

Tribute to Dr. J. Davidson Frame

1947-2023

**Author, Professor, Scholar, University Founder
Former Director, Fellow, Project Management Institute**

Editor's Introduction

Dr. J. Davidson Frame, "David" Frame to his friends and colleagues, passed away on 19 November 2023. With shock, deep grief and holiday season upon their dear PMI friends, his wife Yanping Chen notified the PMI through the chair of the PMI Board of Directors on 2nd January 2024. An email quickly followed from PMI President and CEO Pierre Le Manh, informing other PMI Fellows of David's passing. Since then, PMI and several individuals have posted tributes online. Many individuals have sent condolences to Yanping and David's family. A memorial Celebration of Life was held in Georgetown, Washington, DC on 19 January.

David Frame was a distinguished contributor to the Project Management Institute (PMI) for many years, was a PMI Fellow and winner of multiple PMI awards, and was very well known throughout the international project management community. This PMWJ Tribute provides more background information about David Frame, also providing an opportunity for family and colleagues to share personal memories and tributes to him. Following the announcement from PMI and statement from PMI CEO Le Manh, the memorial brochure and tributes at the memorial by family members are shared below. Links to two videos are included. Tributes from David Frame's friends and colleagues around the world then follow. David Frame had an enormous impact on PMI and professional project management. The paragraphs and statements below illuminate that reach. But be forewarned; keep a Kleenex handy to dry your tears.

Formal Announcement from PMI¹

In Memoriam

Dr. J. Davidson Frame

Our global community is deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. J. Davidson Frame.



¹ From PMI website: <https://www.pmi.org/about/leadership-governance/board-of-directors/in-memoriam>

Dear PMI Board, Fellows and Teams,

I am saddened to share that we learned today of the recent passing of Dr. J. Davidson Frame, a beloved PMI Fellow, past Board director, mentor, and volunteer. He passed away on 19 November 2023.

David was a member of PMI's community since the 1990s, serving on PMI's Board of Directors as an appointed director of certification, director of educational services, and director-at-large. He was awarded PMI's Outstanding Person of the Year Award, Distinguished Service Award, and PMI Fellow Award.

David spent much of his professional career educating others and supporting life-long learning in the field of project management. He was an active thought leader in project management, the decision sciences, and technology management, having written eight management books and more than 25 scholarly articles.

David served as academic dean and chief academic officer at the University of Management and Technology in Virginia, USA. He also served on the faculty of George Washington University, where he established a project management degree program.

I have sent my condolences to his loved ones, including his wife YanPing (also a PMI Fellow and volunteer), and know that his contributions to the profession and PMI will continue to impact project professionals for years to come.

We will honor David with attendance at his memorial service, acknowledge his contributions on the In Memoriam webpage on PMI.org, and will send flowers on behalf of PMI. In addition, the PMI Educational Foundation (PMI EF) will appropriately administer a scholarship in David's name.

David made a powerful impact and lasting legacy on the project management profession and community, and he will surely be missed.

With deepest sympathies,

Pierre Le Manh
President & CEO
Project Management Institute

Personal Statement by Pierre Le Manh

For over three decades, Dr. J. Davidson Frame was revered as a dedicated PMI volunteer, a past Board director, and a mentor. He was honored as a PMI Fellow, the highest recognition within our community, for his outstanding contributions. His commitment to advancing the profession was evident not only through his authorship of eight management books and numerous articles but also through his significant role in shaping project management education. Notably, he established the project management degree program at George Washington University (GWU). As the chief academic officer at the University of Management and Technology (UMT), he made substantial global contributions, working in over 20 countries to address gaps in project management practices.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Dr. Frame was known for his kindness and for embodying the best values of the PMI community. At PMI, we will continue to honor his legacy, remembering him not just through the PMIEF scholarship named in his honor but also in our daily work. We embrace the core values he represented so well, and his memory remains a guiding force for us all.

Pierre Le Manh

President and CEO, Project Management Institute
Paris, France

Davidson Frame Celebration of Life Memorial Service on 19 January 2024

[Memorial Services for John Davison Frame III, January 19, 2024: Brochure + personal story – to read, click here.](#)

[Memorial Service for John Davidson Frame III \(19 January 2024\) – captured on Video; click here](#)

[PMI Memorial Video about the life and career of Dr. J. Davidson Frame: click here \(2024\).](#)



Tributes by Memorial Service Participants

Family Members

I met my brother on February 24, 1947, when he was two days old. Dad brought Mom and David down to our car. I hung over the back of the passenger seat, excited to get a better look. He was asleep, his tiny face scrunched up; his large head topped by a full crop of black hair. I was puzzled by his thick, dark hair, as all the babies I had seen were nearly bald.

