

James Melvin Dawson
(1944 - December 6, 2003)

James Dawson passed away on December 6, 2003 in Madison, Wisconsin. "JD" was a doctoral candidate in CIE in the late 1980s and early 1990s where he is remembered for his insightful wit in class and his boundless energy and support for others. He last returned to Amherst for CIE's 25th anniversary celebration. The words below are from his obituary.

JD's quest to discover the world and the diverse people in it reflected the career path he chose. On completion of his Master's degree he entered the Peace Corps. As a Peace Corps volunteer, he spent time in a kibbutz in Israel and went on from there to the State of Maharashtra, India. As a Peace Corps volunteer in India, JD established a poultry project and a community library. After returning home from the Peace Corps he moved to St. Thomas, Virgin Islands where he managed businesses and organizations for eight years. He then became a Foreign Service Officer and returned to the Peace Corps as a Director in the Fiji Islands and later in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.

Three years later, he became the Overseas Director for Oxfam America in Boston, working on programs in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Americas. His career as a



"Citizen of the World" continued even when he moved to the corporate sector where he served as Vice President and International Market Development Director for American Breeders Services (ABS) in DeForest, Wisconsin. This position provided wonderful opportunities for him to work and experience life and the different cultures of several countries in Eastern Europe and China. JD's untimely death occurred while he was serving in Bangladesh as the Chief of Party of ATDP, a Louis Berger Economic Development Project between the United States Agency on International Development (USAID) and the government of Bangladesh.

JD lived life passionately and lived in the moment. He thought of himself as a citizen of the world. "I am a Globalist" was his favorite answer, anytime he was asked for his country of origin. His goal was to visit as many countries and interact with as many different cultures as possible. At the time of his death he had visited 90 countries and interacted with people from so many different cultures that his reports were beginning to sound like "stories," except that he had pictures to back him up. He derived great pleasure in watching immigration officers go through his passport to find his visa for whichever country he was trying to enter. His passport was three times as thick as the

normal American passport. He had this wonderful ability of immersing and comfortably living in whichever culture he happened to find himself.

JD's whole life was dedicated to empowering and improving the lives of people all over the world. Before he started out on his journey to help people around the world, he was a civil rights activist fighting for injustice in America and a union organizer to fight for the rights of blue-collar workers. James Melvin Dawson, Jr. leaves footprints in the "sands of time" in America, Africa, Asia, Europe and other parts of the world. Hence, all those lives he warmly touched, will mourn their loss and celebrate his life.

For a Word document containing messages of condolence sent at the time of his passing please click [here](#). An obituary from Peace Corps can be found [here](#).