rescue artifacts. The association plans to obtain and display hand-drawn/volunteer-era equipment, apparatus from the horse-drawn era, early motorized equipment, rigs from the Roaring '20s, the Fabulous Firefighting '50s, truck companies and rescues.

The museum intends to make Jim's contribution to EMS a central focus in the Rescue display area. His history with LACoFD and the Carlsbad and Monterey Park fire departments will also be showcased. Engine 382, on which Jim served as an engineer with LACoFD, is in the collection and will be an important piece of Jim's exhibits.



Top right: Jim's passion for cars got an early start. Above: Jim Page and Paul Schneider pose with one of Jim's favorite rigs, Engine 382, a 1957 four-wheel drive Yankee/Calavar Brush Engine. Right: Jim takes a work in progress out for a test drive.



Above: Jim could never resist the opportunity to take a rig out for a spin. Above right: Jim satisfies his need for speed in 2002 at the Richard Petty Driving School. Bottom right: Jim poses with his high school hot rod.

What We Remember ...

Jim's spirit lives on in his family, friends & colleagues

Every time I get on the fire engine to respond on a call, I think of him and smile. He had a love for the fire service/EMS community that was surpassed only by his love for his family.

Captain Andy Page, Son, Poway Fire Department, Poway, California



Jim takes the grandkids for a Christmas spin.

The EMS community lost a great friend; we, however, lost a great dad, grandfather, mentor and all-knowing presence in our lives. I know that he will be watching down on the grandkids as they go through those milestones in their lives—especially that first car (he would have loved tinkering with them) and the possibilities beyond. We miss him beyond words.

Debbie Ries, Daughter, Attorney, Carlsbad, California



Baby Jim, Circa 1937

You always told me the best day of your life was the day that I was born. My favorite memory was the day you told Andy and me that you considered us to be your very best friends. Beyond your life achievements, those words echoing in my heart will forever be the most cherished gift you ever gave me.

Tom Page, Son, Photographer, Carlsbad, California

Jim was consumed with excellence in everything thing he did: as a teacher and as a servant to public safety, to his community and to his many friends.

Dick Judd, PhD, EMSI, New Britain, Connecticut



Jim at work, LACoFD



Jim with his Aunt Gladys

You are my hero. Love you and miss you so.

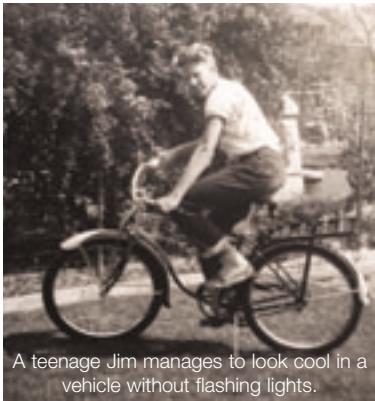
Susan von Beck, Daughter, Business Owner, Duwall, Washington

[Jim's] death has hit me particularly hard, but, knowing Jim, he would say, "Bryan, it's your turn to make EMS and the fire service better." He's right.

Bryan E. Bledsoe, DO, FACEP, Midlothian, Texas

Like many of you, I couldn't believe the news: Jim was larger than life and was always supposed to be there when you needed his help and wisdom. Those of us who were there from the early '60s know what Jim's influence and guidance meant to the development of EMS as a chosen career ...

Denny Kurogi, Johnson County Community College, Overland Park, Kansas



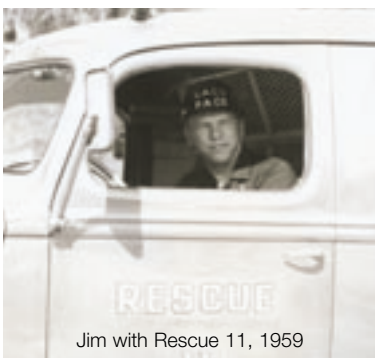
A teenage Jim manages to look cool in a vehicle without flashing lights.

Regardless of how he came into your life, he made it hard to call him anything but Jim, because above all else, he was so easy to be your friend. ... He knew us by name, regardless of our rank or title or circumstances. He listened to us patiently, allowing us to lay it all out, guiding us to the solution we sought, even though he already knew the answer to the problem. He stepped in when we needed a reminder of our values. He made peace among us when we bickered. He laid the foundation, and then encouraged us to build upon it by challenging us to strive for optimal goals, not minimum standards.