Our parents had prepared me for his arrival. They told me I was David's Big Sister and I had to look out for him.

Eight months later our family left for Iran. David and I grew close in the years we were there. As he got older, we roamed the world of the hospital compound and often the hospital itself. David's only fear was when he had to walk through the field of cows adjacent to our home. He asked me to hold his hand. I took his hand and held tight. He didn't realize I was scared too.

David had a curious and opinionated nature. When he was about four, Mom made him an outfit: shorts with a coordinating plaid shirt. He didn't like the shirt. One morning I walked into our bathroom and was startled to see David standing next to small flames shooting up. He had found matches, figured out how to light them and was curious what would happen if he set fire to the shirt.

I called for help and Mom, nearly nine months pregnant with our sister Deborah, came running and quickly extinguished the fire. Fire out, she chased David to give him a spanking. David ran under Mom and Dad's bed. Poor Mom was helpless until our housekeeper came and corralled David. Then Mom started to laugh, and Dave and I knew that he had been spared a spanking.

But Mom got the final word. She patched the burned section of the shirt and David had to wear this obviously mended outfit to church until he outgrew it. Lesson learned. Don't mess with Mom. And a good laugh can ease nearly any situation.

A few years later we left Iran and moved to Forest Hills, New York. It was quite an adjustment. We saw plumbing for the first time. And sidewalks. And a neighborhood full of kids.

David began school early. As his Big Sister, it was my responsibility to walk him to school. He cried for the first week. I felt so helpless. As he got older, on the way to school he often had to pass through a gauntlet of older, tough guys. Later he told me how relieved he was one day as he approached these toughs Frank Stoney, a young black kid of 12 or 13 who I knew from church said: "leave him alone, he's Sally's brother." David was never bothered by these kids again.

David had so many interests. Art lessons at 9, Then piano lessons. And Photography. A quick story. Outside our apartment a gangster was killed by a car bomb. Mom was horrified when David grabbed his Brownie Box camera and rushed down to take pictures. When David returned, he told Mom that he was going to deliver the film to the newspaper. Mom looked up the address. Then David dashed to the subway to go into Manhattan and delivered his film. That afternoon, David's photograph of the exploded car and a dead gangster with his body torn apart was on the front page of the Journal American, with credit given to David. The following day an editorial with a photograph of David appeared, recognizing our Shutterbug.

Eventually, his keen mind drew him to world of science and technology. It started with homemade firecrackers and mini-bombs exploded on the side streets of our neighborhood.....Until one day a policeman brought him home. Then his experiments were moved into our apartment. With our Dad's direction, David channeled his interest in science and created projects that he entered into school competitions. He always won a top award.

And with all of this, David was a graceful and accomplished athlete. His treasured bicycle became the chariot that took him off to explore. A 5-mile bike ride...easy. 10miles, no problem. Let's go for 25.

Our parents divorced, and David went to live with Dad, limiting our time together. Then we went to college, and we were no longer as connected as we had been. After college I was thrilled when he moved to Washington to continue his education. I lived here and we often spent Sundays together. He lived a spartan life. Studied hard. And, honestly, I didn't understand much of what he was doing. But I knew that he had a original and gifted mind. That he had a remarkable sense of humor. A bit weird sometimes, yes. But, so what?

In the early 1990's I was on business trip to Singapore. I wandered into the airport bookstore and saw a familiar book on the front table: "The New Project Management" by J Davidson Frame. I had read the book when it was first published, but I had not realized the reach of his influence in the field of project management. I was so proud of him My Baby Bother had grown into a remarkable and accomplished person.

Last week I located a Second Edition of this book. I was stopped by the inscription David had written: "The words keep spilling out! Love, Little Bother".

I miss you, Little Brother.

I am so grateful that I was there from the very beginning.

Sally Frame

Davidson's Older Sister

Dear David,

Steward of family fables,
Explorer, artist, father and friend.
You were such a complicated vision
Of brilliance and illumination,
Slapstick and insight,
A mind that yearned and churned
Always seeking another plane.
We honor you in this moment,
Each of us sitting with a slightly different view,
Timeframes shifting between us
As we remember funny tales,
late night chats,
Familial sagas,
Whilst cherishing our complex history,
The genealogy which connects.
David.
Artist,
Tennis player,
Disco dancer,
Tenor and bass,
Grocery store bagger,
Storyteller,
Brilliant writer and wit.
Big brother,
Father,
Husband
Grandfather,
Mentor,
Teacher,
Creator.
We gather here to celebrate your genius,
Your virtuosity,
Your embodiment of inclusion,
Though catching up with the emptiness of this loss
May never be reconciled.
You were an icon to many,
Your relationships spanning far and wide.
We love you,
And cherish the many laughs and stories.
We shared.

