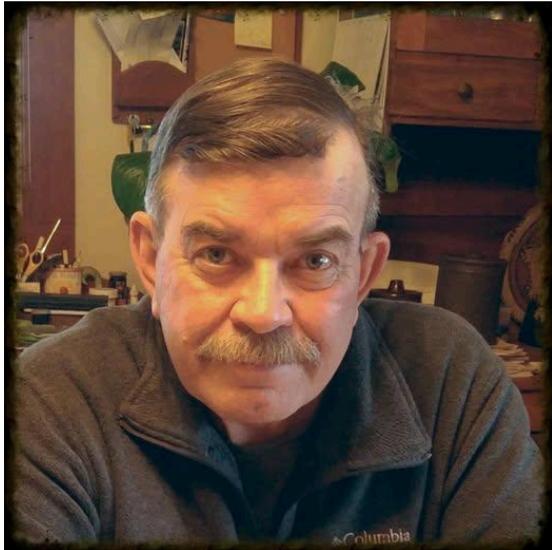


**James A. Rodemaker**  
**September 18, 1947-January 17, 2026**

James “Jimmy” Arnold Rodemaker, NSS 6931 and a member of the Association for Mexican Cave Studies who was active in the 1960s and 1970s, died at his home in Carbondale, Illinois on Saturday, Jan. 17, 2026. He was 78.



Jim was a fellow of the National Speleological Society, a member of the Association for Mexican Cave Studies, a lifetime member of the Little Egypt Grotto in Carbondale, and former club president. He began his caving experiences with the Windy City Grotto in Chicago while attending York High School in Elmhurst, Ill.

Graduating in 1966 from York High School in Elmhurst, Ill., Jim earned a bachelor of science degree in anthropology from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale in 1972. He and his wife Julie (nee Allen) Rodemaker moved to Southern Illinois and started Sunflower Landscaping and Nursery in Carbondale. He continued this business

with his second wife, Terri Treacy, a Texas caver.

Active in the late 1960s and early 1970s in Mexico, Jim explored and reported on caves of the Tlamaya area in San Luis Potosí, including Sótano de la Vaca, Sótano de Huitzmolotitla, Sótano del Fuego, Pit of the Vines, Sótano de Tlamaya, and Sótano de la Poco Ventana. He shared his reports in the *Windy City Speleoneers*.

Caving with Bill Mixon, Phil King, Ron Martel, and others, Jim also visited Gruta del Palmito, Pozo de Gavilán, and Grutas de Villa de García in Nuevo León, as well as Cueva del Salitre, Sótano de Huitzmolotitla, Cueva de Tlamaya, and Sótano de la Tinaja, all in San Luis Potosí.

Additionally, Jim reported on 1970 trips to Gruta de Carrizal and Pozo de Gavilan, both in Nuevo León; Sótano de Gómez Farías in Tamaulipas; Ventana Jabalí in San Luis Potosí; and Sótano del Río Iglesia, Oaxaca. With Ralph Earlandson, he explored Sótano de las Golondrinas and Huitzmolotitla, San Luis Potosí; along with Gruta del Palmito in Nuevo León.

Jim was born in Trenton, New Jersey to Henry J. and Jean (Schultz) Rodemaker. During high school, he excelled at gymnastics and motocross racing. Jim loved adventure and high-risk activities. He also loved nature, was an accomplished outdoorsman and a historian, as well as a nurseryman and landscaper. He was a member of the Illinois Nurseryman's Association, Jackson County Farm Bureau, Murphysboro Eagles, and Carbondale Eagles Aerie #2569.

James is survived by his son, Eli James Rodemaker, NSS 24938L, of Carbondale; a grandson, Ethan James Rodemaker of Laramie, Wyoming; his brother and sister-in-law, Craig and Linda Rodemaker of Naperville, Ill.; his niece, Jennifer Nolten of Naperville; his nephew, David Rodemaker of Lisle, Ill.; niece, Jennifer Nolten; his stepmother, Karen Rodemaker of Tampa, Florida, and her daughters: Donna (Craig) Culver, Lisa (Paul) Romanowski, and Kimberly Trusick; and several grand nieces and nephews.

A celebration of life was held on Friday, Feb. 27, at Sunflower Farms at 4423 Country Club Road in Murphysboro, Ill.

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### **Tributes**

“Jim was a longtime LEG (Little Egypt Grotto) member. He was president of the club, when my parents joined in the 60's. There's a lotta maps out there with Jim's name on them. R.I.P. - *Tony Sean Bittle*

“Sad to hear of Jim's passing. Rode with him on one of my first trips to Tanchipa Dec. '73. Nice truck. Ha ha.” - *Jim Goodbar*

“He was the club president in 1966 when we first joined LESG and was still when I graduated and moved to Alton. Through the years, we've had several cookouts at his place. ... He was married to renowned Texas caver Terri Treacey for many years.. His son Eli was an active caver with us for many years, also.” - *Don Bittle*

“Darn. So sad. He gave me a ride from Austin to Carbondale a long time ago.” - *James Smith*

And, Bill Steele said, Jim was a former winner of the NSS Convention's 4WD slow race.

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### **References**

- [Obituary](#) at Wilson's Funeral Homes
- The Southern Illinoisan [obituary in Legacy.com](#)