Steve Kidd, Lieutenant (ret.), Orange County (Fla.) Fire & Rescue, FireRescue Technical Editor

Jim Page is the person I hope I'm a fraction of someday.

P. DeFelice, NREMT-P, Pennsylvania



Jim with Rescue 11, 1959

Jim Page was the very essence of all that is EMS. No one was a stronger and more respected advocate for EMS, and at the same time no one a more demanding critic of that which needed correction. His legacy to all of us who learned from him compels us to do the same.

Roger D. White, MD, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota

I was a young cocky kid on the set of Emergency! when I saw a tall, imposing man standing in the middle of a chaotic location shoot. With the hustle and bustle of a crew laying down cables, hanging lights, building the sets and pushing the cameras into position, Jim stood serenely in the midst of it all with an almost childlike glee in his eyes. He was living a dream.

Randolph Mantoath, Los Angeles, California



Jim participates in a 10K race in Nashville.

As youngsters, my little brother and I lived for the thrill of Emergency! Christmas was not complete unless we received a shiny new Emergency! helmet. That passion has transformed into a lifelong love. I have been in EMS for more than 15 years and continue to serve as an agency chief and a county coordinator. My brother has been in the fire service for nearly 15 years, and he serves as a fire chief.

Mark Spiezo, EMT-CC, CIC, EMS Coordinator, Fort Edward, New York

No great movement spontaneously springs up. All have great leaders and individuals who are instrumental in making the movement succeed. Jim was one of these. He can rightfully be called one of the founding fathers of EMS.

Mickey Eisenberg, MD, PhD, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington

Jim had vision, courage, insight and a sincere desire to see EMS mature and finally gain the respect it so justly deserves. We need many more like him.

Paul M. Paris, MD, FACEP, Center for Emergency Medicine, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



Following his retirement, Jim volunteered his time with the California Highway Patrol.

Jim always has and always will hold a special place in my heart and soul. Jim took me under his wing when I was a young man and gave me something that I would never be able to repay in a dozen lifetimes. Jim gave me opportunity, he took time to impart wisdom and knowledge, and most of all he gave me a friendship that you just knew came direct from his heart. It was a privilege to be able to spend time with a man of such character, loyalty and integrity that I often felt uncomfortable hoping that I did not disappoint him by my actions or my words.

Chase N. Sargent, Division Chief Virginia Beach Fire & Rescue Dept., FireRescue Technical Editor

I was lucky enough to be seated next to [Jim] at dinner one night during the last JEMS conference, and he made for a wonderful evening with stories. I don't think he ever forgot a name or a face.

Bill Doss, Paramedic/Firefighter, Miami Fire & EMS, Milford, Ohio

A Fitting Tribute

Memorial service honors the ‘father of modern EMS’



Mourners gathered on Thursday, Sept. 16, 2004, to grieve for the loss and celebrate the life of James O. Page, the “dean of modern emergency medical response,” who passed away unexpectedly on Sept. 4, 2004. Nearly 1,000 friends, family and colleagues from across the country came together for a heartfelt memorial ceremony in Carlsbad (Calif.) Community Church. The service highlighted the many stories and achievements of Jim’s 47-year career in emergency services.

Organ music and a classical guitar with vocals complemented a program of genuine, eloquent speakers. The full firefighter service began with a presentation of the colors by honor guards from Carlsbad, Los Angeles County, Monterey Park and Oceanside fire departments, and San Diego Fire-Rescue Department. Bagpipers from Orange County Fire Authority and Vista Fire Department played while flower wreaths in the shapes of the Maltese Cross and the Star of Life were placed in front of the altar steps. At the podium, firefighters in full-dress uniform placed chief’s helmets from the departments where Jim served next to a

bust of his likeness, which was created upon his retirement and placed in the Julian Stanley Wise Foundation To the Rescue Museum in Roanoke, Va.

Remembrances for Jim were poignant and eclectic. Kevin Crawford, chief of the Carlsbad Fire Department, opened with a prayer and welcomed attendees with an overview of Jim’s stunning accomplishments in emergency service. Crawford pointed out that Jim was more than just a measure of his deeds; his very character drew people to him. “He had a presence about him. You always knew he was in the room,” Crawford explained, and emphasized the personal connection Jim established with those around him.

In the spiritual eulogy, William Hood, chaplain of the L.A. County Fire Department, echoed that Jim Page was “many things to many people,” and “at his very core was a fireman.” He included his own personal anecdotes about their shared love of restoring old fire engines. Hood also read a stirring letter from Jim’s wife, Jane, that reflected on the couple’s life, their children and Jane’s gratitude for their time together.