I promise I will look after Katy.
And feel your spirit in her smile.
In the words of Farsi,
Jaat khaaleeyeh...your place is empty.

Deborah Frame

Davidson's Younger Sister

January 19, 2024

My dad used to tell me about the day I was born and how it was a beautiful fall day. He would describe how the autumn leaves were bursting with color as if in a celebration of my birth. He loved to tell that story to me. And he was a great storyteller.

Many of you know (and if you had not before then you know now after all these wonderful tributes) that he was a man blessed with many talents and abilities. And I, being his daughter, have been in the extremely fortunate position to have inherited even a modicum of his talents and interests, which were passed down to me through nature and nurture. And what I would like to do right now is take this moment to thank him for all the gifts he's given me. These gifts have shaped who I am today. So, thank you dad. Thank you for your love of beautiful images, your photography is my cinematography. Thank you for your love of language. Your poetry is my song writing. Thank you for your love of science and nature. Your bird watching is my fishkeeping. Thank you for your love of humor. Your weird sense of humor is, well... my weird sense of humor. Thank you for your curiosity, and your sharp business sense, your strong opinions, your sensitive heart and your creative mind. And the list goes on and on. Lucky me!

The day my dad passed it was a beautiful fall day and I could not help but notice the autumn leaves bursting with color as if to announce the passing of a truly great man. A one in a million. And it is through this parallel seasonal portal if you will, that our mortal connection came to an end. Full circle as they say. And while there is grief of course, there is also peace because I know that while he is not here physically, he lives on through what he passed down to me. And to you. And to every person he touched while here on earth. So thank you dad for giving me life and for teaching me how to live.

Katy Frame

Davidson's Daughter

Since I came to the US from China when I was seventeen, his influence has woven a continuous thread through the fabric of my life, creating cherished memories.

It was at that tender age that my journey with him began. He gracefully introduced me to Western life, sharing the beats of Abba and Bee Gees, the warmth of Christmas melodies, and the magic of iconic movies like Indiana Jones and Ghostbusters. In each note and frame, his wisdom helped shape my understanding of this new world.

During the initial months of attending college at Georgetown University, where language barriers cast shadows of uncertainty, he stood by me, advocating for my success with professors. Then in my sophomore year, he supported my shift from pre-med paths to Economics and Math, laying the foundation for my future endeavors.

After college, when I grappled with the decision to rent or buy, he explained the market intricacies with data and helped secure the loan for my first apartment.

In a moment of personal crisis, he shared books like the Amelia Peabody series and the Geisha's Memoirs. As these stories unfolded, revealing tales of resilient women, the strength and resilience within me were unlocked.

As I walked down the aisle on my wedding day, he stood proudly by my side, offering steadfast guidance and filling each step with joy.

As John and I navigated the journey of raising three boys, he often shared his childhood stories and insights on what's important when nurturing boys. Those anecdotes, discussions, and wisdom from him were priceless, serving as guiding lights in our decisions and approach to raising our sons.

The emptiness left by his departure is deeply felt, and I miss the warmth of his jokes, the richness of his stories, the flavor of his cooking, the guidance in his advice, the strength in his support, the depth of his wisdom, and the comfort of his hugs. Though I miss him dearly, I know that his love and the memories of him will be forever cherished and enclosed in my heart and the hearts of my children.

Lele Wang

Davidson's Stepdaughter

Today, I stand before you on behalf of my two younger brothers to share memories of the life of our grandpa David – a man whose warmth and presence left an incredible mark on our hearts.

Grandpa David was an artist at heart. Each year, he gifted us unique paintings on our birthdays, showcasing not only his artistic skill but also his affection. Whether it was capturing my basketball victories, Ryan's skating lessons, or Patrick's toothless smile, his paintings stand as cherished tokens, preserving the stories he so eloquently conveyed through his art.

I also enjoy painting, and when I was trying to experiment with blending colors, I turned to him for guidance and advice. He not only explained the techniques but also bought me the paints, brushes, and sponges. One of my recent paintings was selected by the school to be showcased in a local magazine.

Additionally, Grandpa David was an amazing cook. His fries and fish nuggets with ketchup never disappointed and were always a delight to eat. Despite Ryan claiming to dislike ketchup, he couldn't resist enjoying it with Grandpa David's fish nuggets. After every meal, Grandpa David always treated us to ice cream; these were all cherished memories.

