

## **JIM BACK : OBITUARY**

James Henry Pennell Back died in Harare , Zimbabwe on 29 April 2013 .

Jim was born in Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape on the 2 November 1928 - the son of a distinguished advocate at the Eastern Cape bar. He was educated at College (Espin House – 1942 to 1946) and at Rhodes University, graduating with BA and LLB degrees in 1952. After a short period at the bar in Grahamstown Jim emigrated to what was then Rhodesia in May 1953. He qualified as an attorney in 1956 and then joined the local bar where he practised as an advocate until 1964 . In June of that year he joined the firm of Gill Godlonton & Gerrans and was admitted as a partner . He became senior partner in 1981 and he retired from the firm at the end of March 2013 a few weeks prior to his death . He served as a partner for a little short of 49 years and as senior partner for 32 of those years. He held numerous directorships, including seats on the boards of a number of listed companies .

Jim's family was the most important thing in his life. Jim married Gill in what was then Salisbury in 1955 and they had three children, Sue, Belinda and Simon. Gill passed away in 2010, 55 years after she and Jim were married. Jim was a devoted and loving husband, father and grandfather.

The second thing of great importance to Jim was his golf. He was a member of Royal Harare Golf Club for many decades and an excellent golfer . He only ceased to be a regular player in the last year or two. The respect afforded to him by his golfing colleagues was demonstrated by his being elected as Captain of the Golf Club, and his subsequently serving as its President and later a Trustee . He was justifiably proud of his son in law Nick Price the former world number one and some of his happiest times were watching Nick play in the “ majors “ .

Jim's real passion and interest in life (outside family and golf) was the law, and the practice of the law. He was a mine of legal knowledge, and had a vast experience of the practical application of the law. Jim found a deep

and abiding fascination in the place that the law has in society, in the law itself, and in the application of the law to every field of human activity.

Jim was always decisive . He was always very clear in his views about a wide variety of subjects, and would express those views forcefully and succinctly. This attitude was manifested in the advice which he gave clients. This was always clear, simply expressed and unequivocal. This was something which was greatly appreciated by his clients, who always knew where they stood.

Despite his huge success in life and in his chosen profession Jim was never arrogant, or conscious of his own dignity, he did not stand on ceremony, was always modest and a true gentleman . Jim will always be remembered with deep respect, and with great affection. Jim's many friends and colleagues have lost a truly good man.

Written by Tom Taylor, Treasurer of the Harare Branch of the Old Andean Club,  
and based on the Eulogy written by Peter Lloyd.