

Jim Lawrence



Jim was born on the 26th of January 1938, in Alliance, Nebraska, No. 2 of eight kids. Growing up in Ontario, Oregon, the girls shared one bed, while the boys slept out on the porch.

They picked strawberries in summer—of course, Jim could out pick everyone—and sledged in winter. The local Sherriff gave them permission to hunt, even when out of season, because he knew they'd eat every bit. The hardworking family had five sisters, Fyrne, Sharon, Ruby, Diana and Tracy, and three brothers, Jim, Fred and Randy.

In 1958, Jim met Dixie back in Alliance. She was 16. The day after Dixie graduated from high school, she and Jim married. They remained so for 57 years, until her death.

In the 1960s, Jim and Dixie returned to Oregon, where they had two sons and a daughter: Greg, Doug and Dana. Jim and Dixie shared a love of sports, cards and their faith. If someone had a problem, they got Grandpa Jim to add it to the Prayer List, which he still goes through religiously each night. Jim, a leader in the community, was also on the school board and an elder at the Gladstone Christian Church.

Jim loves elk hunting. Once, he bought a tent for a hunting trip. When he returned, he sold it at a profit and a new enterprise was born. Jim treated his tent business with the same inimitable integrity as his bread delivery job: when a customer bought a tent, he insisted on setting it up in the yard, triple-checking there were no missing pegs, poles or tears.

On many occasions, he'd load up the trailer with gear for the Sherwood boys' football camps, where he'd set up shop, as well as cooking them his "world-famous" hash browns and English muffin pizzas.

When Dixie passed away in 2015, Jim was crushed. But he never lost his will, or his humor. Ask Jim how he is, and he'll say, "Super franztastical, astronautical, cyntrifical!" This is how he makes his grandchildren—Jake, Keegan, Mikayla and Gabi—laugh. He also tells them of his "imaginary friends": Squat, Juan Multi, Boberia, Ho-Hum Stumblebum and Bo-Didley, and, sometimes, asks them if they'd like a "Kumquat Sandwich." If you try to beat Jim, he's still the first one to say, "One more than you say, and gotcha last!"

When Jim Lawrence went on vacation, the other Franz Bread truck drivers were always reluctant to take his route.

For 23 years, Jim, a notoriously hard worker, rose at one o'clock in the morning for his two AM start. He would drive through Beaver Creek and Oregon City, delivering bread to schools and stores, as well as checking their stock. When Jim finished 10 hours later, at four PM, he would head straight to his son's football games, pockets full of red and black licorice and mints. Grandpa Jim, everybody knows, never comes empty-handed.

Challenge him to any kind of competition, you are sure to lose. Once, as a kid, Jim and his cousin had a sun-staring contest. "He'll always come out on top," says his daughter, Dana Smith.