

About Jim Weikart

Jim Weikart grew up in Youngstown, Ohio, graduated from Ohio Wesleyan (BA) and the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop (MFA). His master thesis was an (unpublished) novel *Photographs from the Congo* based loosely on a story an Ethiopian officer told him when they spent three days drinking together in Dekemhare, Eritria in 1965.

He met the Ethiopian while visiting his wife-to-be, a Peace Corps teacher who had alternative plans at the time leaving Jim with the Ethiopian officer. Two years later, Jim and Lynne Alkire married at Gordon & Gloria Hagbergs' residence in the Ngong Hills north of Nairobi.

After a 2 ½ year teaching stint in Bukoba and Songea, Tanzania, from '64 to '66, Jim spent the next year or so at the Iowa Writers' Workshop. He and Lynne lead a Quaker sponsored Non-violence-In-Action workshop in Chicago the summer of 1967. Perhaps fortunately, Dr. King did not return to Chicago for a second summer of

marches. Jim and Lynne ended up in New York in the fall of 1968 having missed the Chicago Democratic convention because their Drive-Away car broke down in Utah on the way east.

Jim got work training Peace Corps volunteers at Teachers College for the fall of '68. At the end of that, the writing producing no income, he answered an ad from H&R Block for a free course in tax preparation. Being a quick study, Jim ended up with a seasonal position in a H&R Block office on Murray Street right down the block from the IRS as the World Trade Center rose several blocks away. Later in that spring, he and Lynne were offered a position to dorm parent the first co-ed dormitory at Barnard College.

The Barnard job gave them a salary, a place to live, and tuition remission at Columbia. Jim enrolled in William Owens Writers Workshop in the Columbia General Studies program. Through that workshop he met Robert

Anderson, John Linder and others who would influence him throughout the rest of his life.

Jim also helped organize The Committee for a Free Mozambique. At the time Mozambique was still a Portuguese colony, and Jim's post in border-town Songea, Tanzania had thrown him into contact with Eduardo Monlane, the president of the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique. He saw himself keeping up his connection to Africa with this project. The Committee offered support to Sharfudine Khan, the FRELIMO unofficial representative in New York.

In the summer of 1969, Jim made his third trip to Africa, leading a student construction project at the national museum in Niamey, Niger. (His first had been as a student volunteer building a family hostel at a hospital in the South Pare Mountains in Tanzania.)

His son Eric was born by Lynne in January, 1970.

Jim continued to work seasonally at H&R Block, while he

and Lynne ran the co-ed dorm and took courses at Columbia and Teachers College.

In the summer of 1973, the small group who had constituted the Committee for a Free Mozambique rented a group house together on Shelter Island. After a 10 year run, many of the group house bought separate homes on Shelter Island.

His daughter Jeanne was born by Lynne in April, 1974.

Jim brought his H&R Block experience home, and in 1975, Jim and Lynne gave up the dorm parenting and moved into an apartment on 111th Street. During the spring of 1976, Jim ran a tax business out of his apartment. The following year, he rented a back room of a Tad's Steakhouse that had a separate entrance right onto 111th Street that he could see from his house. Curtis Arluck joined him that year as a part-time assistant.

Jim and Curtis had worked on the McGovern Campaign

for President in 1972. And together they had supported Lynne and John White as winning insurgent Democratic District Leaders in 1973. Following that win, Jim had managed the campaign for Assembly for his friend, Ed Sullivan in 1976. Ed won by 56 votes. Jim also managed winning campaigns for a State Senator and a Civil Court Judge.

In 1975, Jim published the story “The Final Return” in *Mystery Monthly*. That same year he returned to Africa, traveling to Mozambique for Independence Day celebrations. He traveled across Africa by train to reach that celebration, going transcontinental from Lobito, Angola through Zaire into Lusaka, Zambia. He flew from there to Blantyre, Malawi and took the train down to Beira, Mozambique.

In 1979, Shelley Martin joined Jim and Curtis as a partner in Weikart Tax Associates. Together they built a thriving tax practice that lasted for 34 years. In 2004, the practice merged with Metis Group LLC and Jim phased out into semi-retirement to return to write.

Jim lived on 111th Street in New York until 1994, when he and Lynne separated. In 1998 he married Dana Lichty. Since then he has lived in the River Towns of Westchester, traveling into the City on an almost daily basis until 2009.

Walker and Company published two mysteries, *Casualty Loss* in 1991 and *Harry’s Last Tax Cut* in 1992. Stories were published in *Ellery Queen* and *Alfred Hitchcock*. In addition, Jim had tax articles published and op ed pieces about taxes in the *New York Times*.

Jim returned to Ethiopia in 2008 to be with his daughter, Jeanne, while she awaited the legal formalities of adopting her second child to be completed.

He currently lives in White Plains, NY with Dana.

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