



## James Varner Parker

June 27, 1925 - November 6, 2018

James Varner “Jim” Parker, 93, of Cape Girardeau, Missouri died Tuesday, November 6, 2018 at Southeast Hospital.

He was born June 27, 1925 in Senath, Missouri to Jason Franklin and Flossie Marie Varner Parker. When he was three, he moved with his family to Ottawa, Kansas after the St. Francis River flooded and destroyed the family home. The family moved to Rector, Arkansas when Jim was four after the Marais des Cygnes River flooded. When Jim was five, the family moved to Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

He was a graduate of Central High School in 1942. He served in the Army from March 1946 to January 1949, where he served in the 351st Infantry in Italy during World War II. He received a World War II Victory Medal and Army of Occupation Medal.

James attended Southeast Missouri State University and then moved to Phoenix, Arizona where he got an Associate's degree in Art in 1949 from Arizona State University. He then received a Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts at Phoenix Community College in 1968 and later a Master's of Education from Arizona State University in 1969. He continued to teach in Arizona and then moved back to Cape Girardeau where he taught at Southeast Missouri State University.

Jim retired in 1990 from Southeast Missouri State University as museum director. He had previously been an artist and was curator for the Heard Museum of Anthropology and Primitive Arts while living in Phoenix, Arizona.

He became a distinguished artist of the Southwest and Midwest and was a member of Arizona Watercolor Association, Arizona Artists Guild, and the Exchange Club. He received the Otto F. Dingeldein award.

He had a passion for many varieties of art, especially Native American artifacts. Jim had a love for supporting students at the university. He was also an avid gardener, as people said his yard was a "work of art". He won several awards for his nice yard. Another art he had was decorating. He decorated many people's houses and weddings.

He was a member of Centenary United Methodist Church.

Survivors include 10 nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents; two sisters, Madge Rose and Grace Virginia Barr; and one brother, Harold J. Parker.

Per Jim's wishes, a graveside service will be held Saturday, November 17, 2018 at 2:00 pm at Cape County Memorial Park with the Rev. Dr. Barry Winders officiating.

Memorial contributions may be given to James V. Parker Theatre and Dance Scholarship, c/o Southeast Missouri State University Foundation, One University Plaza, MS 7300, Cape Girardeau, MO 63701.

Online condolences may be made at [www.fordandsonsfuneralhome.com](http://www.fordandsonsfuneralhome.com).

Ford & Sons Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

# Cemetery Details

## Cape County Memorial Park Cemetery

2315 Highway 61 North  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701  
(573) 334-1909  
<https://www.fordandsonsfuneralhome.com/>

# Previous Events

## Graveside Service

NOV 17. 2:00 PM (CT)

Cape County Memorial Park Cemetery  
2315 Highway 61 North  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701  
(573) 334-1909  
<https://www.fordandsonsfuneralhome.com/>

# Tribute Wall

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“ James V. Parker was an extremely gifted artist, a top notch curator at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, and he was an excellent teacher/mentor. He was also a great friend to my parents, Rex and Dell Peterson, who knew him through my dad's activities as a board member at the Heard Museum. As a result of these ties and because I was an Art History major, Jim agreed to direct me in a winter internship at the Heard where I had the rare opportunity to witness his sheer genius at Museum show design.

The show was a major collection of rare Indian Art/Artifacts that was being presented at major museums across the country. I traveled with Jim to California to see what a large institution there had done with their show. Although the Heard Museum had far less resources and space, when it came time for Jim to display the same collection - his exhibition design for the Heard Museum was a far superior experience both artistically and educationally. My project, which documented and compared the two shows, earned me an outstanding evaluation by my college's art department...and the memory of that great time working with Jim forged a long friendship. Each year at Christmas-time I looked forward to receiving a Jim Parker original Christmas card - always a simple and perfectly beautiful image he created...often of flowers and plants - along with a pithy note of the goings on in Cape Girardeau. Jim - thank you. I will miss your bright spirit, your friendship and your talent. - Lisa FitzGerald

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**lisa fitzgerald** - January 26, 2019 at 05:37 PM