



JAMES CAMPBELL RICE, III

December 4, 1935 – October 23, 2006

James C. Rice III, was a loving father, grandfather, husband, partner, friend and mentor to his many family members, loved ones, and colleagues. He was always there emotionally for everyone – with a warm handshake, a kiss and a gentle squeeze of the hand. He had a special place in his heart for those least fortunate, and he dedicated decades of his life to meet their needs. He believed in the dignity of every living person and he sought to lessen the burden of all. Jim was a true believer in the adage “the meek shall inherit the earth”. He could not comfortably pass by a person in need of money without sharing. He felt if they asked, the better part of valor was to believe they were indeed in need. Jim saw a great deal of suffering during his many years in New York and at key strategic times he had an opportunity to shape events for the better. He never paused to consider the impact on himself of the actions he took, but rather sought to forge new paths based on his blend of logic and humanitarianism. He was, as all who love him know, utterly selfless. When anyone, whether a close family member or a stranger on the street, came before him he was the penultimate gentleperson. Those who love him will miss him, but he will live on in our hearts and most importantly in our actions. We will all try to make our lives a reflection of the path he lit. The path is clear, it’s outline definitive: love thy neighbor as yourself, and do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Jim’s career was a mosaic of the stuff of boyhood dreams, corporate straight jackets and the joy of really making a difference. His most recent position as Director of Development for Hospital Audiences Inc. gave him many opportunities to give back by helping to support services for the mentally and physically challenged. As former Assistant Commissioner of the New York City Department, Jim made his mark on services for the disadvantaged, taking every opportunity to improve services regardless of any personal career risk.

As a young man, he served as a Page at NBC with now famous radio and TV stars. His first major professional position was a Vice President of ATT long lines division. After a stint as a NYC checker cab driver, he began to work in the public service fields of alcoholism and mental health. He became

Executive Director of the Manhattan Bowery Project, a program sponsored by the Vera Institute of Justice, one of the nation's foremost programs serving homeless alcoholics, during the 1970s when the Bowery was a magnet for the disadvantaged.

Over several decades in positions of progressive authority, in the city that he loved, he worked tirelessly to lay the foundation and create a continuum of health and mental health services for high risk and homeless mentally ill individuals, a social problem which worsened with the advent of mass deinstitutionalization of mentally ill persons in the early to mid 70's. His myriad contributions to innovated programs have been widely recognized and replicated.

Jim served in the New York City government from the start of the Lindsay administration through the early '90's. In 1981, following the passage of landmark legislation, Jim was a pioneer in the creation of Community Support Services for those in need in the city, linking community-based programs and governmental funding that provided an unprecedented array of services for the seriously mentally ill and homeless. During his tenure with the city, Jim spearheaded the creation of a wide array of supportive services including outreach teams, day programs, and supportive housing residences such as Project Reachout, Fountain House, the St. Francis Residences and the Times Square Hotel, culminating in the historic New York New York Agreement to House Homeless Mentally Ill Individuals. Jim's well-known humanity and compassion lent a dignity to the delivery of social services for populations often neglected and underserved. His legacy continues today in the now well-established network of agencies that serve the needs of New York City's poor and disenfranchised.

Born December 4, 1935, and coming of "age" during World War II and it's aftermath Jim's early years were marked by an awareness of man's inhumanity to man, the events of the 40's and 50's shaped his social consciousness and social life. He graduated from Horace Mann High School and Columbia University, class of 1957. Jim returned to school when he was in his forties, and received his Masters Degree in Public Administration from the Robert F. Wagner School of Public Administration at NYU in 1980. At Columbia, he was the lead pitcher for the Columbia baseball team and sang with the Columbia Blue Notes. Jim's deep voice, both speaking and singing, was legendary. He sang to all he loved, and if they were able taught them to sing.

Michael Jon Spencer, Founder & Executive Director of Hospital Audiences, Inc., a non-profit where Jim served as Director of Development until his death, said of Jim: "He was an extraordinary human being who was able to connect the bureaucracy, and the people it served, in a way never done before. He has left a permanent mark, a structure that will endure for years to come."

Jim Rice is survived by his long-time partner, Meta Beth Ribowsky, daughters Anna Lou Newcomb and Grai St. Clair Rice, and son James St. Clair Rice, as well as two grandchildren, Jennie Copeland Newcomb and John Clark Newcomb. He is also survived by two former wives and dear friends Anna Lou Clark Platt and Cheryl Healton.

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." Martin Luther King