

James Earl Parker Jr.



LAS VEGAS, NV - Sandhills native James Earl Parker Jr. was one of the CIA's longest serving covert operations officers, serving for 34 years. He also served 3 years in the U.S. [Army](#) as an Infantry Platoon Leader in Vietnam where he was wounded and received the [Purple Heart](#) with 'V' device. Cancer did what his country's enemies could not, ending a dedicated life October 9, 2018 while in Las Vegas, Nevada. Ironic, as most of his life had been a successful gamble in the service of his country. Jim was the son of Earl and Vera Parker of Southern Pines who have preceded him in death.

He grew up in the 1950's in Southern Pines and attended East Southern Pines schools after which enlisted in the U.S. Army. Mr. Parker was soon selected for OCS and became one of the first Infantry Platoon Leaders sent to Vietnam in 1965. As fate would have it, years later as a CIA officer he was the very last American Official to leave Vietnam barely escaping from the Delta by boat two days after Saigon fell. He returned to Southern Pines and married a local girl, Brenda Denton, and worked in his father's lumber mill in Sanford. In 1970 he was recruited into the CIA in their Special Operations Group. He was assigned in Thailand serving in a headquarters supporting the "secret" war in Laos. While there, he and his wife adopted two Thai children from a local orphanage. As a family they moved to many postings around the world until his retirement in 1992. On his return to Southern Pines he served as the President of the Moore County Kiwanis Club and spent much of his time authoring 7 books about his wartime experiences in Southeast Asia. He was recalled to active CIA service in 2001 with his first day of work watching the events of 9/11 unfold in front of him in CIA Headquarters in Langley, Virginia. For the next 11 years he served with Army Special Forces and Navy Seal Teams in the field finally retiring for a second time in 2012. He was preceded in death by his parents and older sister Judy Prichard. He is survived by his loving wife of 50 years, Brenda; his son Joseph (Tracie); daughter Miriam; a grandchild Tristan; sisters Joan (Eugene) Edwards of Fayetteville and Kathie (Gary) Swaringen of Ashville; and a foster-brother Va (Beui) Xiong of Aberdeen, as well as numerous extended family members. The family will receive friends from 6:00 - 8:00 pm October 26th at the Boles Funeral Home at 425 W. Pennsylvania Ave, Southern Pines. Funeral Services will be held Saturday, October 27th at 11:00 at the Boles Funeral Home, followed by a graveside service at Pinelawn Memorial Park. Memorials may be made to the American Cancer Association or to the [charity of your choice](#). Online condolences may be made at www.bolesfuneralhome.com Services are entrusted to Boles Funeral Home of Southern Pines. Published in Fayetteville Observer on Oct. 22, 2018