

James Muntz Kirkland Biography



James M. Kirkland, - Class of 1966 - b. August 21, 1947 From the EHS Yearbook, The Maroon: “*Jim*” Intended Career: Industrial Psychologist, E-Club 2, 3, 4, E-Club Vice-President 3; Student Council 2, Class Council 4, Class Vice-President 4; Swimming 2, 3, 4 (Co-Captain); Golf 2

Jim Kirkland served 10 years – five two-year terms from 1983 through 1992 – as the State Representative for Elgin (and Cook County portions of Hoffman Estates, Barrington, South Barrington, and Palatine) in the Illinois General Assembly. This after serving on the Elgin City Council from 1978 through 1982. During these 14 years, he was a general practice attorney in Elgin, and with his wife, Vicki, served actively in the Elgin community – including on his EHS class reunion committee.

He is from a family which on both sides – his mother was a Muntz – goes back three generations in Elgin. His parents and two siblings, plus many ancestors, aunts and uncles, cousins, and nieces and nephews, graduated from Elgin High. Both of his children also graduated from Elgin High, Joel in 1992 and Brooke 1995.

Jim was born in 1947 in Sherman Hospital, and attended Elgin Academy (pre-school), McKinley Elementary School and Larson Junior High School. At EHS, he served both as Class Vice-President and swim team co-captain his senior year.

Jim went to Williams College, a small liberal arts college in Williamstown, MA. As a lark (having not played in high school), he played freshmen football. And survived. More seriously, he continued swimming, co-captaining its team to his senior year. He majored in American Civilization and graduated in 1970.

Jim hitchhiked with a backpack alone around Europe that summer. He then returned to Elgin to become, from 1970-72, a reporter for the Elgin Courier-News. There he met fellow reporter Vicki Toth from Crystal Lake. They married in 1972 and moved to Chicago, where she continued

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her journalism career at the Chicago Tribune while he attended Chicago-Kent College of Law. He graduated in 1975, shortly after Joel's birth, after which they returned to Elgin.

Brooke was born in Sherman Hospital in 1978. During the two decades they brought up their two kids and Jim practiced law and politics in Elgin, Vicki worked in public relations, including for many years operating her own firm, VK-PR.

Following an unsuccessful run for the State Senate in 1992, Jim lobbied the General Assembly for a year for gun control legislation. Following that, for four years, he managed a division in the Chicago office of the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES). During this period, he and Vicki separated (later divorced). Jim lived in Chicago for a year before moving to Alexandria, Virginia, in 1997 and in 2001, marrying Chicago-native Noreen Stoeck Lopez.

The highlights of Jim and Noreen's 20 years in Virginia include, during their first decade plus there, her directing an adult education (GED and ESL) project for PBS and then working as an adult education specialist for the Federal government, and he working as a Mid-Atlantic region independent sales representative selling adult education materials.

Jim, early after retiring, volunteered for two years as an immigration attorney for Catholic Charities of Washington and completed a family genealogy (online, with title but not contents i.e. recent births, updated – see <http://genjmk.com>).

In 2010, though, he stumbled onto a hobby with legs: barbershop singing. Starting with a retired guys daytime chorus, he now also sings with two quartets, plus since 2016 – after auditioning successfully – his hometown (and by good fortune) internationally competitive Alexandria Harmonizers.

Highlights of Jim's first two years with the Harmonizers includes singing in two weeklong events in Nashville and in a Carnegie Hall gig.

Noreen is a chorus singer too (at church, plus for a mixed seniors chorus), and is serving as Treasurer (2017-18) for a local P.E.O. (Philanthropic Education Organization) Chapter. Joel and Brooke with spouses, and Vicki, all live in Silver Spring, MD – a half hour drive from Alexandria through Washington, DC. A new relationship, also with legs, has just blessed all – grandparenting – after the 2017 birth of Joel's son, Henry, with Brooke due shortly to give birth to a daughter.

April, 2018