Grandpa David had a unique tradition that we all looked forward to at each gathering in their house. He would measure our heights, marking the passage of time with a pencil on the wall. It became a symbol of our growth, a reminder of the precious moments we shared as a family.

Grandpa David's connection with nature was apparent. Armed with a bird whistle and some bird food, he would attract feathered friends, capturing their beauty through his sketches and photographs. His appreciation for the natural world was a sentiment he generously shared with those around him. He also gifted us the bird whistles, which Patrick blew into every few seconds; we had to hide them from Patrick for now.

Moreover, he imparted valuable life lessons through activities such as teaching Ryan and I how to handle a bb-gun. It wasn't just about marksmanship; it was also about how he thought that we were responsible enough to handle a bb gun. I will always remember how he cared about our safety and made sure that we were doing it right so that we didn't hurt ourselves.

Today is a day to celebrate the enduring legacy of Grandpa David. His culinary delights, artistic creations, bird calls, and life lessons will forever be in our hearts. We will always remember the joy he brought into our lives and carry forward the lessons he graciously bestowed upon us.

Thank you for joining us in honoring the memory of our beloved Grandpa David

Michael, Ryan and Patrick
Davidson's Grandsons

Professional Colleagues

I remember the day I first met David.

He and I were starting our board journey together in Phoenix. The hotel had not yet caught on fire.

I'm stepping into this new role, and I really didn't know what I had signed up for. And here was another new board director, except he wasn't a new board director, he had served off and on for as long as PMI's been around, felt like.

I was immediately intimidated. His experience was staggering. This guy could dance circles around me. In multiple languages.

But here's the thing. That's not the person he was. He always made you feel appreciated, that your ideas were the most innovative, fascinating things he's ever heard. He would stop everything to give you his undivided attention, be completely present, and make everyone he interacted with feel special and appreciated.

He was a keen observer, which is something that came out in his painting, sketches and pastels, and his appreciation for the world. It also came out in infinite patience, humility, kindness and compassion.

And his incredible and bizarre sense of humor. When I was thinking of hilarious stories I could share here today, every story had something in common - they'd be 100% inappropriate for this setting.

I appreciated his dedication to lifting up the profession of project management; giving it recognition and dignity but without what he called, "the usual hubris of professional organizations."

When he finished his term at PMI, I really missed being able to bounce ideas off of him, as his wisdom and commitment to professional excellence was unmatched. When others bring up stories from 20 years ago to explain why things are they way they are, or what decisions were made, most people roll their eyes, eager to get back to the task at hand. But with David, everyone dropped their pencils to learn. His storytelling was disarming, and his perspective was peppered with warmth and humor, and he could turn the room with his brilliant mind.

Plus, you never knew whether he was going to devolve into whether osso buco should be cooked for 10 hours using a fine cut of veal (no) to detailed foreign policy recommendations on the future of Taiwan.

I talked with his student and greatest admirer, CJ Walker Waite, this week, and she told me something that David once told her, which I think captures the man I know and love. He said:

“I think my greatest reward is helping people find the best inside them, and then seeing them making it flourish.”

Thank you, David, for seeing that light.

Jennifer Tharp

Immediate Past Chair

PMI Board of Directors

San Francisco, California, USA

Statements of Tribute by Colleagues and Friends Around the World

The following statements have been offered by family, friends and colleagues who knew David Frame personally.

Condolences and Tributes prior to Memorial

3 January 2024

Dear Yanping,

Mary Elizabeth and I just learned of David’s passing and wanted to reach out to express our condolences to you and the family. I looked for a phone number but for some reason I was not able to find one, so please excuse me sending this via email instead of calling you. David was not only a giant in the Project Management community where his leadership and contributions will be long remembered, he was also a true human being who offered kindness and helped everyone around him. He was a special person who was always able to offer teachable moments with respect and humility. I will always remember fondly our time together in Virginia when you both hosted me in your home in

2010 prior to the PMI conference. May David Rest in Peace and I pray that you receive comfort in this difficult time.

Sincerely,

Philip Diab, PMI Fellow

Former Chair, PMI Board of Directors

Jordan and USA

3 January 2024

Dear Yanping,

I'm sorry to hear about David's death last year. I enjoyed meeting you both at various PMI gatherings over the years, and I always learned something from David. He and you were so encouraging and supportive, always friendly and helpful. You'll be missing him terribly, especially stepping into a new year without him at your side. I'm sure your many happy memories will bring you comfort, and I hope you have family, close friends and good colleagues to offer support, especially as the various "firsts" come and go.

Thank you for sharing David with us all. He'll be greatly missed.

