



James Campbell Curtis

JUL 12, 1948 - DEC 22, 2025



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Dr. James Campbell Curtis, age 87, of Lewes, Delaware, passed away peacefully at his home on Monday, December 22.

Born on July 12, 1938, Dr. Curtis was the son of the late Burnham and Jane (Currie) Curtis. A lifelong scholar and educator, he graduated from Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, and went on to earn his Ph.D. in History from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois.

Dr. Curtis devoted 33 years to the University of Delaware, where he served as a Professor of History and as Director of the Winterthur Program in American Culture before retiring. A dedicated historian and writer, he authored four books and was widely respected for his intellect, mentorship, and deep commitment to his students. Over the course of his career, he positively shaped the lives of countless undergraduate and graduate students, leaving a lasting academic legacy.

Dr. Curtis honorably served his country as a Lieutenant in the United States Navy. Beyond his professional life, he was known for his sharp wit, gentle humor, and legendary dad jokes. He embraced life fully and passionately—an avid golfer, advanced skier (who taught skiing for many years), tennis player, fly fisherman and enthusiastic sourdough bread baker. His bread became famous in Lewes. Known and loved by nearly everyone who met him, Dr. Curtis also had a lifelong love of ice cream, was a devoted Chicago Cubs fan, and more recently, a loyal Baltimore Ravens supporter.

Above all else, Dr. Curtis loved his family. He was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and friend, and he made a meaningful, positive impact on everyone who knew him—from close friends to colleagues and students alike.

In addition to his parents, Dr. Curtis was preceded in death by his stepdaughter, Diana Wise. He is survived by his wife of 40 years, Susan G. Curtis; his children, Jennifer Curtis (Rich Bell) of Carrboro, North Carolina; Matthew Curtis (Amy Leach) of Mt. Airy, Pennsylvania; and Meg Curtis



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Berreth (Todd Berreth) of Carrboro, North Carolina; four cherished grandchildren, Lucy, Carly, Kate, and Jack; his stepdaughter, Susan Orten (Tom); and his beloved feline companion, Malcolm Mackenzie.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, January 17, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 2nd Street, Lewes, DE 19958, where friends and family may visit beginning at 10:00 am.

All those unable to attend the services are invited to join the service via live streaming by visiting the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K46OKxXh4a0> .

In lieu of flowers, donations in James's memory may be made to the University of Delaware, <https://ud.alumniq.com/giving/to/makeagift> .

James Campbell Curtis will be remembered for his warmth, humor, generosity of spirit, and the enduring legacy he leaves through his family, his teachings, and the many lives he touched.

FLORIST NOTE: PLEASE DELIVER ALL ARRANGEMENTS BY FRIDAY, JANUARY 16, 2026, TO OUR LEWES LOCATION.

Please sign the virtual guestbook located on the tribute page.



Events

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Visitation

- Saturday**, January 17, 2026
- 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM ET
- St. Peter's Episcopal Church**
200 2nd St, , Lewes DE 19958



Memorial Service

- Saturday**, January 17, 2026
- 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM ET
- St. Peter's Episcopal Church**
200 2nd St, , Lewes DE 19958





Tribute Wall

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Trina sent a Country Basket Blooms to the Curtis family.



January 16 at 11:06 AM



Trina planted a Memorial Tree in honor of James.



January 16 at 11:06 AM



Jim Greene posted:

Dr. Curtis was my professor for two history classes at UD in 1974/1975. He made difficult concepts more understandable, usually with wit and compassion. I remember to this day his multimedia presentations integrating photos with music. RIP, Dr. Curtis.

January 12 at 5:05 PM



Mark Brindle posted:

I had the honor and pleasure of being a student of Dr. Curtis in History 101 & 102 courses in late 70s/early 80s, taking both in a History Through Film format. While there were regular daytime lectures, we also had evening films to compliment the time period studied, but the films were incredible movie style...On the Waterfront, The Caine Mutiny, etc.Lectures as well were memorable, with one on how "The Wizard of Oz" was reflective of the time period...Scarecrow as Agriculture, Tin Man as Industry, Dorothy as Common Person, Oz as God...Who knew? Another on Sports as the American Culture, w/ Dr. Curtis wearing a variety of sports / athletic gear during lecture.He was warm, he was welcoming, he created educational energy and he did have an incredible sense of humor. Thank you, Dr. Curtis

January 6 at 5:29 PM



Andrew posted:

I was lucky enough to meet Jim through his wife, 'Mrs. Wise' who had been my favorite teacher at Our Lady of Fatima. Jim hosted us in their home at a Ski Resort in Colorado. Jim taught us how to ski the moguls.Throughout the trip his warm humor and willingness to discuss history with us was unforgettable.Andrew Bailor

January 6 at 7:53 AM



Memories only last if you share them

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



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