



James "Jay" Lackey Crawford

September 14, 1938 - January 3, 2026

JAMES LACKEY CRAWFORD "JAY" passed away in Devon, PA on January 3, 2026 in the presence of his wife of 64 years, Rosemary. Jay was born on September 14, 1938 and raised in Philadelphia by his parents James (Jim) and Thelma along with his sister Patricia. His mother was quick to share how active he was as a child and how hard it was to keep up with him. Although that energy served him well in life, his elementary teachers had their work cut out for them. His mother was frustrated that he was not reading in first grade, so she decided to search for another option. This desire to support her son led to Episcopal Academy. The commute and financial commitment was not easy, but she was steadfast that Episcopal was the proper fit. His experiences at Episcopal shaped him as a man – he was inspired and engaged to participate in all aspects of the EA community. He excelled in athletics, especially in soccer – which he played semi-professionally – and track and field. Jay earned All League honors in both sports. After

graduating from Episcopal, he ventured across City Line Avenue (from Episcopal's campus) to St Joseph's University on a Track and Field scholarship. Jay was awarded the John D Enright Award for the outstanding Senior Athlete and was captain of both the soccer and track teams. It was at St. Joseph's that he met Rosemary Armon and the two married shortly after his graduation.

Thanks to his positive experiences at Episcopal, Jay chose education as his career path.

Several Episcopal teachers encouraged him to take a year and teach at another school, so Jay accepted his first teaching position at Monsignor Bonner. That year at Bonner was extremely important in providing a greater educational perspective and enabling him to hone his craft as an educator. A year later, in 1962, he returned to Episcopal Academy to teach science and coach soccer. Jay was thrilled to positively impact EA students and inspire their curiosities both in and outside the classroom. During this time, Jay and Rosemary started a family and moved onto campus. Jay pursued a M.ED in Counseling Psychology from Temple University in 1970 and continued post graduate work at Pennsylvania State University to aid in his preparation for increased responsibilities. While raising four children, he held many leadership positions: Director of Admissions, Director of College Guidance, Assistant Headmaster

and was appointed Headmaster in 1973 at the age of 35. His sister, Patricia, also dedicated her professional life to education, and Jay took great pride in her accomplishments.

Under Jay's twenty-nine years of leadership, Episcopal went through significant changes. He soon realized the limitations of EA's City Line location and oversaw the addition of the Devon Campus. In perhaps his most impactful decision, after 150 years of single-sex education at EA, Jay shepherded the transition to co-education, with the first co-ed class graduating in 1984. While he received significant criticism, Jay was steadfast — expanding the school's initial goal of 30% girls to 50%, where it is today. His commitment to equity extended beyond the student body; he prioritized hiring women for key leadership roles, including unit heads, Director of Admission, and the school's first female Athletic Director. Jay's vision of a truly inclusive Episcopal was further cemented through his support of programs like Horizons and Steppingstone Scholars, ensuring that an EA education was accessible to talented students from all walks of Philadelphia life. In his final act as Headmaster, Jay made one of the largest gambles in the school's history, working with the Board to purchase a property in Newtown Square, a property with the necessary space and potential to move Episcopal

into the next 250
years.

Maya Angelou said, “People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them feel.” While Jay ushered in many significant changes, his endearing legacy is his unwavering commitment to each and every student who attended Episcopal Academy during his time. Jay made a conscious choice to connect with each student, finding some common interest — whether it be sports, academics, or in the arts. In doing this, Jay made every student at EA feel they were seen, heard, and a valued member of the community. Jay’s primary focus was that of all great educators – how Episcopal could best meet the needs of every student. Along with his commitment to student life, Jay held a deep respect for the faculty. He practiced active listening with each employee, and believed it was vital for a faculty member to be on the Board of Trustees, ensuring teachers would have an equal say in the future of the school. A quote from Art Carey’s (class of ‘68) tribute piece for Jay - “At root, teaching is about generosity. It’s about giving your time, talent, energy and wisdom - your life, really - to making good people.” Jay exemplified this every day.