With best wishes,

Dr David Hillson, The Risk Doctor,

PMI Fellow, HonFAPM, CFIRM

London, UK

3 January 2024

Hello Yanping: I heard the sad news about David and was shocked, stunned, and saddened. You and David were by far two of my favorite people while at PMI and there's so much the two of you did for me on a personal and professional level. I am partially comforted by the many memories we share of travel around the world, walks to/from our various dinners, and leisurely conversations on work, family, and life. And while nothing can truly comfort you at this sad time, I hope my note temporarily lifts your spirits and brings back some positive memories.

I will keep you both in my prayers, but please again accept my condolences. Sending my deepest love and respect.....

Victor R. Carter-Bey, DM

Past PMI Director of Certification

Arlington, Virginia, US

4 January 2024 (posted on LinkedIn)

Yesterday, I received the news of the passing of [J Davidson Frame](#).

Dave's contribution to the project management field and to the [Project Management Institute](#) cannot be measured.

A PMI Fellow, former board member, author, academic, and thought leader, there is no single area of our profession that was not touched by his brilliant contributions.

My condolences to [Yanping Chen, MD, PhD, PMP, PMI Fellow](#), and his loved ones for the loss 🙏.

The only thing I can say at this moment is that his legacy is here and will continue to benefit future generations. The best way to honor his contributions is to share a lecture he gave at The University of Texas at Dallas about the PMI Pulse of Profession 2017 (Thanks, Tahirou Assane Oumarou, for sharing it with me): <https://lnkd.in/dq7Pwn8Y>

Rest in peace, David, and thanks for all you did for the profession and for all of us.

Ricardo Viana Vargas, PMI Fellow

Former Chair, PMI Board of Directors

Lisbon, Portugal

8 January 2024

Hi Yanping!

I am terribly saddened to hear about David's passing last November! Please accept my deepest condolences to you and the family!

David will be deeply missed, and his contributions to the global PM community will continue to be very valuable for generations to come.

He's such a very wonderful person, he touched so many people's lives, minds and hearts! He is an inspiration to me in my life personally, within PMI and outside PMI, but especially while working with PMI Board.

I will forever be grateful for having known David (and you) and having worked with David in the PMI Board!

[My husband and I continued to talk about you and David, even after I left the PMI Board. We love you!]

Please take care of yourself and let me know if I can help you in any way!

Vicky

Victoria Kumar, PMP, PMI-ACP, DASSM

PMI ATP Instructor (DASM, DASSM)

Past Director, PMI Board of Directors

15 January 2024

Dear Yanping,

I was so sorry to hear of David's death. No matter what age, stage, or circumstance – it's never easy. The news was shocking to me, but that is nothing compared to how you and your family must feel. Please pass my sympathy on to your family.

I regarded David as a friend, a respected and erudite scholar, a source for an honest perspective, a provider of sage advice and always delivered with a cheeky smile. A rare character and he will be greatly missed.

The memorial service should be a time for pleasant memories and an opportunity to be close to David's many, many friends. A time to commence healing. I regret that I will not be able to attend the service, but I will be thinking of you.

Sincere condolences from myself and Vicki, and from all your friends in Australia.

With love and best wishes

Mark Dickson

Former Director and Chair, PMI Board of Directors

Australia

18 January 2024

Yanping,

The weather situation in NYC has caused me to cancel my flight to Washington DC and I will not be able to attend the memorial. I am very sorry I cannot be there. David has been a friend for more than 30 years and he was my sponsor for the PMI Fellow award. David was, in my opinion, not only a friend but the finest example of what a PMI Fellow is all about. He was always sincere, courteous, had a unique sense of humor, and was dedicated to PMI and the project management profession. His demeanor and personality simply caused anyone to immediately like him. He was warm, and just a pleasure to know. I met David when I took my first class toward a GWU Masters certificate.

Speaking very plainly, we just connected not only as professor and student, but as New Yorkers! David and I shared a few unique New Yorker experiences, and he was fond of sharing a few of those with others when we met at PMI events. I recently found a few photos of David and me, taken as he autographed his book *Managing Projects in Organizations*. That was in 1991. I have some amusing stories about David and I and I hope to share them with you when we have an opportunity to meet again. I always enjoyed my conversations with David and will miss him at every PMI Fellow event. I have a deep appreciation for David, and I thank him for his friendship, his kindness, and the inspiration he gave me to continue my contributions to PMI.

I wish you and your family a very brief time of sadness. The memories of David will soon sooth your loss and fill your hearts and thoughts with the warmth of his smile and his devotion to you and his family.

I am proud to be David's friend and thankful that he has been a part of my life.

