



James L. Sibley Jennings, Jr.

October 27, 1941 - March 31, 2016

James Longstreet Sibley Jennings, Jr. born on October 27, 1941, James Longstreet Sibley Jennings, Jr. passed away on March 31, 2016 at his home in Macon, Georgia. He was the son of the late James Longstreet Sibley Jennings, Sr. and the late Ernestine Moore Jennings.

As he grew up, Mr. Jennings developed an abiding appreciation for the unique architecture of his home town of Milledgeville, Georgia, an interest which would be reflected in the many professional achievements that were to follow. A direct descendant of Judge Daniel R. Tucker who built Rose Hill, an iconic antebellum mansion based on classical Greek tenets of architectural beauty (later renamed Lockerly Hall by Reginald W. Hatcher, whose family lived in the home from 1928 until 1963), Mr. Jennings took a particular interest in the comparison of its pure Doric style with the equally accurate Ionic style of the nearby Governor's Mansion, both believed to be by the same architect. He recognized that these buildings, along with the Georgia Military College, represented manifestations of American architecture during the Federal and Greek Revival Periods which were unique to Milledgeville, both in their architectural purity and in their structural innovations including the use of stucco on brick rather than the prevailing wooden structures of the era. After graduating from Georgia Military College in 1959, Mr. Jennings enrolled in the School of Architecture at the Georgia Institute of Technology, where he elaborated and expanded his interest in the architecture of Milledgeville into a

senior thesis which remains an authoritative study of this singular architectural style. When the Hatcher family moved away from Lockerly Hall, Mr. Jennings worked with the family to assure that the historic mansion would not be razed by developers, and eventually managed to find a purchaser who would preserve the house as the centerpiece of today's Lockerly Arboretum. In later years, his recollections of Milledgeville as well as his historical and architectural expertise would be reflected in his continuing interest in assuring that Lockerly Hall would be preserved in perpetuity. His efforts in the 1960s and later were instrumental in preserving the mansion in a condition that would enable the current owners to seek inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Just as Lockerly had been his ancestors' legacy to him, the development of the cultural resource that the mansion and the adjoining Lockerly Arboretum would become are among his own legacies to the future.

A widely recognized architectural historian, Mr. Jennings had a particular interest in restoration efforts to preserve historically significant buildings, primarily in Washington, D.C. and the adjoining parts of Virginia and Maryland. He served as an architectural consultant on numerous projects and developed a reputation for insistence on historical accuracy as well as cultural context. Mr. Jennings stood firm in his belief that the integrity of a restoration required that the finished project be as nearly identical to the original structure as could be achieved. Authenticity, for him, was a goal that should always be paramount in efforts to preserve what was valuable from the past.

Heading his own firm in Alexandria, Mr. Jennings was a practicing architect, as well as a consultant and historian. Nonetheless, his greatest interest and his strongest passion remained the preservation and, where necessary, the restoration of the architectural treasures of America, particularly those from the Federal Period. He was the author of numerous articles and studies. Perhaps the most prominent was Volume II of Massachusetts Avenue Architecture, of which Mr. Jennings was the principal author. This

comprehensive study of one of the most historic streets in America was published by the United States Commission of Fine Arts in 1975, and – some forty years later – in 2011 was named by the District of Columbia Library as one of the fifty most essential books on the history of the nation’s capital.

Despite his accomplishments and his renown, however, Mr. Jennings never lost his love for the people and the places of central Georgia. He was widely and affectionately known by a multitude of friends and relatives, all of whom were enriched by his wisdom, wit and charm, and all of whom are diminished by his passing.

express online condolences at www.williamsfuneral.net

Obituary courtesy of Williams Funeral Homes & Crematory of Milledgeville

Tribute Wall

BY

“ Dear Sibley, Learning of your death tears my being. I treasure the work we performed together from historical fragments to measuring embassies. The best was knowing you and Nestor. Your lectures, kindness and architecture and knowledge is a legacy few leave. Have a great flight. Marion "Bud" Yeck, Washington D. C.

Bud Yeck - November 28, 2017 at 01:17 PM

DJ

“ Goodbye Sib; You certainly were a fabulist.

David Jennings - June 04, 2016 at 11:25 PM

NS

“ Rest in peace Sibbo: I will never forget our trips to Europe and South America, and our trip from Washington DC to Milledgeville and the places in between. Meeting grandma was a treat. I will always love you. Nestor.

Nestor Sanchez - April 10, 2016 at 02:34 PM

NS

“ Nestor Sanchez lit a candle in memory of James L. Sibley Jennings, Jr.



Nestor Sanchez - April 08, 2016 at 08:56 PM

NI

You were our dear friend and more like family for decades. We will miss you greatly and deeply. Your loss is like the loss of a library-- so extensive and important was your knowledge of antiques and genealogy and humanity. I will miss your counsel and your wisdom and most especially your courage. I would be remiss not to say that we have lost perhaps one of the greatest remaining Southern storytellers. I never knew anyone that fought harder than you.

Nate Ivey - April 25, 2016 at 02:56 PM

SH

Sibbo..I just saw a book called" James Longstreet"! I hope you are reading it from on high.Maybe I never thanked you for the always welcoming hospitality, with wine, no less! Those old days in Milledgeville are still tucked away in my old memory now and I could never forget you. I hope you are in Heaven with all of the unimaginable glorious things we all should look forward to. May we meet again.

Sharon - October 12, 2024 at 11:04 AM