

# UNCLE JIM RASSIAS - ΔΗΜΗΤΡΗΣ ΡΑΣΣΙΑΣ – RIP

Peter Adamis - The Voice from the pavement 21 October 2012



Uncle Jim Rassias 2007

Writing an article on a loved one is always difficult and fraught with danger as I may not encapsulate all of the feelings and experiences one would like to add. However, at the time of writing (Monday 22 October 2012 at 2.0 am), Uncle Jim had begun another journey. A journey that would embrace him with his maker and meet with those who had preceded him.

Although we are never to meet him again in this life, we as those who are left behind know in our hearts he has gone before us to prepare our arrival when our time comes. This small article is a tiny aspect of someone who has been a huge part of our lives. Having said this, our condolences to Auntie Fotina, cousins, Phillip, Ilias and their families. Words fail to express our grief and hope that this small tribute is worthy of a great Uncle.

Over a span of 77 years, our Uncle Jim was a pure gentle soul in every aspect. Kind, considerate, supportive, always on hand to provide assistance, a word of encouragement and even to put his hand in his pocket for any worthy cause or individual that needed assistance or was in dire straits. A very humble man both in his demeanour and his approach to life.

He was so humble that when he purchased a brand new vehicle, he would find it embarrassing to drive around the neighbourhood in case people thought that he was showing off. While he loved tradition, especially the Hellenic culture, he readily embraced his adopted country's; way of life and contributed to the fabric of Australian society by his actions, deeds, example and encouragement. He was known for two 'catch-cries' during his life that we as youngsters grew up with. The first was that 'health was important above everything else', and the second was "Is everybody Happy?"

Born in Pellana around 1935, he grew up in an agrarian society that was still recovering from the great depression that had enveloped the world. It was a time of great famine and families had to make do with what they had or were able to create to improve their standing. Born a twin (with brother Evyeni) with siblings: sisters Chrisoula, (RIP) Calliope and Andonia, brothers Arthur (RIP), and Evyeni.

Jim or Dimitri as he was known grew in to a fine young man in his father's household. his father Philip Rassias had not long been back from the ill fated war with Turkey during the 'Great Idea" of Prime Minister Venizelos in Asia Minor. his father had returned to a village that was still steeped in banditry and lawlessness where the strong survived and the weak succumbed to the elements.

Uncle Jim's mother died young while he was still in his teens, leaving his father to bring up the family on his own. By all accounts his father was proud and well respected member of the community and he encouraged his children to do well in all of their endeavours ad to overcome any challenges that life may throw at them. Many of us can remember as youngsters being held in Uncle Jim's arms and caring for us. While at the other end of the earth in Pellana, Greece the tradition of ringing the church bell when a Pellanioti has passed away was rung.

In the end it was our turn to repay that kindness by embracing him. The tradition of ringing the bell is to advise all Pellaniotes and surrounding villages that another member of its community, no matter where they are located around the world, had passed away. One would think that although the day will come when the last bell tolls for those born in Pellana, that ancestral ties are not severed and that succeeding generations maintain the links that were forged many years before.

One could also say that Uncle Jim is leaving us with yet another example of how important it is to retain the ties of our cultural origins and heritage, and at the same time strengthening the fabric of our adopted society, no matter where that society may be located in the world today.

Uncle Jim was close to my mother, his sister Calliope and it was not usual for Uncle Jim to look after us and giving our mother a well earned rest. Uncle Jim would go on to baby sit our own children many years later. I also remember a time when Uncle Jim was in a fig tree in Pellana Greece when he fell down slightly injuring himself. He looked up at me as he lay on the ground and said to "quickly run and get your mother for assistance". I ran my little heart out as I was only three year old to our hut situated on a small rise outside the main village of Pellana.

I ran through the poppy fields and vegetable patches seeking help from my mother. When Uncle Jim migrated out to Australia, he chose to be close to his sister Calliope and in doing so, the siblings in Greece and in Australia had each other for comfort. He visited Greece a number of times and enjoyed himself immensely meeting relatives friends and acquaintances from his youth.

Another time when I was serving in the Australian Army, posted in Melbourne back in 1979, Uncle Jim was babysitting our two little boys David and Paul. Returning from our night out, I drove Uncle Jim home and on the way home he gave me \$20.00, a huge sum to me at the time and said that it was for the boys. I never told him that we were short for that week as pay day was not for a few more days.

He just knew that we need the money and said "I don't want you to worry as everything will turn out right". It is true that each and every one of our family has their own story to tell about our Uncle Jim and its difficult to record the kindness to each and every one here. Suffice to say, we all paid our respects to him during his last moments and young brother Con who had booked a flight to Thailand drove to the hospital on his way to the airport and sang at his bedside, the very same song that Uncle Jim would sing to us when we were children. *"Anapse to tsigaro ke domosoume fotia"*.

As the years went by and our family travelled throughout various military postings, we always came back to the family location where uncle Jim was always on hand to provide support, advice, encouragement and help where he could. His love for his wife Auntie Fotina was well known and he would often say that he would be lost without her.