Sincerely and Respectfully,

Frank Saladis, PMI Fellow

New York, USA



PMI Fellows annual group photo, Las Vegas, Nevada – December 2022

The last PMI Fellows meeting attended by Davidson Frame

Statements received for this tribute

We have lost an excellent professional and a good friend.

I still remember that the first time I met David was in 1993 in San Diego (California), when I attended my PMP certification exam. Several years later, he contributed to one of my books, coauthored with Randall L. Englund (Project Sponsorship), where he shared some real stories about dealing with executives. I have been meeting David and exchanging emails every year. I invited him to speak several times to Spain (THE PROJECT PORTFOLIO DAYS), where he contributed with his professional experience. Since 2011, I have met him every year at our PMI Fellows dinner and, lastly, at luncheons. As a practitioner, author, researcher, professor and global volunteer in PMI, he has been an example. I wanted to finish my comments like this:

Dear David, God bless you! Your contribution to the profession made a difference in our professional and personal lives. I will never forget you, my friend.

Alfonso Bucero, PMI Fellow

Madrid, Spain

It's hard to think of a better man than Davidson (David) Frame - super smart, gentle, with a wicked, almost British, sense of humour. I enjoyed many occasions in his company both professionally and socially. David was always generous with his time and the sharing of his knowledge. He became one of my 'go to persons' when in need of some mentoring. A giant of PMI and of the wider profession for many decades and a true loss.

Iain Fraser, PMI Fellow

Wellington, New Zealand

My first encounter with David was in 1998 when I bought the book 'The Project Office,' which he co-authored with Thomas Block. I was implementing my first PMO at a German insurance company, and this book gave me comfort and security.

When I met David later at many PMI conferences and in the Board room (we were both Board directors from 2017 to 2019), this was the feeling that David conveyed: comfort and security.

I met his wife, Yanping Chen, in 2015 and became a fellow board member with her. We had many good discussions, sharing a common view on right and wrong. Sometimes, David joined, and I consider both of them friends.

David and Yanping both have amazing life stories and are truly global citizens.

I miss David and wish Yanping the strength to carry on.

Panta Rhei!

Thomas Walenta, PgMP, PMP, PMI Fellow

Frankfurt Area, Germany

David has been a reliable friend, an inspiring presence, and a guiding mentor throughout my years as a Board director at the Project Management Institute. His visionary approach to project management and leadership has been a trigger for much of my work, and his mentorship has been invaluable. His influence extends beyond the boardroom, leaving a legacy of empowered leaders and enriched project management professionals.

Thank you, David! Rest in peace.

Antonio Nieto Rodriguez

PMI Fellow

Brussels, Belgium

My connection with David Frame goes back to the vibrant days of the 1990s, when we were both members of PMI's Washington, DC chapter. In those years, David's leadership shone through as he passionately spearheaded PMP courses on weekends, propelling our chapter towards the ambitious goal of becoming the largest in the world.

Our journey continued when we served together on PMI's Global Board of Directors during 2007 to 2012. David, a true PM scholar left an indelible mark with his intellectual prowess and unwavering commitment to PMI's mission. His strategic insights and dedication fueled the board's initiatives, contributing richly to the field of project management.

Susan and I fondly attended David's Celebration and Thanksgiving Service, where family and colleagues painted a poignant picture of his incredibly rich life journey. Despite the snowy Washington weather that day, the warmth of memories and shared stories brightened the occasion.

David, a giant among Fellows, will be sorely missed. His legacy lives on in the project managers he influenced and minds he inspired. Farewell to a leader, mentor, and friend.

Gene Bounds

PMI Fellow

Alexandria, Virginia, USA

I met Davidson Frame many years ago when he was teaching at George Washington University, following that he went on to establish The University of Management and Technology with his wife Yanping Chen. Over the years, we often met at PMI Fellow and Volunteer events as well as PMI Congresses. I had many opportunities to appreciate his great commitment to the PMI and his bright academic mind. He will be missed by all the PMI Community and particularly by the PMI Fellows.

Michel Thiry, PhD, PMP, DAC, DAVSC, PMI Fellow, FAPM

Managing Partner, Valense Ltd.

United Kingdom

"I was first introduced to David when I joined the PMI Board in 2001. David and I served on the Board concurrently for two years. As a new director, I watched the Board interact to determine where I fit into the process. Many of the directors talked at length during discussions, but David usually sat quietly. At first I thought he wasn't paying attention. But when he did speak, the room quieted and everyone listened carefully. And David inevitably nailed the issue succinctly, and with clarity about the really consequential choices involved in it. It always got the Board's conversation back on track. And every time, he positioned his comments with a wry sense of humor that showcased his humility. He didn't care about being recognized; he didn't even always have a strong opinion on the subject at hand. He cared only about getting the right decision made. His demeanor and thought process taught this new Board member what it meant to be an effective member of the group.

