



James Ambros "Jim" Gilstrap

June 3, 1947 - June 8, 2026

James Ambros "Jim" Gilstrap
Pickens, South Carolina

James Ambros "Jim" Gilstrap, age 79, went home to be with the Lord on June 8, 2026.

Born on June 3, 1947, in Miami, Florida, Jim was the son of James Ambros Gilstrap, Sr. and Carolyn Sexton Gilstrap. Throughout his life, he was known for his love for God, his dedication to serving others, and his desire to invest in people.

Jim spent much of his professional career as an educator, faithfully serving as a school teacher and impacting the lives of countless students. He was respected not only for his knowledge but also for his patience, kindness, and genuine concern for those under his care.

Outside the classroom, Jim had a lifelong passion for volleyball. He coached athletes for many years and was deeply invested in helping young people develop both their skills and character. Even after retiring from teaching, he remained active in the sport he loved, continuing to serve as a volleyball referee through the most recent season.

Following his retirement from education, Jim sensed God's call to missions and answered that call by serving with the International Mission Board in Peru for several years. It was during his ministry in Peru that he met Rose Estrada, who would become his beloved wife. The two were married on January 5, 2020, and shared a love for Christ, missions, and serving others.

A faithful member of Pickens First Baptist Church, Jim was committed to helping others grow in their faith. Through his involvement with Bible Training Center for Pastors (BTCP), he helped train and encourage pastors and church leaders throughout Peru and beyond. His ministry touched countless lives and helped strengthen churches around the world.

Jim was a devoted husband, father, brother, friend, and ministry partner. Those who knew him will remember his steady faith, servant's heart, quiet wisdom, and genuine love for people. He faithfully used his gifts to encourage others and point them toward Christ.

Jim is survived by his wife, Rose Estrada Gilstrap; his daughter, Nichole Criminger; stepdaughter, Rosa Pamela Estrada; and brother, Robin Gilstrap. He was preceded in death by his parents, James Ambros Gilstrap, Sr. and Carolyn Sexton Gilstrap.

Jim's greatest joy was found in serving the Lord, loving his family, and investing in the lives of others. Whether in the classroom, on the volleyball court, in the church, or on the mission field, he believed that people mattered and that God's Word could transform lives. His legacy lives on through the family he loved, the students he taught, the athletes he coached, the friends he encouraged, and the pastors and church leaders he helped equip for ministry around the world.

A Celebration of Life service will be held on Saturday, June 13, 2026, at 11:00 AM in the sanctuary of Pickens First Baptist Church. Family and friends are invited to remain after the service, as the family will be available to visit and

receive guests.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in Jim's honor may be made to

Mountain View Funeral Home is honored to serve the Gilstrap family.

Upcoming Events

Celebration of Life Service

JUN 13. 11:00 AM (ET)

Pickens First Baptist Church
406 East Main Street
Pickens, SC 29671

Tribute Wall



“ *Jim will surely be missed by his family and friends and his volleyball cadre! He was a wealth of knowledge in many things but I will be forever grateful for the wisdom of volleyball he bestowed upon me! My heart goes out to his closest loved ones during this time of grief and sorrow. My deepest sympathies and condolences!*

Lacy Lugo - 1 hour ago