He would put on a display of bravado and strut around the house telling anyone within hearing shot what his beliefs on marriage, life, philosophy and politics. Like the true Hellenic that he was, our Uncle Jim always had a solution to the world's problems and any times were astounded by his knowledge of the world as we knew that his education in his native land was not above High School level.

He was an inspiration to our four sons, and also to his many other nephews and nieces that doted on him and looked upon him as their confidant, father figure, mate, and some who could be counted upon for a word of advice and encouragement. We who have been left behind are more the richer for having know him whilst he was still amongst us.

During our life time we have yet to meet anyone to say an unkind word about our Uncle Jim and one could say that this was the measure of the man that he was. I say that words are not enough to express our sorrow, our grief and coming to terms with the void that has been left by his passing at what we now believe is a relative young age for a male.

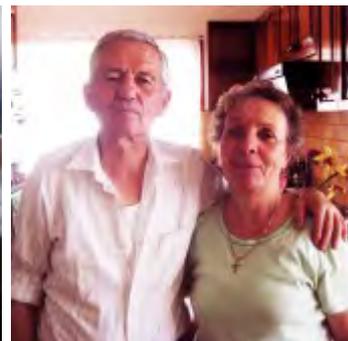
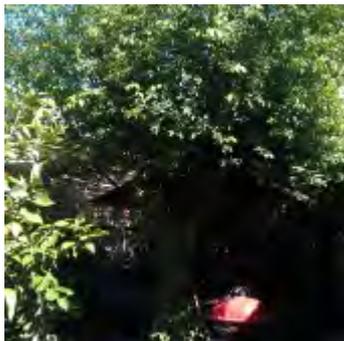
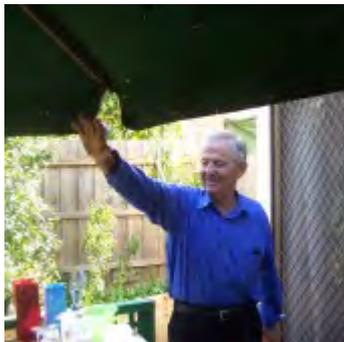
This article is but a small aspect of his life and have yet to touch upon his family, his achievements, and all other manner of worldly influences that he has left us with. The images being displayed are only a small selection taken over the years and do not reflect Uncle Jim's total life or his contribution to those he left behind. On another note of remembrance it is a tradition within our family to plant a tree for our family and good friends as a way of remembering them.

In 2002 Uncle Jim gave me two plum trees to plant at home. One I named Uncle Jim and the other Auntie Fotina. Both trees are doing well and it would appear that this year's plums are going to a bumper crop. This is a living document that will be enhanced with time to include other memories of our wonderful Uncle Jim. Rest in Peace Uncle Jim and thank you for the wonderful memories. **Rest in Peace Uncle Jim and thank you for the wonderful memories.**



*The Voice from the Pavement* - Peter Adamis is a (not for profit) Journalist/Commentator. He is a retired Australian military serviceman and an Industry organisational & Occupational (OHS) & Training Consultant whose interests are within the parameters of domestic and international political spectrum. He is an avid blogger and contributes to domestic and international community news media outlets as well as to local and Ethnic News. He holds a Bachelor of Adult Learning & Development (Monash), Grad Dip Occupational Health & Safety, (Monash), Dip. Training & Assessment, Dip Public Administration, and Dip Frontline Management. Contact via Email: [abalinx@netspace.net.au](mailto:abalinx@netspace.net.au) or via Mobile: 0409965538

### SELECTIVE IMAGES ALBUM





## NOTES

### 1. 21 October 2012

It was the shocking news, that brought tears to my eyes. And you made me remember what it was like to cry. On that dreadful day, God decided it was your time, your time to go, so He took your life away,

And everyone felt the pain, the pain that you had been suffering for so long. It's harder than I ever thought life could be without you. So the family will always think of you. We will always know that you'll be looking down on us keeping us safe making sure everything goes okay in our lives, making sure that we live a good life just like you did until the day that God decided that it was your time to go.

#### THE OBSERVER FROM A FAR

I will never forget those days when I would help setting up table and chairs preparing for an party event or even those long days (weeks) constructing that Veranda, I would see out of the corner of my eye you, my (Uncle) "Theo" Jim with hands behind your back just walking ever so softly 'Observing' the works taking place, then I would hear "That doesn't look right there" or "Maybe do it this way" LOL.

Those were the days I will never ever forget, you my (Uncle) "Theo" Jim walking with hands behind your back "observing' and NOT lifting a single finger to help LOL. I miss you and love you R.I.P.

