



# Jay William Layer

MAR 18, 1936 - JAN 31, 2023



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# Jay William Layer

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Jay William Layer, of West Chester, PA, passed away quietly in the early morning of January 31st, 2023. He was with his wife, Marjorie, and all five of his children. He is also survived by his nine grandchildren: Emily, Jacob, Leah, and Sofia; Jay; Jacob and Joshua; Sean and Connor.

Dad was born in his beloved Brooklyn, NY on March 18, 1936. Although he only lived there until he was 8 years old, he maintained a life long affinity for the place. He returned to visit his home on Madison Place in April 2019, and was warmly welcomed by the current owners, whom Jay showed the bathroom tile work installed by his tile-setter father, Henry Lloyd. Also during this trip, he fulfilled a lifelong desire to walk across the Brooklyn Bridge.

Dad's family moved to Bryn Mawr, PA in 1944, where he resided until his marriage to our mom, Marjorie Kephart, in 1959. He graduated from Lower Marion High School in Bryn Mawr and attended Drexel University, where he received a Bachelors of Science degree in electrical engineering. Dad was a career engineer, specializing in RF satellite telemetry communications.

Marjorie, the love of Jay's life, was the only girl he ever dated. Mom was a nursing student at Bryn Mawr hospital, where Jay's nephew was born. They were introduced by Jay's sister, Aileen, and married on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24th, 1959, less than a year after first meeting.

Jay and Marjorie bought the house at 1517 Meadowbrook Lane in West Chester, PA in 1962, and lived there for 60 years, until May 2022. They raised five children together: Tracey, Linda, Jacob, Jennifer and Chris. As parents, they were a formidable team, filling our lives with support, opportunities, discipline, adventures, and purpose. They shared a lifelong love of the ocean, and made sure there was an annual summer family vacation in Ocean City, NJ. This was where Dad gave himself the nickname, the "Giant Clam". He liked to play in the ocean just as much as we did, inventing games and riding the waves.



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Dad liked math and physics. He loved reading the work of renowned physicist Richard Feynman, and enjoyed trying to explain his drive to understand the intricacies of high mathematics and quantum mechanics. Dad's primary strategy for keeping us entertained on long car rides was to pose math problems. His analytical mind also lent itself to chess and bridge. He and our mother were partners in bridge as well as marriage. But his interests were not completely intellectual. He had a life long love of the Peanuts gang, particularly that World War I flying ace, Snoopy.

They were also dance partners. Dad especially loved foxtrots and jitterbugs. Mom was his favorite partner, but dad loved dancing so much that any partner would do. Fortunately, with three daughters, there was always one available.

Dad's love of dancing was surely an extension of his love of music. We grew up hearing everything, from Tchaikovsky to Brubeck (two favorites). Dad acquired a taste for opera later in life, but also never lost his love of big band music, especially the Glen Miller orchestra and Benny Goodman. His taste was far ranging and eclectic. He also loved bluegrass, folk music, dixieland and even owned a recording of the Ferko String Band.

Ironically, Dad took strange pride in being a terrible singer. He would purposely sing off key. Our family renditions of Happy Birthday are particularly ear shattering. That said, he and mom encouraged all five children to be musicians, which is why Dad ended up being the West Chester East High School Band Treasurer. By the time their youngest child Chris graduated, Dad had served as Treasurer for 10 years. Dad liked having music around. He loved hearing us sing. In his last hours, we hope he heard that Brubeck was playing softly in the background.

Dad and Mom were our biggest fans, rarely missing a concert, band show or musical production. Dad always with his signature move of rolling up his program like a telescope and peering through it at us, trying to make us laugh from the stage.

Dad was not a gregarious man, given more to being quiet and observant, but he had a wonderful, dry, silly, and sometimes irreverent sense of humor. He was not given to hyperbole. When asked his opinion, "not half bad" was high praise.

He was a teaser. His teasing meant that he liked you. When we were in high school, our sister took to wearing midriff revealing tops; our dad named her "our navel hero." He gave nicknames to lots of people. Our first grade teacher, Mrs. Minacci, became Mrs. Menagerie. His children were



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respectively Bugs (Tracey), Lindy-Lou (Linda), Hambone (Jake), Guinevere (Jennifer) and Beans (Chris). But more often the kids humorously were referred to by birth lineage: number 1, #2, #3, #4, and #5.

Throughout his life he took up various hobbies and activities: volleyball, ballroom dance, sailing, and guitar lessons to name a few. Later in life he briefly took up the hobby of making wind chimes, constructed primarily from copper pipe and fishing line. He named them Blow Hard wind chimes, “guaranteed to last as long as they last.”

Before cancer and cancer treatments started to take their toll, dad was 6 feet tall and weighed in at about 200 pounds. He was strong and resourceful. He was one of those men who fixed everything. From the car to the refrigerator to the plumbing to the wiring, dad had his hand in maintaining every aspect of house and home. His work may not have been exactly to code, but it was pragmatic, cost effective, and functional.

The Meadowbrook Lane home is situated on an acre of land, so there was yard work too. Lots of it. Whether house maintenance or yard work, Dad was our foreman. One summer, under Dad’s direction, we painted the entire exterior of the house, with Dad doing most of the work, of course, but always engaging his children to participate. Even Chris, only four years old at the time, with a bucket of water and brush, helped “paint” the house.

That was how the Layers operated, as a unit. The seven of us. We ate dinner together, and laughed, sang, cried, played games, went camping, and had picnics together. And now one of us is missing. And we do miss him. His quiet, gentle, funny presence was a constant. And now it’s gone. But, he left an undeniable legacy. His character, kindness, and astute, often humorous observations are indelibly written into all of our DNA. Dad isn’t here, but, in a way, he is... we are dad now.

