

## IN MEMORIAM: JAMES P. GUY II

James P. Guy II, who served as the president of the Energy Bar Association's Southern Chapter and was the 128th president of The Virginia Bar Association (VBA), died surrounded by his family on January 21, 2026. Jim was guided by faith, and his love of family, commitment to the rule of law, and passion for music were woven together throughout his unfortunately short but well-lived journey.

Jim was born in San Jose, California, and lived his life all over the world, including New Jersey, Paris, Belgium, and Germany and Fairfax, Charlottesville, Richmond, and Saxe, Virginia. Jim attended the University of Virginia for both college (1987) and law school (1990).

He joined the LeClairRyan law firm in 1994 and enjoyed a successful career at the firm where he led the government relations and regulated industries group. Jim was an exceptional lawyer who dedicated his legal career to the electric cooperative community. LeClairRyan served as general counsel to Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (ODEC), and Jim took great pride in his work on behalf of ODEC and its member distribution cooperatives. He was instrumental in the development and construction of several of ODEC's power plants, as well as the acquisition of service territories by ODEC members. Jim also drafted and revised Virginia law governing electric cooperatives, particularly through periods of de-regulation and re-regulation. He joined Williams Mullen as a partner in 2019. In March 2020, Jim joined ODEC member Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative as general counsel and vice-president of administration. He served as the head of Mecklenburg's legal team as well as its affiliates, EMPOWER Broadband and EMPOWER Telecom. In 2022, Governor Glenn Youngkin appointed Jim to the Virginia State Air Pollution Control Board, where he served as board chairman.

Jim was mentor to countless lawyers and served the legal community in exemplary fashion. Jim served as chair of the Virginia Bar Association's Law Practice Management Division before serving as the VBA President in 2016. He also served as board director, vice president and ultimately president of the Energy Bar Association's Southern Chapter from 2024-2025. He was twice named the *Best Lawyers*<sup>®</sup> Richmond "Lawyer of the Year" for Energy law (2016, 2019) and was named among Virginia's "Legal Elite" for Legislative, Regulatory and Administrative Law by *Virginia Business*.

Jim grew up with several family members who played a variety of instruments. He played guitar, accordion, and harmonica, as well as a handheld drum and an Irish pennywhistle. His talents were front and center with his band, Uisce Beatha, with Jim as leader, strummer and singer. The band had an impressive 16-year gig on Thursday nights at the Rare Olde Times pub in Richmond, VA. Jim's bandmates were his wife Judy, the love of his life, plus his brother and friends. The band's performances were affectionately described as "a rowdy family reunion." Jim and his bandmates utilized their talents for good, often appearing for community and charitable events including Richmond's Irish Festival. Jim also helped found a nonprofit called the HARPS foundation, which offered harp performance opportunities as a means for personal growth, community service, and social change.

Jim's commitment to family and community led him to serve many years on the board of directors of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. Jim had two nephews with Cystic Fibrosis, and Uisce Beatha frequently gave benefit performances to the Foundation. A man of great faith, in 2018, Jim was invested as a Knight of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta, one of the oldest lay religious orders of the Catholic Church.

On February 17, 2026, the Virginia General Assembly passed a Resolution celebrating Jim's life. It read, in part, "the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of James Patrick Guy II, a towering figure in the Commonwealth's legal and electric cooperative communities whose life embodied service, creativity, faith, and love."

Jim's survivors include Judy, his wife of 35 years; his beloved children, Callaghan (Daniel MacPhee), Seamus (Olivia Echegaray), and Mairead; two precious granddaughters, Imogen and Aoife; his mother, Dorothy; and brothers and a sister. In Jim's obituary, the family quoted a Gaelic phrase, "Ní bheidh a leitheid arís ann." It means, "There will never be their likes again."