As I got to know David better, there were other things I noticed about him. He was generous with his knowledge and committed to mentoring. He never pushed himself on anyone, but he was always there for those who sought his help - and at times, he gently redirected others to be the best they could be. He derided self-importance - his own and others'. I also watched David as an ambassador for the profession. His belief in project management's value to business and even society was heartfelt, and he conveyed that to others without the almost-religious fervor of some. It got people to pay attention and ask questions.

David became a role model for me. Because of him, I still often ask myself if I can boil a debate down to its most consequential decision points. Because of him, I often (maybe not often enough) realize I have to operate from a position of humility and questioning instead of from only conviction. From him, I learned the value of generously mentoring others. I will never be David. But without the Davids of this world, I'd only have hard knocks as my teacher. Thank you, David, for your life lessons and for the joy of knowing you."

Marge Combe

PMI Fellow

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA

I first met David Frame in December 2001 at a Nashville bus stop ... we were waiting for the tour bus to take us through Nashville neighborhood's to see homes of the historic global famous Icons of Country Music ... not knowing I was touring with PMI's Icons David & Yanping (and their children) ... the three of us became immediate Friends and continue to be close personal friends ... the rest is History.

I was first elected to the global PMI Board of Directors in 2002 (notification took place in person in Nashville a month earlier), with David already a sitting Board Director ... he had many eye-opening comments, one such was at a 2002 Board meeting recess he found it amusing that during meetings, board members would clammer to get on official records that they second a motion of any kind, just to see their name in print ... where he boastfully stood up and said "I am very proud that I have never second any motions" ... we all laughed ... that was the essence of David.

David & Yanping wrote letters of support for my successful 2012 application to be a 2012 PMI-Fellow (same year Yanping was bestowed a PMI-Fellow).

David was amused and satisfied that Yanping and I would call each other in public, Brother and Sister ... we still say it to this day ... Our bond developed at a Board's EMEA trip to Budapest Hungary where we went sightseeing together for 2-3 days visiting Zoo, Markets, and Castles ... we developed a brother/sister bond.

David ... Thank you ... You will be missed ... Having our Roads of Life cross each other's ... definitely made Me be a better Professional, Person, Husband and Father.

Mark Mathieson, PMI Fellow

Fresno, California

2012: PMI Fellow

2012: President Fresno California Central Valley Chapter

2002-2004 & 2007-2009: PMI Global Board Director

1996-2000: Chair Design, Procurement & Construction (DPC) SIG

1992: PMP

Remembering Dr. Davidson Frame





I have personally lost a dear friend, a person who has inspired me right from the first time we met in 1996 in the George Washington University. We shared our thoughts in the most transparent way with total trust in each other. In 1996, we invited him to India to participate in our global symposium in New Delhi and also to conduct a 3-day program on project management certification. A most emotional moment was when he refused to take the cheque we presented him at the end of the program for his professional fee mentioning that would be his contribution to the missionary work being carried out by me in building a project-oriented India. He said he came from a background of missionaries as well. In appreciation Centre for Excellence in Project Management (CEPM) had instituted a Dr. Davidson Frame Excellence Award for the Project Leadership.

Davidson was a man of the highest integrity, symbolic of what passion is all about and a thought leader in the larger perspective of project and program management. The global project management community will miss him forever. It is a most painful process to get to face the reality that he is no longer with us. May his soul Rest in Peace!

Adesh Jain

Chair, International Institute of Projects and Program Management (i2P2M)

Founder, The World Project Management Forum (WPMF)

Former President & Chair, Hon Fellow, IPMA

New Delhi, India

I had the pleasure and fortune to know Dr. Davidson Frame within our PMI Family. He was a remarkably wise individual and an outstanding professor who made significant contributions to advancing the project management profession. The project management community will dearly miss him.

Kind regards,

Pablo Lledo

Former PMI Director

Former Chair, PMI Education Foundation

Mendoza, Argentina

David was a personal friend for many years (since 2000), my mentor and role model. He indeed was a thought leader and always challenged and inspired everyone to think out-of-the-box and do their best. He was a champion of international culture. He always made a long-lasting impression on anyone he met due to his kind and caring nature. He would always make people feel important whenever anyone met him.

