

Emeritus Biography

James P. Walsh (PhD, Northwestern) is the Arthur F. Thurnau Professor Emeritus and the Gerald and Esther Carey Professor Emeritus of Business Administration in the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business. He also holds emeritus titles in Organizational Behavior, Human Resource Management, Corporate Strategy, and International Business.

Over a forty-year academic career, Jim's research explored the cognitive, structural, market, and moral dimensions of organizational life. His work spanned managerial and organizational cognition, corporate governance, stakeholder theory, and the responsibilities of business to society. Among his many contributions, he took particular satisfaction in helping to develop a normative theory of business—one that called on firms to act not only in society but for society as well. The Academy of Management honored him with a Distinguished Scholar Award.

A dedicated educator, Jim was recognized for teaching excellence by both the Ross School and the University of Michigan. He advised nearly 300 MBA teams on action-based learning projects across five continents. He also developed an undergraduate Strategy course that, in time, helped shape his normative theory of business. That course held special meaning for him—not only intellectually and pedagogically, but personally. He took many of those students on business and society immersion trips to China, Ghana, and Rwanda, places where questions of commerce, culture, politics, and history intersect in profound ways.

Jim also embraced the call to service. On campus, he chaired both the Management and Organizations Department and the Strategy Department, and served on countless committees and task forces. His impact extended well beyond Ann Arbor. Serving as an action editor for the *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Organization Science*, and the *Strategic Management Journal*, he devoted most of his service energy to the Academy of Management. Joining “the Academy” as a PhD student, he served on the editorial boards of several of its journals, worked as an Associate Editor of the *Academy of Management Review*, co-founded and then edited the *Academy of Management Annals* for its first five years, helped create two new Interest Groups (now Divisions), chaired a major Division, served as Dean of its Fellows Group, and was elected the Association's 65th President. The AOM recognized these many contributions with its Career Distinguished Service Award.

Looking back, Jim saw his engagement with African scholars and institutions as another meaningful highlight. He held a *pro bono* appointment as an Extraordinary Professor at the University of Pretoria (in South Africa), mentored PhD students and junior faculty across the continent, and helped lead the Academy of Management's Africa Strategy—an initiative that contributed to the founding of the Africa Academy of Management. He also

served for many years on the board of the UN's Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative, supporting global efforts to advance ethical business education. This work was grounded in a capacious vision of corporate responsibility. Consistent with his normative theory of business, he believed—and still believes—that firms must be responsible to society as they create and deliver their goods and services, and just as responsible for any harm their work may cause.

In sum, Jim's scholarship was defined by a quest to better understand cross-level relationships within organizations and between organizations and society. But at his core, he's always wanted to help organizations more fully serve the common good.

He was deeply grateful to have shared this journey with his wife and longtime colleague at Northwestern, Dartmouth, and Michigan, Professor Sue Ashford. Among his greatest joys was having two of their three daughters take his Strategy course and join him on those international immersion trips. Even so, he regretted not being able to share that experience with all three—Allie, Hannah, and Maddy.

Reflecting on his professional life, Jim is filled with gratitude—for the freedom to pursue questions that mattered, for the students and colleagues who both inspired and taught him, and for the trust placed in him along the way. He often remarked that societies ask their professors, clerics, and justices to don robes—as a reminder that their work is to serve the world, not themselves. He sought to wear his with gratitude, humility, and honor.