

## James M. Furner's Signature Collection

James (Jim) Michael Furner was born in Decatur, Illinois on August 11, 1946 to Harry and Geraldine Furner. He had two brothers: Richard (born in 1939) and Robert (born in 1949). Jim was raised in Decatur attending both grade school and high school there. Jim attended Southern Illinois University (Carbondale, Illinois) (SIU) graduating in 1968 with a Degree in Radio and Television Communication. He met his wife, Sylvia, while at SIU and they were married in October, 1967. They have three children, Christine, Tracy (Stein) and Brian. Jim had a career in industrial television and corporate advertising before his untimely death at the age of 64.

Jim began his signature collection when he was a junior in high school when he thought he could improve his grade in his English class by soliciting (in 1963) an autograph from the author of the book on which they were assigned to write a report. The book was "Travels with Charley" and the author was John Steinbeck. A few weeks later a typed letter arrived in which John Steinbeck wished Jim the best and asked how he liked the book and signed the letter. Thus a passion for signature collection was born!

Over the ensuing 48 years of his life, Jim collected well over 1000 signatures. His interest was broad and his signature collection includes: astronauts and cosmonauts (donated to the manned space archives of NASA located at the University of Houston, Clear Lake campus in August 2019), politicians from around the world, military heroes (donated to the Pritzker Military Museum in Chicago in 2018), authors, actors, scientists, and sports figures. He would be proud to have his American women writers' signatures given to the American Women Writer's National Museum.

