



**Annette Estes**  
**Guest Columnist**

## Professional Development

### Remembering Jim Cockman

I am thankful for a lot of things. I'm thankful today for *The Greenville News* so that I can pay public tribute to a man I am grateful to have known.

Jim Cockman was my mentor and dear friend. I met him and his wife Cathy when I was doing the Children's Miracle Network Telethon for WYFF-TV. After talking with them behind the scenes, I could tell they were good people.

So, when I began my consulting business, I asked Jim if I could meet with him to get ideas about what services CEOs and companies want and need that I could provide. He told me to write down three words: Find, Get, Keep. He said companies want to find the best people, get the best people, and keep the best people and said I could help them achieve the last two with my behavioral and values assessments.

Having done Jim's behavioral style and values profiles gives me an insight into why he was so successful and loved by so many people. Jim's top three values (passions) were Utilitarian (getting results), Individualistic, (power), and Social (humanitarian). The first two help explain how he became a powerful and wealthy businessman. The Social value is what made him passionate about serving and helping others.

Jim continued to give me advice and referrals throughout my career. I still have clients today whom he referred to me.

For several months a few years ago, I attended a religious course presented by St. Francis Episcopal Church, which he and Cathy attended. They let us meet every week in their home in Chanticleer. It was during that time I learned of Jim's deep faith in and love for God. I can imagine God has appointed him to chair some of His heavenly charitable organizations.

Jim and I met together in April of 2003 so we could catch up and I could get some business advice from him. When I arrived at their home, he and Cathy were watching their daughter Allie take riding lessons. Jim then took me to lunch at his country club and helped me with a letter I had written to area CEOs asking them to participate in a Hiring Study I was getting ready to conduct.

At lunch, Jim told me about how they decided to adopt Allie and the gleam in his eyes told me how very much he loved her. He said he had prayed for God to find her a good home while she was still their foster child. He kept getting the message that *they* should adopt her. He laughed and told me how he argued with God that they were too old to adopt a young child. But as always with Jim, God won.

In March, 2003, I wrote a series of articles on leadership and asked a number of successful people to give me their definition of what makes a great leader. Jim wrote, "Compassion, caring, trust. Integrity is the foundation. People do not care how much you know until they know how much you CARE."

If ever there was a man who walked his talk, it was Jim Cockman.

The last thing Jim did for me was to endorse my first book. The last time I saw him was at The Commerce Club where we were attending separate meetings. I had some of my books with me and gave him his autographed copy. He was pleased and said he was proud of me. Somehow, his faith in me means even more to me now that he is gone.

On the day we learned of his death, I saw one of the men Jim introduced to me years ago, Leighton Cabbage. Leighton said the most comforting words, "You can't kill an angel."

Thank you, Jim, for being an angel to so many whose lives are better because of you.

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