

James H. Tillman

December 24, 1954 - August 26, 2020

What do you say when someone you've known your entire life passes away? Jimmy Tillman worked at Petersen Industries since 1977. I was born in 1984. When I say I've known him my whole life, that is no exaggeration. For me, Jimmy started out as a family friend and later became a co-worker. Most of you reading this probably had the opposite experience. Chances are, you met him here as co-worker or client and, not long after that, you became friends. If that's not the case, then you are broken inside and I feel sorry for you.

I say this because it is hard for me to imagine anyone not loving Jimmy. Could he be frustrating sometimes? Absolutely, but only because he had so much information and history floating around in his head that maybe he forgot that we haven't all been working here for over 40 years. I think sometimes even he took for granted what a huge asset he was.

Jimmy was a heck of a guy. He could be the quietest person in the room but also had the knack for coming out of nowhere with a comment that would have everyone within earshot in tears of laughter. His fashion sense could be described as western eclectic which he would wear boldly (sometimes with a sly grin). And don't get me started on his relationship with insects. Honestly, with some of the pranks that were pulled on him involving creepy crawlies, I'm surprised he hadn't died of fright years ago.

For years, Jimmy has been a lodestone here at Petersen. Whether he was the first person a vendor met or the reason why retired employees would keep coming back for a visit, Jimmy was the heart of this company and we will miss him dearly.

I had to fight Casey to be the one to write this. We both feel very deeply for Jimmy's family during their time of loss. I eventually got the nod because of the long history that I have with Jimmy, but trust me when I say, the loss is felt greatly by us both. Now that I am writing this, I'm struggling with how to end it. By ending this, I feel like I am already letting go and I am not sure I am fully prepared to do so. With that being said, let me go back to the beginning: What do you say when a dear friend passes away?

We love you, bud...

-Sam

