



James Clayton Browne

The Road Not Taken

Robert Frost, 1874 – 1963

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

*James C. Browne
Celebration of Life
Saturday, February 10, 2018
4:00 to 6:00 P.M.
Westwood Country Club*

Greeting

Hymn

Sung by Brett Barnes

"How Firm a Foundation"

Eulogy

Dick Rathgeber

Nell Dale

Duncan Browne

Clay Browne

Remarks by other attendees

Hymn

Sung by Brett Barnes

"Amazing Grace"



Visitation and Refreshments

James Clayton Browne, "Jim Browne" to almost all who met him more than once, died peacefully surrounded by his family on Friday, January 19th. He is preceded in death by his father Walter, sister Mary Alice and brother Walter Jr. Survivors include his wife Gayle, son Clayton Browne, son Duncan Browne, and daughter Valerie Bradley.

Jim Browne greatly enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren Vanessa Browne, Megan Bradley, Nickolas Bradley, Duncan James "DJ" Browne, Jr., Austin Browne, and Seth Bradley.

He and Gayle were married on July 11th, 1959, and they would have celebrated their 59th wedding anniversary later this year.

He graduated from Conway High School in 1952, received a BS in Chemistry from Hendrix College in 1956 and a PhD in Physical Chemistry from the University of Texas at Austin in 1960. He joined the UT faculty in Physics in 1960, was a Professor of Computer Science at Queen's University of Belfast from 1965 through 1967, and became a tenured professor at UT in 1968.

Jim first heard about "computers" in 1956, and his relentless intellectual curiosity led him to become an elder statesman of the discipline of computer science. He explained to his children and grandchildren he had to use an abacus and slide rule to calculate electron orbits as part of his dissertation research, so when he heard about these amazing new "calculating devices" called computers, he was immediately interested. This interest led to a distinguished career in computer science spanning six decades, including being one of the first faculty members of UT's Department of Computer Science founded in 1966.

Jim and Gayle moved to Belfast, Northern Ireland in 1963 to help Queens University set up their first real computational center. Although the Brownes were originally scheduled to live in Belfast for a year, Jim quickly became indispensable at Queens, and the family ended up staying in Northern Ireland until 1967.

After the Browne family returned home to Austin, Jim rejoined the UT faculty, became a permanent member of the UT computer committee, and served as the chairperson of the Computer Science Department for a number of years. Jim was the supervisor or co-supervisor for the graduate studies of 68 Ph.D. students and 65 master's degree students and for a substantial number of undergraduate honors theses. The vast majority of these students went on to successful careers in academia or business.

A devoted husband and father, Jim was known both for his unyielding strength of character and a soft spot for anyone truly in need. Over the years, he literally gave away tens of thousands of dollars to desperate graduate students and family members dealing with serious personal and medical issues.

Jim was a "nerd" before the term was invented. He wore shirts with two pockets filled with pens, glasses and the like from the 1950s until the 1970s when his kids grew old enough to talk a small modicum of fashion sense into him. Self-consciousness was not even on the radar for this sharp-as-a-tack country bumpkin from Conway, Arkansas. He was too busy doing important things like writing a program to help astronomers detect double-binary black holes or heading up the grant-writing team to bring the latest generation of supercomputer to UT Austin.

Jim was a committed caregiver to his wife Gayle for the last three years of his life. His devotion to Gayle and her needs was truly an inspiration to all who knew them. He loved her more than life itself in a very literal sense.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the James C. Browne Graduate Fellowship Fund in Computer Science at the University of Texas at Austin.