Matthew A.N. Adamis 21 October 2012 MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

### 2. 22 October 2012

Alex Wilson wrote: "Peter. Your brilliant writing about your late Uncle is to be commended. Maria and I are sorry that your Uncle has passed on but know that he is waiting for you with a large Ouzo." MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

### 3. 22 October 2012

Ilias Deros wrote: "Peter I can't believe it, please give my sincere condolences to auntie Fotini and of course Philip and Louis for their loss. He was exactly as you say a gentle sweet and loving man he will always be in my thoughts. My sincere condolences to your mum" ATHENS GREECE

4. 22 October 2012

Eleni Vlachogianni wrote: "Ton manadon mas h oikogeneia, Peter gia aytoys poy exoun fygei einai mnimosyno ayth h foto, s; eycharisto" ATHENS GREECE

5. 22 October 2012

Giuseppe DeSimone wrote: Eternal rest grant unto him oh Lord May perpetual light shine upon him Rest in Peace. Amen. He and you are in my thoughts and prayers tonight. God bless you both MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

6. 22 October 2012

Peter Vlahos wrote: Dear Peter. Please accept on behalf of myself and family our sincere sympathies.

I had met him twice and found him to be the person you express in your brief obituary of him... May he rest in peace.... PV MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

7. 22 October 2012

Maurice Barwick writes: Thank you Peter for including me with your Family in advising of the death of a beloved Uncle. I know how much you value friendships and relationships and so this loss will come as a tremendous blow. My sincere condolences. Maurice BEAUFORT AUSTRALIA

8. 22 October 2012

Maria Glekas (Sydney) writes: Dear Peter, I am so sorry to hear about your loss. My thoughts are with you and your family. He may rest in peace. I know what the family is going through; two weeks ago I lost my dad too. On behalf of the committee of Vorion Dimon Spartis (Orea Eleni ) Our deepest sympathies to the family during this difficult time. Warm Regards Maria Glekas SYDNEY AUSTRALIA

9. 22 October 2012

Savvas Grigoropoulos wrote: "May he rest in peace and may his memory give you strength and harmony!" MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

10. 22 October 2012

ΓΙΩΤΑ ΠΑΣΣΙΑ writes: Πιτερ μου Καλησπερα .....εμαθα οτι ο Θειος Δημητρακης δεν ειναι καλα ...κει ειμαι πολυ λυπημενη σας στελνω την αγαπη μου κ την θετικη μου σκεψη. αχ να αλαζαν τα πραγματα κ να γινοταν ενα θαυμα να γινει καλα . Κουραγιο σε ολους καρδουλα μου . θα προσπαθησω να μιλησω στο τηλ μα το Φουλη . Πολλα φιλακια στη Γιοβανα .στους θειους στα ξαδελφια στα παιδια .....σε ολουςζζζζζζζζ

ΓΙΩΤΑ ΠΑΣΣΙΑ

Παναγιωτη μου . συλληπητηρια για τον αγαπημενο μας θειο . κουραγιο σε ολους καρδουλα μου .. η σκεψη μας ειναι κοντα σας . σας αγαπαμε πολυ . ATHENS GREECE

11. Jenny Nicolopoulos on 22 October 2012

Dear Peter, You have encapsulated the unique qualities of my favourite Uncle our Theio Jim and he would be so proud of you as he was of his entire family..He was like my second father, in fact my parents entrusted him to raise us should anything happen to us when we were kids.

I remember feeling secure rather than distressed on hearing that comment from my own father at age 10, as Theio was the kindest soul. He dearly loved children and my own 2 year old twins adored Pappou Bimi.

He provided guidance and advice in a nonjudgmental manner. You are right he was so worldly despite his lack of formal education. Truly streetwise...I too will never forget his cheery disposition and wicked sense of humour.

The last week of his life was particularly traumatic as despite all the medical advances I know of today nothing else could be done to save his life. He is at peace now and that gives us solace. He will be missed and never forgotten. Tha mas leipseis Theio Jim kardoula mou. He would reply Ygeia, Xara kai agapi se olous.... MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

12. 22 October 2012

Elias Katsos wrote: Thank you for this Peter and kourayio. My condolences to you, the family and his friends for a man who lived a life of giving to all around him and who will be deeply missed by many. May he rest in peace and may his memory be eternal. Elias Katsos – NEW YORK USA

13. 22 October 2012

Peter and Yovanna, We were so sorry to read about the passing of your Uncle Jim. Our deepest condolences to you and to your whole Family during this difficult time. May his memory be eternal! Love, Uncle Peter, Aunt Anna, Mike, Cathy & Nicholas. TORONTO CANADA

14. 23 October 2012

George Thodoropoulos wrote: Peter, A very eloquent article for an obvious eloquent and understated man..wish I could have know him. you did him proud as we would say here! George USA

15. 23 October 2012

BARBARA VALS KATSOS WROTE: "may he rest in peace and May his memory be eternal!!!!  
People really "go" only when we forget them!!!" ALEVROU GREECE

16. Phil Rassias on 8 November 2012

Thank you to all who wrote such nice things about our dad. We miss him so much. In a recent dream that we had, he told us that he was well and looked healthy. We will never forget him and always love him in our hearts. May he rest in peace. LOVE YOU DAD. Phil