Remembrances were shared by three other speakers who had known Jim both professionally and as a friend, but in diverse ways:

Doug Wolfberg, one of Jim’s partners at the law firm of Page, Wolfberg & Wirth, spoke about the privilege of working with an idol who then became a partner. Despite his legendary status in the world of EMS, “Jim never looked around the room when you were talking to him to see if anyone ‘more important’ was around,” said Wolfberg. Before the service, Wolfberg elaborated with a specific memory that related to his early days writing for *JEMS*. “I remember when I wrote my first article back in 1989, and Jim actually thanked me for making a contribution. Here I was realizing my dream of finally getting published, and Jim was thanking me. ... It was his humility—he made you feel special and important. He let other people shine. ... He made everybody feel that



Helmets representing the three fire departments Jim served evoked tears from those attending the memorial service.

way. It’s a rare attribute.”

William Atkinson, president/CEO of WakeMed Health Systems in Raleigh, N.C., and a close friend of Jim’s, addressed Jim’s family directly. He thanked them for lending Jim to his extended EMS and fire family, adding, “There’s an empty place in our field, in our world and in our hearts.” Having known Jim for 31 years, Atkinson marveled at the numerous achievements he had observed and taken part in with Jim all over the United States. Among other



Jim’s dedication to the fire service was acknowledged with a presentation of the colors by five different fire departments.



Jim's four children, Tom Page, Susan von Beck, Debbie Ries and Andy Page shared uplifting family memories of their father with the audience.

things, Atkinson witnessed Jim bring about North Carolina's first EMT course, help to implement CPR training for rescuers, advance the use of critical air transport, encourage disaster operations training (years before Sept. 11), pioneer the implementation of 9-1-1 into the North Carolina phone system and "take the funeral home out of ambulance service and [put ambulance service] into the fire department," with a controversial start in Baytown, Texas.

Atkinson listed some of the countless monikers for Jim, including *father, grandfather, firefighter, rescuer, author and storyteller*, but added, "Most of all, he was a *weaver*. He connected the dots better than anyone I've ever known." As with most of the speakers, he closed with a warm goodbye to his friend that hinted at the deep emotion beneath his sentiments, a message that seemed to resonate with the listeners.

Also remembering his friend fondly was Alan Brunacini, chief of the Phoenix Fire Department, who had known Jim for decades and was a contemporary of his as they came up the ranks in their respective



Chief Alan Brunacini, whom Jim viewed as a brother, spoke about Jim's role as a visionary.

departments. Brunacini humbly introduced himself as a Phoenix firefighter and provided the audience with a light-hearted memory of how he used to "amuse" Jim, and how he, like so many others, was awed at the poise and grace of his colleague, whom he referred to as an "elegant man without affectation."

Prior to the memorial service, Brunacini had other glowing comments about Jim. He explained, "There are two parts to being a visionary: seeing what should be done in the future and then actually doing it. Visionaries are a dime-a-dozen, but there aren't many like Jim. His vision has produced 80% of the activity that the fire service could engage in. In 30 years, he changed our service; it was probably the best change in productivity in the public sector, ever. ... He was smart enough and enough of a statesman to represent us where we needed it. ... And everybody felt so close to him."

Jim's four children, Tom Page, Susan von Beck, Andy Page and Debbie Ries also shared memories of their father with those in attendance. Tom led the eulogies with readings from letters written by his children, his grandmother and his cousin, all noting the special ways each had remembered Jim. Tom underlined the goal of lifting the audience's spirits because this was a celebration of Jim's life, and he revealed humorous anecdotes about his father, both from personal experience and the recollections of others. For example, Jim's 97-year-old mother, Marion, passed on a story about her son's bout with rheumatic fever as an active 12-year-old with a paper route, and how Jim was told he would have to stay in bed for at least a month. He kept himself busy reading the entire set of *Encyclopedia Britannica* cover-to-cover, and yet his mother mused over why her son still didn't get straight As in school.

Tom and his siblings left the audience with a call to carry on their father's work. "Integrate my father's core values into your life," said Tom. "Work hard. When the work gets difficult, double your efforts. Don't be afraid of following your dreams; fear only the possibility of failing to make a difference."

