

## **Jim Allison Smith**

Jim Smith is a 1957 graduate of Coleman High School. Jim was orphaned at the age of 10 and moved to Coleman to be raised by his grandmother, aunt and uncle. He excelled in school, was a class leader and participated in football and track. While in high school, he also worked numerous jobs and still graduated at the top of his class. He studied a year at Rice University and then transferred to the University of Texas in Austin. He graduated with honors in 1961 with a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting.

Following graduation, Jim was drafted to serve in the National Guard and was stationed at Fort Polk and Fort Knox. A year later he was released from service and began his career with the CPA firm Arthur Anderson and Co. in Dallas, Texas where he achieved the position of senior auditor in just five years.

In 1966, he moved to Austin where he was recruited to serve as Comptroller at TRACOR, Inc., Austin's first high tech company. At the age of 30, Jim became the youngest TRACOR corporate officer. Jim served as Treasurer, Vice President, and Chief Financial Officer at TRACOR until its sale in 1987. TRACOR sold for \$940 million in 1987 and had approximately 9,400 employees.

Jim then served as Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of Alamo Group, Inc. in Sequin, Texas. Alamo is one of the world's largest manufacturers of truck and tractor-mounted mowers, and brush-cutter equipment. Alamo was a very large firm which later grew from net sale of \$845 million in 2016 to \$1.4 billion in 2020.

Jim loved working with numbers and was quoted as saying, *“To a lot of people, financial reports are nothing more than gibberish, but to me, they are like a good book; they really tell a story.”*

Jim also served on corporate boards of large business firms like National Instruments, San Marcos Telephone Co., Art Carved Rings, Texas Commerce Bank, Electrosources, Mobley Environmental Services, Enviroquip, Net QoS, and Range Online Media.

Jim not only distinguished himself professionally, but also as a respected civic leader in the Austin area serving as President of numerous boards including the Capital Area Council Boy Scouts of America, Austin Area Research Organization, Jr. Achievement of Central Texas, Heritage Society of Austin, Austin Civic

Ballet/Ballet Austin, and the Austin Chapter of CPA's and well as serving on many other boards in the Austin area. He was Co-chair of the City of Austin's master planning process in the late 1980's and was on the Austin ISD Bond Committee. He was also an active leader at First Presbyterian Church in Austin.

Jim always carried and nurtured his early education well, to the betterment and benefit of his various employers, their companies and employees, his community organizations, his church, and his many civic endeavors, all with honor. Jim passed away in May of 2020. He is remembered as a man of integrity, honesty, and humility.

Fellow CHS Class of '57 classmate and 2020 Hall of Honor Recipient, Dr. Ben Streetman, wrote this about Jim:

*"I came to know Jim Smith when we attended Coleman High School, in the early and mid-1950's. He was really smart, and a good student. He was a great friend, and we spent many wonderful hours together, doing teenager things. One of the things we did was to help Charles Moody hot rod a 1939 Plymouth coupe, a two-door with rumble seat. Jim and I enjoyed mechanics but didn't have any money. But Moody was a doctor's son and could afford the parts. We took a 6-cylinder flathead Ford engine, had the cylinders bored out for oversize pistons and changed the stroke for more compression. We matched it up to a LaSalle transmission, and at some point, it actually ran. We learned a lot about friendly collaboration and how much work and concentration it takes to pull off a difficult project. Those lessons served us well as our respective careers played out.*

*As Jim's amazing career developed, I was always proud of his accomplishments, which ranged beyond his work in business to include the arts and community affairs. A life well lived!"*

Accepting Jim Smith's 2022 Hall of Honor award on his behalf is his wife, Jare Horne Smith.