



## James Robert Irwin

October 11, 1940 - June 30, 2020

James Robert Irwin, MD, 79 passed away with his family at his side at his home in Moses Lake on June 30th.

Dr. Irwin was born October 11, 1940 to J. Walter Irwin and Nelle Moore Irwin in Pittsburgh, PA. James graduated from Miami High. Amoret, Mo. He attended Sterling College in Sterling, KS. He then attended the University of Kansas School of Medicine, Kansas City, KS. He interned at Deaconess Hospital, Spokane, WA and then went to Iowa Methodist Hospital, Des Moines, IA for a surgical residency. During the summer months he worked for the US Forest Service in Northern Idaho to pay for his college education.

The summer of 1961, Jim was introduced to Frances at a picnic at Manito Presbyterian Church. It was truly a love created by God at that first meeting. After Frances graduated from her School of Nursing at Deaconess Hospital and Whitworth College, they married in Sequim, WA on June 12th, 1964.

The young Irwin's first summer was at Spyglass Look Out in North Central Idaho. They then moved to Kansas City where Jim continued his Medical School Education. Between Jim's Junior and Senior year of Medical School the couple served a summer in mission in Pokwo, Ethiopia. This cemented their desire to serve others as God had called them to serve. After internship and residency, Dr. Irwin served two years as the Chief of Surgery at US Navy Hospital, Whidbey, Oak Harbor, WA.

The couple applied for oversea medical mission service with the United Presbyterian Church USA and went to Ganta, Liberia for seven months. They then went to Kenya. Due to changing times they were not able to serve in the mission as planned and returned to the United States. Dr. Irwin chose to open a surgical practice in Colville, WA where he served for 13 years. He was one of the founding members of Northeast Washington Medical Clinic.

Nearly 32 years ago Dr. Irwin moved to Moses Lake, WA and opened Irwin Surgical Group. He quickly became appreciated for his surgical skills and his leadership in the Central Basin. Throughout his career he cared deeply for his patients whether that meant meeting a rancher after hours for a few stitches or praying by a patient's bedside at 3:00 AM after emergency surgery. His patients had a great appreciation for the care he gave. At age 62 he was called up, as a Navy Surgeon, to go to Iraq as a Navy Reserve Officer.

He retired as Captain after 40 years of military service January 2004.

Dr. Irwin retired from active surgical services in 2013. His last years at Samaritan Healthcare he served as Chief Medical Officer. His final years he served as a consultant with of Office of Social Security Disability,

Although always dedicated to his patients and family, he served his community through Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce and Columbia Basin Cancer Foundation. His hobby was his Arabian horses and Endurance Rides. He was a member of the American Endurance Ride Association and rode approximately 4,000 miles in competition. Dr. Irwin also enjoyed riding his motorcycle. For his 70th birthday, he and his son Paul rode the Four Corners Tour of the USA. They rode 11,000 miles in 21 days, finishing the four corners in 15 days.

Dr. Irwin was very active in the Stevens County Medical Society, the Grant Adams County Medical Society and Washington State Medical Association. He was a Fellow in the American College of Surgeons. He served as Ruling Elder in the Presbyterian Church, serving locally, within the Presbytery, the Synod of Alaska NW and the General Assembly of the denomination. He was an active member and Elder of First Presbyterian Church, Othello.

Dr. Irwin was an original member of Moses Lake Medical Team which began to make medical missions trips to Nigeria in 2008. He completed 14 trips to Nigeria, providing surgical services to hundreds of patients in need. He enjoyed teaching nurses and physicians improved surgical and medical skills.

Dr. Irwin is proceeded in death by his parents J. Walter Irwin and Nelle Moore Irwin and his four brothers, Dr. Glenn M. Irwin, Rev. John W. Irwin, Rev. Dave P. Irwin and Bill H. Irwin. He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Frances D Irwin, sons Timothy R. Irwin and wife Jenny Irwin, Paul E. Irwin and wife Kristine Irwin, Grandchildren, Shelby and Kyle Swanstrom, Andrea Irwin, Craig Irwin, Zackery and Mallory Friedbauer, Joseph and Midori Friedbauer, Dane and Jazzmin Friedbauer and Kiah Irwin. Two "sons" joined the family, Nyeswa Jarboe originally from Liberia, Africa and Stacey A. Scott. He has three Great Grandchildren. He has numerous nieces and nephews, and two living sisters in laws. Memorials can be made to Moses Lake Medical Team, Umpqua Bank, Moses Lake, Presbyterian Church (USA) Mission Ministries, P O BOX 643700 PITTSBURGH, PA 15264-3700 or Samaritan Foundation, 801 E. Wheeler Rd. Moses Lake, WA 98837 Interment will be at Tahoma National Cemetery, Thursday, July 9th. A virtual Memorial Service will be held at a date to be announced. Please check the Kayser Chapel of Memories web page as to when the memorial service will be available for virtual access. A Police Officer escorted parade will be held Thursday, July 9th at 6:30 AM on West Broadway as Dr. Irwin's casket leaves Moses Lake. The community is invited to stand along Broadway Avenue to bid Dr. Irwin a final farewell.

