

A TRIBUTE TO JAMES H. GILLIAM JR.

THE INSTITUTE LOST ONE OF its senior statesmen on August 20, 2003, when HHMI Trustee James H. Gilliam Jr. passed away unexpectedly at his home near Wilmington, Delaware. He was 58. Distinguished in his career as an attorney and businessman, and esteemed as an effective community leader and philanthropist, Gilliam leaves a rich legacy of accomplishment.

A charter member of the HHMI Board of Trustees, Gilliam was appointed by the Delaware Court of Chancery in 1984. Along with current charter trustees Frank W. Gay, Hanna H. Gray, and William R. Lummis, he had served HHMI with distinction since then.

At the time of his death Gilliam chaired the HHMI Board's audit and compensation committee. As HHMI President Thomas R. Cech observed, however, his importance to the Institute went well beyond that key role. "Jim's wise counsel and conscientious work helped shape the Institute as we know it today," Cech said. "He contributed inestimably to the integrity and high standards of our business practices and administration. At the same time, he encouraged our efforts to promote a more diverse scientific community."

Not simply a successful businessman—although he was certainly that—Gilliam was also a highly regarded community leader. Soft-spoken but tenacious, smart, incisive, and quick with humor, he practiced a style of leadership that was quiet but adroit. He is remembered as a man who cared deeply about doing not what was expedient, but what was right.

When it came to helping others, Gilliam was both passionate and compassionate. As his sister, Patrice Gilliam-Johnson, told the *Newcastle-Wilmington News Journal*, Gilliam believed that "to whom much is given, much is required." Gilliam believed in "making other people's lives better," his sister said. "His life spoke to that."

To his many colleagues, especially those in the Wilmington community, Gilliam was known as an energetic and dogged problem-solver who rose to any challenge, no matter how difficult. He addressed those challenges with consummate style, substance, skill, and grace. Gilliam was well known for his ability to help bring people with disparate points of view to consensus, and for his successful efforts to create meaningful links across diverse communities. He

shunned the limelight, though, preferring to do his work quietly behind the scenes.

Gilliam was an accomplished lawyer and businessman. An alumnus of Morgan State University, he earned his law degree from the Columbia University Law School and began his career in private practice. After serving an appointment as Delaware's secretary of community affairs and economic development, he joined Beneficial Corporation, where he served as executive vice president and general counsel and on the executive committee until the company was purchased in 1998. At the time of his death, he was a private investor and chief counsel of a private investment firm.



One of the unifying threads of Gilliam's illustrious life was his abiding commitment to volunteer service. At the national level, in addition to his work with HHMI, he was a trustee of the National Geographic Society and other organizations, and of several corporations, foundations, and colleges. Revered and respected as an accomplished civic leader in Wilmington, his hometown since college, Gilliam also served many local directorships and volunteer positions. As just one example of his deep commitment to the Wilmington community, he was a founder of the Black Tie Affair, a mentoring and networking opportunity for young men.

Exemplifying Gilliam's dedication as a family man is the surprise he announced for his father's 80th birthday—he and his wife Linda created a \$1.5 million fine arts endowment at Morgan State University. Given in honor of his parents, the gift was the largest in Morgan State's history. In addition to his wife, sister, and parents, Gilliam is survived by three daughters, Alexis, Leslie, and Morgan.

In the days after his death, local and national newspaper editorials celebrated Gilliam's remarkable accomplishments in life. Bill Clinton sent condolences. CEOs sang his praises, as did members of Congress, the governor of Delaware, and many other civic leaders.

In his distinctively thoughtful and gentlemanly manner, James H. Gilliam Jr. contributed significantly and fundamentally to the very fabric of HHMI. "Jim's death is a loss on both the personal and professional levels," Dr. Cech said, "but he will continue to live in our hearts and guide our work for countless days to come." ■