Andy Page, a Poway (Calif.) Fire Department captain, added, "Fight the good fight and encourage others to do the same." After his family spoke, Andy noted that some members of the audience might not have had the past opportunity to hear Jim speak and observe the strong applause his speeches received. He asked



The memorial service ended with a fly-over by three helicopters from the L.A. County Fire Department, San Diego Fire-Rescue Department and Mercy Air.

that a final round of applause be given to Jim, a request the audience immediately granted with a long, thunderous, standing ovation.

The ceremony ended with a procession of 60 fire apparatuses and ambulances from different areas of L.A. and San Diego counties, and as far away as Las Vegas; the vehicles escorted the family to a private service at a nearby cemetery. Jim's beloved Rescue 11 and the famous Squad 51 traveled side-by-side at the front of the procession in a fitting tribute to Jim. An impressive fly-over by helicopters from the L.A. County Fire Department, San Diego Fire-Rescue Department and Mercy Air brought tears to the eyes of onlookers as the helicopters flew over the long line of emergency vehicles. ^(TOP)

Kristi Savino is the JEMS associate editor. She has an MA in Literature and Publishing from the National University of Ireland, Galway, and a BA in Creative Writing from Pepperdine University.



Unfilled boots and bunker gear symbolize the loss experienced by the fire service after Jim's untimely passing.

James O. Page Employment History

James O. Page has a work history that spans more than five decades and includes the fields of fire, EMS, law, publishing and public speaking:

- January 2000 to September 2004—Partner, Page, Wolfberg & Wirth
- September 1979 to December 2001—Founder/Publisher, Jems Communications
- April 1986 to January 1989—Fire Chief, City of Monterey Park, Calif.
- August 1984 to April 1986—Battalion Fire Chief, City of Carlsbad, Calif.
- August 1981 to September 1984—Manager, Technical Support Services Program, U.S. Fire Administration (FEMA)
- October 1976 to December 1983—Executive Director, ACT (Advanced Coronary Treatment) Foundation, Basking Ridge, N.J.
- July 1975 to October 1976—Exec. Director, Lakes Area EMS, Buffalo, N.Y.
- December 1973 to February 1975—Chief, North Carolina Office of EMS
- November 1959 to November 1973—Firefighter, Firefighter-Specialist, Fire Captain and Battalion Chief, Los Angeles County Fire Department, Los Angeles, Calif.
- August 1957 to November 1959—Firefighter, City of Monterey Park, Calif.

Major Awards & Honors

As an EMS visionary, Jim was honored with several prestigious awards:

2004—The American College of Emergency Physicians' Award for Outstanding Contribution in EMS (first time ever awarded to a non-physician)

2000—First recipient of the James O. Page/JEMS Award, Jems Communications

2000—Designated as a "Fire Service Legacy" (one of the 20 people who were most influential in the American fire service in the 20th Century), *Fire Chief Magazine*

2000—Mayoral Commendation and Key to the City, Lincoln, Neb.

1999—Certificate of Commendation, County of Los Angeles Fire Department

1995—James O. Page EMS Achievement Award, International Association of Fire Chiefs

1993—Rocco Morando Award for Lifetime Achievement, NAEMT

1990—Decade of Progress Award, American Ambulance Association

1989—Platinum Videotape Award for Home First-Aid Video Library

1988—Lifetime Emeritus Membership, National Academy of Emergency Medical Dispatch

1980—J.D. Farrington, MD, Award for Excellence, NAEMT

1974—Governor's Award for Bravery and Heroism, State of North Carolina

Bibliography

Jim was a prolific writer, authoring more than 400 magazine and journal articles related to fire protection and EMS, including the Burning Issues column in *FireRescue Magazine* from March 1997 to December 2004 and the following essays, books, films, etc.:

- *Simple Advice*
- Chapter 1, 3rd edition, *Managing Fire Services*
- *Making a Difference: Thirty Years of Modern EMS*
- Foreword, *Principles of Emergency Medical Dispatch*
- *The Emergency! Companion*
- *Discipline with Due Process*
- *The Home First-Aid Video Library*
- *The Magic of 3 AM*
- *The Paramedics*
- *Emergency Medical Services for Fire Departments*
- *Effective Company Command*



ILLUSTRATION STEVE BERRY

James O. Page Charitable Foundation Created

Page, Wolfberg & Wirth has taken the lead in establishing the James O. Page Charitable Foundation to carry on Jim's legacy through the improvement of EMS and public safety in the United States, with emphasis on such areas as EMS and the law, education and EMS leadership. Jems/Elsevier supports this noble endeavor. For more information, visit www.jamesopage.org.