

James Atkin Willis

June 10, 1951 ~ September 28, 2025

James Atkin Willis passed away on September 28, 2025, along with his best friend and wife, Mara Willis, in a tragic plane crash in Tomball, Texas. James was born to George and Elizabeth Willis in Salt Lake City, Utah, on June 10, 1951.

Jim attended East High School, graduating in 1969, and went on to earn his MBA from the University of Utah in 1975. He focused on advancing his career and building flight hours when, unexpectedly, he met Mara—the love of his life. Jim and Mara were married on July 17, 1987, immediately becoming a family of five.

Jim was an exceptional stepfather; by the end of his life, there was no need for the word “step” before father. He was an intellectual—always learning, training, and exploring new flying techniques and technologies. Jim had a great sense of humor; those who knew him remember the wide grin and twinkle in his eye just before he delivered a punchline.

Always seeking adventure, Jim embraced life to the fullest—whether skydiving, skiing, or traveling the world with Mara, his constant companion and best friend. Flying was his lifelong passion and career, one he pursued with joy and dedication for over 40 years.

Jim thrived as a husband, father, grandfather, and friend, leaving a lasting impression on all who knew him—especially his grandchildren, who will miss him dearly.

Jim was preceded in death by his grandparents, parents, and a stepson. He is survived by a stepson, a stepdaughter, beloved grandchildren, sisters, a brother, nieces, nephews, extended family, and many great friends and neighbors whose lives were forever changed by knowing him. He has loved deeply and been deeply loved in return. His one true love, best friend, and inseparable companion will be laid to rest beside him.

Services for Jim and Mara Willis

Viewing - 10/20 6-8 pm

Funeral - 10/21 10:00 am

Location - 10860 S 3200 W, South Jordan, Utah

Graveside - 10/21 12:00 pm

Larkin Sunset Gardens Cemetery, 1950 E 10600 S, Sandy, Utah

To watch the funeral services live via zoom please click the blue "Watch Services" tab at the top of the obituary.