

Autobiography of Murray Armstrong James

I was born in Fort Worth, TX on April 10, 1927 to Helen and George W. Armstrong Jr.

Although I spent most of my childhood in the East following my parents' divorce, I'm still Texan, born and bred. My grandfather, George W. Armstrong Sr., was County Judge in the early 1900's and I'm proud to be a direct descendent of George Smythe, a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence.

No matter where I've been, this has always been my true home. By the time I was 11 years old I was travelling by myself to spend summers in Texas with my Dad and stepmom and wonderful weekends on her family ranch where Dad was raising cattle.

I attended Sweet Briar College in 1944-45 and then met LTJG John Hatcher James (Jack), home from the Pacific theatre. I promptly transferred to T.C.U. and majored in biology. We were married in 1947, a marriage that lasted almost 65 yrs before his death. We have had 3 kids, 8 grandkids and at present 15 great grands.

Civic interests: As a Junior League volunteer, my first job was teaching the "Frisky and Blossom" class at the then Children's Museum. In the '50's I helped organize the Museum Guild, served as its President once and served on the Museum Board of Directors for several years.

Environmental issues became important and I got involved in recycling with City Councilwoman Margaret Rimmer. I co-chaired the Greener-Cleaner campaign but don't remember dates for this.

I began volunteer work at Nature Center and became active with a new organization, the "Friends" in 1974. I served as President, also chaired the Advisory Committee and set up an Endowment for the Nature Center with the Community Foundation of North Texas in 1985.

As a member of Fort Worth Garden Club, I became involved in fundraising for proposed Garden Center Building and Conservatory, and eventually was co-chairman of the campaign.

I have served on Botanic Society Board and have remained active in both Botanic Garden and Nature Center projects.