

# Remembering 'Just Jim'

*Written by Grace Nordahl*

As I was out celebrating my birthday last week, I learned of the death of former owner, editor and publisher of the *Banner Journal*, Jim Frederikson.

Jim and his four siblings were a part of our Harrison Street gang growing up and, needless to say, we youngsters were all inseparable.

There were the ball games in the vacant lot next door, sledding and skating at Mills' Hill down the street, riding our bikes down the "doubles" to the swimming pool, the fun times at the Frederikson cottage in Hatfield, playing "Annie, Annie Over," riding in the back of their green Chevy station wagon and, then, Jim's live pet alligator that he brought back as a "souvenir" after visiting his mom's home state of Louisiana.

In school, Jim loved sports, any sport - basketball, baseball, football and GOLF! He was always available to give advice, analyze a swing (either with a bat or golf club) throw a pitch, play catch and, mostly, listen.

However, sports weren't his only love. He went on to major in journalism at UW-Whitewater, and by the young age of 24 he was already owner, publisher and editor of the *Banner Journal* newspaper. It was there that he had established himself as a worthy source on sports and area news. His column, "Just Jim," which focused on the week's sporting activities locally, statewide and nationally, was a must-read by most subscribers. He was also instrumental in creating the weekly "football contest" of which he knew the outcome - by heart - come Monday morning of all 25 contests that had been played the previ-

ous weekend. It was there, too, that he encouraged me into my journalism career by hiring me as a summer intern at the newspaper.

Jim's efforts of establishing the *Banner Journal* as "the official Newspaper of Jackson County" won several honors for its overall newspaper excellence and placed first in 1973 with the Wisconsin Press Association.

He continued his excellent local news and sports coverage for the next several years and then, as one reporter put it, "moved from the Skyline Golf Course to Arizona" with his wife and two children, where he continued his journalistic abilities. And, being the sports enthusiast he was, he continued to hone his journalistic abilities as the sports editor of a Yuma, AZ newspaper and coached youth sports as well.

In the years that have followed, my sisters and I have kept in close contact with both Jim and his wife, Shawn. He would always write the annual family Christmas letter, one that I always looked forward to receiving, where he eloquently told of the year's happenings. We were always excited to learn when the two of them were coming back to Black River Falls for a visit and made every effort to meet up with them to rekindle our friendship. As it goes, all of the stories that have been exchanged were always embellished just a little more as we dug back in our memories of growing up on Harrison Street together.

Jim's quick wit, calm demeanor and true interest in our lives never wavered. He will be missed.