In accordance with Dad’s wishes, there will not be a funeral.

Celebration in memory of Jay at Irish Eyes in Lewes, DE at 4:30 pm on March 4th. Dress is casual! Music, food, drink, funny stories! No tears!

In lieu of flowers, donations in Dad’s memory can be made to a charity or organization of your choosing.



## Obituary

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Please sign the virtual guestbook located on the tribute page.





# Events

**Jay William Layer**

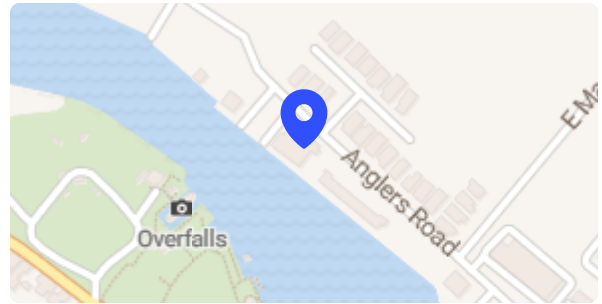
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## Celebration of life

 **Saturday**, March 4, 2023

 4:30 PM ET

 **Irish Eyes Pub & Restaurant**  
213 Anglers Road, Lewes DE 19958





## Tribute Wall

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**Linda Cylc** posted:

What a beautiful tribute! I worked with Jay over 20 years ago, but never forgot him. Jay was probably the reason I was hired and I am pretty sure he gave me the nickname Sweeto! Jay challenged me to be the best engineer I could be, and I always worked hard for his approval. I remember how Jay would come into my cubicle, sit down, cross those long legs and scratch his head...my heart pounding, thinking "uh oh, did I screw something up?!" When Jay finally spoke, it was usually him talking out loud about something perplexing him and had nothing to do with my work, and he would solve his "problem" and say something like good chat! Back then, we had a large and amazing group of coworkers; soo many great memories. Jay was the most respected person, and I am honored that I got a few "not bad" comments from him! I will always remember how we planned a dance at my wedding to a song by Glenn Miller, In the Mood! Jay got a kick out of my husband, and I am soo glad we got to know Marge, what a beautiful marriage, one that we wanted to mirror in life. Jay will never be forgotten, I cherish all of my memories of him. Peace, love and strength to your family. Linda Cylc

March 4 at 4:54 AM



**Anonymous** sent a Sweet Tenderness to the Layer family.



February 2 at 9:53 AM



**Eric Jensen** posted:

Jay was a special man. As a band member at West Chester East High School, I saw Mr. and Mrs. Layer as among the favorites of the band parents. He was fun and an avid supporter of all of us...as if we were his own kids! And what kids he had! Praying for Tracey, Linda, Jake, Jenn and Chris....all of whom are so special! Your whole family is loved!

February 2 at 9:40 AM



## Tribute Wall

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SW

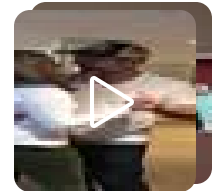
**Scott Watson** posted:

Dear Layer Family, Hearing of your father's passing - and reading your beautiful tribute here - brings back a rush of fond memories of him and the family he (and his special wife) helped create. Your home, with his quiet but strong presence, was one of my favorite places to be in high school. The remarkable children he raised (most of whom I knew as good friends "back in the day"), and the welcoming space he and his wife created in their home for many of us WC East Band kids, says much about the man he was. I'm so very sorry for your loss; please accept my most heartfelt condolences. With warm affection and sympathy, Scott Watson

February 2 at 9:39 AM

LL

**Linda R. Layer** shared 2 videos to the **Dad - Videos** album.



February 2 at 9:30 AM

MH

**Matt Hildebrand** posted:

I moved next door to Jay and Margie in '06. Everytime you talked with Jay you could count on coming away from that conversation with a smile on your face and an inspiration to look at life in a better way. The first time I met him after moving in he greets me "Hi nice to meet you - here's the thing your fireplace in your house doesn't work right..." (the convo carried on with some more laughs and pleasantries) and that began years of being fortunate to share a property line with him. As for the fireplace - Jay was indeed correct. Love to the family, Matt

February 2 at 3:45 AM

EJ

**Eli And Joanne** posted:

Jay Layer was a good man. He was funny, quirky, inventive, interesting. Jay was able to fix anything and analyzed everything. He loved his family and friends. Jay will be missed so much. Love you Jay. Eli and Joanne

February 1 at 4:47 PM



## Tribute Wall

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JF

**Joanne Finegan** shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

Marge and Jay were our neighbors for 30 years on Meadowbrook Lane. We loved them and shared many wonderful memories, both happy and sad. Jay was such a funny guy who always kept us guessing and like to pick through our trash to rejuvenate discarded items and then try to sell them back to us. He often would come over when we weren't home to watch our TV. We knew he was here as we would find his mug or glasses. The entire Layer family are wonderful. We will miss Jay and hope he is finally at peace. ❤️❤️

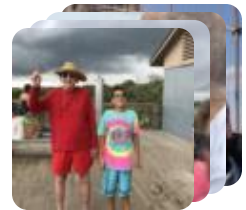


February 1 at 4:08 PM

LL

**Linda Layer** shared 10 photos to the **Tribute Wall** album.

I love you Dad. So many great memories!



February 1 at 12:49 PM



# Media

**Jay William Layer**

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Linda R. Layer shared 2 videos to the **Dad - Videos** album.

February 2 at 9:30 AM



Dad Video



Mom and Dad Dancing



Joanne Finegan shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

February 1 at 4:08 PM



Family Photo outside of their Meadowbrook Lane home.



Linda Layer shared 10 photos to the **Tribute Wall** album.

February 1 at 12:49 PM





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# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Jay by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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