# Events

---

**JUL** **Graveside Service** 10:30AM

**9**

---

Tahoma National Cemetery  
18600 S.E. 240th Street, Kent, WA, US

# Comments

---



“ Sorry to hear of your loss, you are all an amazing family and did wonderful things together, I know you will continue with great adventure and world changing actions.

**Jennifer (Hoffman) Hart** - August 17, 2020 at 06:57 PM

---



“ I am so sorry to hear about Dr Irwin's passing  
Such a great kind man  
Thankful I knew him

**laurie ahmann** - August 16, 2020 at 02:24 PM

---



“ I just learned of Dr. Irwin's death. I was a pathologist with InCyte Pathology in Spokane. I always enjoyed talking with Dr. Irwin when I called him to give him a patient's report. A thoughtful and kind gentleman. He did so much for Moses Lake.  
Karen Ireland, M.D.

**Karen Ireland, M.D.** - August 07, 2020 at 05:34 PM

---



“ Dr. Irwin was a good man, a friend and a kind and gentle physician. Our favorite memories include the time he took away the fear that our young son was feeling before a tonsillectomy. Dr. Jim was going to take care of him. And, the time that he was the only casualty on a 20 mile Scout hike. To all the family, we are sorry for your loss.

Marlyn and Jean Ballain

**Jean Ballain** - July 20, 2020 at 06:29 PM

---



“ Dear MLMT,  
On behalf of the entire Medicaid Cancer Foundation and Radio Diagnostic Center, I write to convey our heart felt sympathy on the loss of Dr. James Irwin, your mentor, founding father, Chief Medical Director.

Until his death, he was a renowned medical professional who gave humanity his talent selflessly. His good ethics and legacy will remain with us forever.

We shall miss Dr. Irwin during the annual outreaches time Kebbi and his participation in our cancer walk.

Please accept our most heartfelt condolences at this difficult time.

Dr. Zainab Shinkafi-Bagudu  
Founder/CEO  
Medicaid Cancer Foundation  
Medicaid Radio Diagnostic Centre

Dr. Zainab Shinkafi Bagudu - July 19, 2020 at 02:47 PM

---



“ I first met Dr. Jim & Franci when I moved to Colville, working at Mt. Carmel Hospital as an RN. I spent about 8 yrs. there & enjoyed working along side of these 2 wonderful caring people. Later in life I moved to Moses Lake, retired, & renewed our friendship. Our city will miss Jim & his dedication to all. Franci, my heart breaks for you but you have a wonderful caring family & many friends to lean on during the rough times that will come. May God bless this family!!  
Love, Lova Lobe

Lova Lobe - July 19, 2020 at 02:17 PM

---



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Akande Adebayo - July 19, 2020 at 11:14 AM

---



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



**Greg and Chris Callison** - July 18, 2020 at 12:57 PM

---



“ Dr Irwin, a man with great love for family, friends and humanity. He served all with his God-given skills as a physician, following in the footsteps of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, whom he loved while on earth. You were an inspiration and blessing to the poor and forgotten in Nigeria. Rest in peace in Jesus

**Olajumoke Akinjide** - July 16, 2020 at 10:14 AM

---



“ It was great working with Dr Irwin at the DDS, he was one of the kindest men I have ever met. He will be missed

**Deb Cowan** - July 16, 2020 at 01:15 AM

---



“ Beloved friend for 43 years, adopted family, adored by my children, blessed by the gift of his loving friendship. I could write a novel of his kindness, talents and devotion to his patients, family and country. Thanking you and praising God for your making this world a better place.

**tess white** - July 16, 2020 at 12:14 AM

---



“ Dr Irwin was a great physician and took very good care of my family. He was a great mentor as well.

**Michael W Miller MD**

**Michael W Miller MD** - July 15, 2020 at 11:49 PM

---



“ Dr. Irwin saved my life when I was 8 and my appendix ruptured. He felt bad about the scar that was left and every time I saw him he would apologize for it. I wear that scar proudly in remembrance of my favorite doctor. Because of him I chose to work in the medical field (billing and admin)!because I hoped I'd find someone as caring as him to work with. RIP Dr. Irwin. I will never forget you.

