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In Memoriam

Cite this article: Ghanayem N and Jaquiss RDB (2022) In Memoriam: James S. Tweddell (1959-2022). *Cardiology in the Young* **32**: 1367–1368. doi: [10.1017/S1047951122002852](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1047951122002852)

Received: 9 July 2022

Accepted: 11 July 2022

First published online: 2 September 2022

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This article has been co-published in *World Journal for Pediatric and Congenital Heart Surgery*, *Cardiology in the Young*, *Annals of Thoracic Surgery*, and *The Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery*.



James Scott “Jim” Tweddell was born on September 2, 1959, the youngest of three sons of Richard and Marie Tweddell. He tragically died at the peak of his career after a heroic battle with brain cancer.

Dr Tweddell matriculated at Miami University of Ohio in 1977. He graduated in 1981 with a degree in zoology, magna cum laude, and Phi Beta Kappa. He attended medical school at the University of Cincinnati and was elected to Alpha Omega Alpha upon graduation in 1985. During medical school, he first saw congenital heart surgery, performed by Dr Warren Bailey. Jim then sought surgical training at New York University with Dr Frank Spencer. It was his first opportunity to train with a President of the American Association for Thoracic Surgery (AATS), but not his last.

In 1987, Jim began a research fellowship at Washington University in St. Louis. His talent and productivity were so impressive that Dr James Cox (another AATS President) then Chairman of Cardiothoracic Surgery, persuaded Jim to complete his training in St. Louis. Over the next several years, Jim worked in an academic hothouse with a faculty including six AATS presidents, two presidents of the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, and Editors-in-Chief of *the Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery* (2) and *the Annals of Thoracic Surgery* (1).

Upon completing his congenital cardiac surgery fellowship with his mentor Dr Thomas Spray (an AATS President) in 1993, Jim joined the faculty of Medical College of Wisconsin and began working at Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin. He joined Dr S. Bert Litwin, whom he succeeded as Director of Cardiac Surgery at CHW in 2001. In 2004, Jim became Chief of the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery at the MCW and steadily expanded the scope and outreach of the Division.

After two decades in Milwaukee, during which he led the congenital heart program to international prominence, Jim was recruited back to his hometown of Cincinnati. There he became the Executive Co-Director of the Heart Institute and Director of Cardiothoracic Surgery at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center. Jim established a fellowship in congenital cardiac surgery. In addition, he helped found a joint program for congenital heart care with the University of Kentucky Children’s Hospital, which has developed into one of the most successful such programs in the country.

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Jim was an exceptionally productive and innovative scholar, with more than 220 peer-reviewed articles, 20 book chapters, and 100 abstracts. He delivered invited lectures at leading medical centers and conferences throughout the world. He was the recipient of more than 20 research grants. He served as a reviewer, editorial board member, or editor for nearly every leading journal in cardiovascular medicine. He was a member of all major professional societies and held leadership positions with the American Heart Association, The Society of Thoracic Surgeons, and The American Association for Thoracic Surgery. He was a Director of the American Board of Thoracic Surgery from 2011 to 2017. Most recently, Jim served as the 10th President of the Congenital Heart Surgeons' Society, the most prestigious honor a congenital heart surgeon can receive.

Among congenital heart surgeons, Jim was best known for his pioneering work in the care of children with hypoplastic left heart syndrome. In Milwaukee, he led a group that revolutionized the care of such patients with a relentless focus on understanding and managing their complex physiology. Jim introduced surgical modifications which enhanced early postoperative stability and reduced important complications in the intermediate term. In addition, the group developed a management strategy focused on optimizing systemic oxygen delivery. Building on their striking success in the early postoperative period, the team extended their focus into the so-called interstage period, wherein sudden death remained a major problem. By introducing a home-monitoring protocol, Jim's group dramatically reduced interstage attrition. Perhaps most importantly, Jim led the effort to share the lessons the Milwaukee group had learned. This was foundational for the development of the National Pediatric Cardiology Quality Improvement Collaborative, a superb example of the "multiplier effect" in collaborative, iterative improvement.

The preceding paragraphs represent an abbreviated description of a phenomenally successful, productive, and impactful career in the realms of clinical care, research, and education. All of it however is dwarfed by the reality of the son, brother, husband, father, friend, and mentor that Jim was. He was a man of towering intellect and unparalleled accomplishment, but he was also incredibly warm, generous, kind, caring, and funny. Despite his storied undergraduate career, Jim was less grateful to Miami University for his education than he was for it having introduced him to an aspiring young teacher, Susie, the love of his life. Although his courtship was hampered by a vehicle whose floorboards were

more aspirational than real, Jim was able to charm Susie into both marriage in June 1985 and a move to a tiny apartment in New York. Together (although Jim would certainly not apportion the credit equally), they raised three remarkable and accomplished daughters—Sarah, Alison, and Caroline. Sarah, a neonatologist, is married to Dan Ziebell, a pediatric cardiologist. Sarah and Dan welcomed Susie and Jim's first grandchild, George. Alison earned both an MBA and a JD and is a Tax Manager for a major accounting firm. She and her husband Peter Meehan recently welcomed Dr Tweddell's second grandchild, James. Caroline followed her mother's path and works as an Intervention Specialist in a local school district in Cincinnati. She married Joe Weaver this summer.

When not at home with his family or professionally engaged, Jim was a man of protean interests. He was once quite a passionate golfer. He later embraced another avocation, taking up the banjo with typical Tweddell gusto. Jim wholeheartedly devoted himself to mastering the instrument and became quite a skilled player, enough so that he was asked to join any assemblage of musical specialists at cardiac society meetings.

On a personal level, Jim was an incredibly generous and loyal friend, mentor, and sponsor. Despite his fame and success, he remained grounded and approachable, with an earnest desire to help patients, colleagues, and learners of all stripes. His guidance and support were instrumental in launching early-stage aspirants to successful careers and extending the careers of colleagues. His advice was widely sought, and answers to the question, "What Would Jim Do?" always provided superb guidance. Jim was unstintingly honest and transparent. He was notable for his humility, and his friends knew that a phone call to Jim would begin with him recounting his latest surgical blunder in very entertaining terms. Perhaps his most notable attribute beyond his intelligence was his sense of humor, which was always self-effacing while meandering along the bounds of presentability. If a man of his accomplishments could ever be described as impish, Jim was that man.

The term "triple threat" is often used to describe a person who had great success in clinical care, education, and research. Jim Tweddell was certainly a giant in all three, but it could fairly be said that his triply-great professional success was exceeded by his superlative and memorable character. Dr James S. Tweddell was a quadruple threat. We have lost a pioneer, a visionary, a great surgeon, and a true friend. He will be greatly missed by his colleagues and patients, and his memory will live on in our hearts.