After retiring from Episcopal, Jay spent many wonderful years with his wife, Rosemary,

traveling the world, consulting, serving on numerous boards (Gesu School, Stepping Stone Scholars, and Lankenau Hospital to name a few) pursuing the many interests and curiosities he'd developed over the years. Above all, Jay loved to fly fish. He started the sport in his early years on the Jersey Shore in Brigantine and continued through his entire life. One of Jay's favorite activities was teaching his grandchildren how to fish off his dock on Lake Winnapesaukee, NH — he and Rosemary's beloved second home, and just down the lake from Camp Tecumseh, another love of Jay's. He served close to 50 years on the board at Camp Tecumseh and six years as the Chairman. An avid outdoorsmen, Jay loved waterskiing, boating, running (he once illegally jumped in and completed the Boston Marathon!) camping, hiking, wood working, golf and, at the end of the day, reading a good book — always underlining and scribbling in the margins, never passing up a moment to learn!

Jay is predeceased by his parents, James and Thelma. He is survived by his wife, Rosemary, his sister, Patricia, and his brother-in-law John, his son James (Ellen) of Raleigh NC, his son Steve (Rose) of New Hampshire, his daughter Kim (James) of Newtown Square, PA, his daughter Meg (Paul) of Wayne, PA, grandchildren Jay, Patrick, Shannon, Robyn, Michael, Jeffrey, Darby, Katie, Luke, Mac, and Christopher. He is also survived by

numerous nieces,
nephews, and three great grandchildren all of whom he cherished.

Relatives and Friends are invited to pay respects on Saturday, January 17th
2026 from

9:50 AM - 10:45 AM at St. Matthias Church (128 Bryn Mawr Ave, Bala
Cynwyd, PA 19004) and

to a Mass of Christian Burial immediately following at 11:00 AM. His Mass will
be livestreamed at <https://saintmatthias.org/live-stream>. Interment will be
private for the family.

To honor and celebrate Jay's life with the many individuals he touched, a
Memorial

Service will be held on April 11, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. in the Class of 1944
Chapel at The

Episcopal Academy. The service will be live streamed via:

<https://vimeo.com/event/298405/0e5401400e>

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to one of the following
the Scholarship Fund at The Episcopal Academy,
Camp Tecumseh, and Penn Medicine Department of Hematology
Malignancies.

Previous Events

The family will receive guests

JAN 17. 9:50 AM - 10:45 AM (ET)

St Matthias Catholic Church
128 Bryn Mawr Ave
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004-3099
(610) 664-0207

Funeral Mass

JAN 17. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Matthias Catholic Church
128 Bryn Mawr Avenue
Bala Cynwyd, PA

Life Celebration

APR 11. 11:00 AM (ET)

Class of 1944 Chapel at Episcopal Academy
1785 Bishop White Drive
Newtown Square, PA

Tribute Wall

JV

“ For all of the wonderful memories and kindness Jay showed our mother, Marie Viola - longtime head of the business office at EA. I hope they can now share a cup of coffee at their “new heavenly campus” and reminisce!

John (Denise) and Bob (Judy) Viola - February 02 at 09:19 AM

PF

“ Jay and Rosemary lived next to my parents on Lake Winnepesaukee. My father loved chatting with Jay during the summer months sharing all the details of the projects my dad might have been working on. Jay had the ability to be fully present for everyone. Peg (Janek) Frame



peg frame - January 17 at 10:00 AM

MB

“ I remember Jay from when he and his family spent his summers in Longport , N J . My sister and I babysat for his sons. Once a summer we would bike to Atlantic City for breakfast. He was always so warm and welcoming to me and my sister. It was a long time ago but I remember the fun we had with him and his family like it was yesterday. He was a special person and I am grateful to have known him .

Mary Lou Tranchitella Baker - January 14 at 11:09 AM

IS

“ Inetha smith purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of James "Jay" Lackey Crawford.



Inetha smith - January 06 at 10:30 PM

IS

“ Inetha smith planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James "Jay" Lackey Crawford.

Inetha smith - January 06 at 10:30 PM

EJ

“ Elizabeth J. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James "Jay" Lackey Crawford.

Elizabeth J. - January 06 at 07:12 PM