**Keri Jones** - July 15, 2020 at 08:36 PM

---



“ Rae LeeAnne Baker lit a candle in memory of James Robert Irwin



**Rae LeeAnne Baker** - July 15, 2020 at 07:26 PM

---



“ Dr Irwin and Francie were fabulous, loving, giving employers to me. I'm so glad I was blessed enough to to get to work for Dr. Irwin when he and Francie first came to Moses Lake. The professionalism, compassion and surgical skills were much needed for Moses Lake at that time. He was always involved in the community and went on many church missions to help those in need, including helping my disabled brother get to church for many years. His heart was huge and his spirit will be missed by all that knew him. We are all better for having met such a kind and generous, loving man of God.



**Shelley Bond** - July 15, 2020 at 06:17 PM



“ Sorry I didn't meet Dr. Irwin but spoke with his wife during some teleconferencences at Moses Lake Medical Team. I appreciated his role during his team's visit to Ogbomoso, my hometown. May the good Lord continue to bless the family. I hope his wife will join the team during its next trip to Ogbomoso. Nigeria.

May the soul of Dr. Irwin rest in perfect peace.

'Kale Oyedeji

'**Kale Oyedeji** - July 16, 2020 at 10:36 AM



“ I will always remember Jim as thoughtful, soft spoken, interesting, and, obviously a Godly servant of our Lord Jesus Christ. With a missions background myself, I always enjoyed knowing about Jim and Francie's mission trips. My husband, Steve, and I didn't see much of them in their early years, but the Whitworth connection got us reconnected, as Francie and I were both high school friends, and Whitworth students. We have greatly enjoyed the times we have shared, including one season of his work for the SS administration, when he parked their fifth wheel here on our rural property. We take great joy in knowing we will see him again.

**Merrily Lowry** - July 18, 2020 at 01:28 PM



“ Dr. IRWIN.will be greatly missed. Great caring surgeon..Prayers be w with all the family mermbers.

**Alice Millspaugh** - July 13, 2020 at 03:50 PM



“ Such a kind and tirelessly amazing man. My condolences to the family. We will miss him too.

**S. Palmerton** - July 10, 2020 at 01:36 PM

---



“ Karen Dalton lit a candle in memory of James Robert Irwin



**Karen Dalton** - July 09, 2020 at 11:49 AM

---



“ Ruth Dasch lit a candle in memory of James Robert Irwin



**Ruth Dasch** - July 09, 2020 at 11:09 AM

---



“ Our daughter, Kira Jones worked in Admitting a few years ago. She and I met Dr. Irwin and they renewed acquaintances. I was very impressed when he introduced himself as Jim Irwin. In my day doctors first name was Dr.!! It turns out Dr. Irwin was born in October & I in December of 1940. Kira still speaks about how Jim wore cowboy boots in surgery! Reading the obit was a pleasure. A life well lived & a perfect example of a Christian servant. Thank you for sharing.  
Sincerely, Bob Jones

**Bob Jones** - July 09, 2020 at 11:09 AM

---



“ My husband George & I thought he and Francie were the best. They came to George’s bedside in our home when we needed it in the worst way. I’m so sorry Jim’s last year was so rough but now he is released from all discomfort. My prayers are with you, Francie.

**Kathleen Miles** - July 08, 2020 at 11:34 PM

---



“ Jami Starcher lit a candle in memory of James Robert Irwin



**Jami Starcher** - July 08, 2020 at 06:57 PM

---



“ Great man. So willing to give to others. He will be greatly missed.  
John & Nancee Woodard

**Nancee Woodard** - July 08, 2020 at 06:06 PM

---



“ I will forever remember one of our walks with the kids, on the dirt road that winds around the farm and through the fields. We picked sprigs of wheat and ate the wheat berries while talking about the kids Science Olympiad, FFA and dance events. He and Mom Irwin were leaving for a Nigeria trip that upcoming fall and he was getting a walk in before a meeting. He always chatted a bit more on walks. He liked being outside.

**Kris Irwin** - July 08, 2020 at 01:13 PM

---



“ A great man and surgeon. He will be missed. Supreme condolences to Francie.  
Cindy Tomlinson

**Cindy Tomlinson** - July 08, 2020 at 12:01 PM



“ He and his wife gave my mother chemo when she was to I'll to travel to receive it. Her name was carol. I will forever be grateful for their time an effort. Rest in peace Dr. Irwin.

**Teresa** - July 08, 2020 at 06:26 PM

---



“ Kelli Goodian lit a candle in memory of James Robert Irwin



**Kelli Goodian** - July 08, 2020 at 01:00 AM

---



“ A gentle giant whose shoes can never be filled. RIP  
Don and Kelly Korpinen

**Kelly Kissler Korpinen** - July 07, 2020 at 10:58 PM