

The Measure of a Leader

Our Credit Union family recently lost one of our most influential leaders. Jim Simpson, our CEO from 1986 to 2004, passed away at the age of 84.

Some leaders are remembered for the buildings they construct or the financial results they achieve. Others are remembered for something far more enduring, the culture they create and the people whose lives they touch.

Jim was one of those leaders.

Long before "servant leadership" became a common phrase, Jim lived it every day. He believed a credit union's purpose was greater than making loans or growing assets. He believed we existed to improve lives - our members, our employees, and the communities we served. That belief shaped every decision he made and became the foundation for the organization we continue to build today.

His path to leadership began with humble beginnings that demanded resilience, determination, and hard work. Those qualities became the hallmarks of his leadership throughout his career. Perhaps because he understood that not everyone starts from the same place, Jim believed deeply in helping people succeed. Hard work wasn't something he expected only from others; it was something he modeled every day. He set the standard for work ethic, believed there was no substitute for doing the job right, and had little patience for complacency. At the same time, he led with genuine care, treating people with respect and believing in their potential.

During his 18 years as CEO, Jim led Tempe Schools Credit Union through one of the most significant periods of growth in our history. Under his leadership, we built our main branch in Tempe, expanded our membership, strengthened our financial foundation, broadened our impact throughout the community, and evolved into the modern financial institution that would eventually become Landings Credit Union.

Jim understood that lasting growth wasn't simply about adding members or increasing assets. It was about earning trust. By investing in employees, building lasting relationships with members, and remaining deeply connected to the community, he helped create an organization that people wanted to be part of. The remarkable growth the Credit Union experienced during his tenure was a reflection of those values in action.

Whether greeting a member by name, helping someone work through a financial challenge, or celebrating a young member receiving their first car loan, Jim never lost sight of why the Credit Union existed. He understood that every interaction was an opportunity to make a

difference. He believed relationships mattered, and he wanted every member to leave knowing they had been genuinely cared for.

That same commitment extended well beyond our walls. Jim devoted countless hours to organizations dedicated to strengthening education, supporting families, and improving life throughout the East Valley. As a board member of the Tempe Impacts Education (TIE) Foundation, he worked alongside Joe Spracale during its early years to help ensure students had the basic necessities of food and clothing so they could succeed in the classroom. He also served on the Tempe Community Council Board and gave his time and leadership to numerous organizations throughout our community. His extraordinary commitment to service earned him the Spirit of Tempe Award in 2003.

Those who worked alongside Jim remember more than his leadership. They remember his personality.

He loved hunting and fishing, baseball and telling stories. If you spent any time with Jim, chances are you heard him say, "That dog won't hunt," or describe someone as "happier than a dead pig in sunshine." Those familiar sayings, along with his warm smile, reflected a man who could make people laugh while never losing sight of the work that needed to be done.

When Jim retired, he embraced the next chapter of his life with the same enthusiasm and purpose that defined his career. He treasured his wife and their three children, but nothing brought him greater joy than being "Grandpa." He proudly shared stories, photos, and videos of his grandchildren, celebrating every milestone as though it were his own accomplishment. Whether traveling with family, spending time outdoors, or casting a line in the water, retirement allowed him to fully embrace the people and pastimes he loved most.

Jim's vision continues to shape our organization, and the Credit Union has continued to grow and evolve in the years since his retirement. But the truest measure of his leadership isn't found in a building, a balance sheet, or the years listed beside his title.

It is found in a culture that reflects the values Jim lived every day: hard work, genuine care for people, and a commitment to making a difference in the communities we serve.

Those values didn't retire with Jim. They continue to shape the way we serve, lead, and care for others today.

And they remain the greatest gift he left our Credit Union.

Honoring Jim's Legacy

A private family memorial service will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, we invite you to join Landings in honoring Jim's legacy by making a donation to the TIE Foundation or by sharing a favorite memory or message with his family.

Donation: Checks should be made payable to **TIE Foundation** and mailed to:

Landings Credit Union
2800 S. Mill Avenue
Tempe, AZ 85282

Landings Credit Union will ensure all donations received are delivered to the TIE Foundation in Jim's memory.

Donations to the Tempe Impacts Education Foundation are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. The TIE Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization (EIN 86-0670224).

Memory Share: One of Jim's greatest legacies is found in the lives he touched over the years. If you have a favorite memory, story, or message about Jim that you'd like to share with his family, we would be honored to help preserve those memories.

Please email your stories and memories to the Credit Union by clicking [HERE](#). We will collect all submissions and ensure they are shared with Jim's family.

Thank you for helping us celebrate a remarkable leader, mentor, colleague, and friend.