On a personal note, he was my source of inspiration when I was writing a series of my three books on Human Aspects of Project Management that were published by PMI. He wrote a praise/comment published on the back cover of my Book-3 "Managing the Project Team". In addition, he wrote an excellent recommendation letter for my promotion to a full Professor level at TRIUMF, University of British Columbia, and at the time when there were not many academics at the Full Professor level associated with PMI.

My wife, Shiksha was fortunate to meet him at PMI Fellows dinner in Philadelphia in 2019. We will miss David a lot and would remember his sense of humor and all his nuggets of wisdom.

With Warmest regards,

Vijay Verma, PMI Fellow, PMP, MBA, P. Eng.

Researcher Emeritus TRIUMF,

University Of British Columbia
Vancouver, BC, Canada

The world is a different place because David Frame walked this Earth. Few leaders could exhibit such a tremendous level of passion for ideas and a consistent appetite for learning as David demonstrated. David connected minds and hearts to create lasting changes wherever he went.

In the world of project management, his legacy, consistent footprint in thought leadership, and driving academic agendas, speak volumes of his character. David inspired generations in all the roles he played in his life's journey. The Project management profession is indebted to your dear David. May you rest in peace and may the future of work you contributed to laying its foundation, showcase your greatness.

Your friend,

Dr. Al Zeitoun, PMI Fellow
Maryland, USA

For more than 30 remarkable years, Dr. J. Davidson Frame was not just a professional standout but a dear friend and mentor.

As my colleague on the PMI Board and as volunteer, his impact on me was immeasurable, and I'll miss him profoundly. In our shared journey, he wasn't just a guide in our professional realm, but a true friend who shared both laughter and wisdom and he was really a multicultural guy so he always brought different perspectives into our conversations. His dedication to advancing project management wasn't just about books and articles; it was a genuine passion that touched lives, either creating the project management degree program at GWU or being chief academic officer at UMT. It was like watching a maestro compose a symphony – inspiring and transformative.

As a friend, he was the person you'd turn to for advice, the one who'd share a joke in the hallway or offer a reassuring nod when things got tough. For me, he wasn't just a colleague; he was a role model. His values, dedication, and kindness were a guiding light that shaped not only my professional journey but the paths of many others.

These words are not enough to express the sadness in my heart but I'm grateful for the privilege of knowing David and for the lasting impact he had on me and countless others.

Ricardo Triana, PMI Fellow
Washington, DC, USA

PMI mourns the loss of a kind and astute man. David offered so much to the project management profession and to our PMI Community with his knowledge and experience. While he was an esteemed academic, he was also a student of life, as illuminated in his conversations with others. He was a proud husband and father, surrounded by the love of his talented wife Yanping and his daughters. It's in times of loss like this, when someone leaves this world seemingly too young, to reflect on what we can carry forward in David's legacy. I hope that those who knew David can find comfort in their memories shared with him, and explore the fulfillment of life with curiosity.

Brantlee Underhill

Chief Community Officer, PMI
Pennsylvania, USA

David Frame is the reason I became a project manager.

I was pursuing a Master's Degree at George Washington University and took his Intro to PM Class. I loved the course but most of all loved his teaching style...energetic, engaging, and able to bring clarity to a topic where clarity is often a struggle. I signed up for his advanced course. David used to tell colleagues that in his "Advanced PM" course he had 10 serious professionally dressed male engineers and one flamboyantly attired woman, whose laugh could shake the windows, and often did. Then he'd say, "That's why I tell CJ she can be a 'pane.' "

Throughout the years David always took an interest in what I was doing, where my life's twists and turns had taken me, and how my teaching and consulting careers were going; he truly celebrated my wins and understood the periodic stumbles; almost always in an unobtrusive way offering thoughtful and helpful advice.

David had a great wit, was engaging and supportive, and was a true intellectual.

He was interested in ideas...what makes things work, how change happens, how can things be done better? He was also fascinated with history and politics.

A man of highest academic standards, he expected the best from every student but saw his role as helping to make students *be* their best, and because of this he took an interest in his students' life experiences, thinking, beliefs, and goals.

David was an educator in the purest sense - loved intellectual inquiry, debate and discussion...he stood for universities as centers of higher learning and chafed against anything which eroded the academic integrity of his beloved institution.

He used to say, "The hardest thing in learning is to sometimes *unlearn*...what we thought was true but was wrong. That's why learning is a lifelong process. Tends to make one humble."

Wrote that one down and always share it with my students. Not sure it enhances their humility though.

Nearly 20 years after I took my Masters, we served together on the International PMI Board of Directors. His dedication to lifting up the profession of project management - giving it recognition and dignity but without what he called "the usual *hubris* of professional organizations" was contagious. But more than that, his passion for the membership - the people who make up the profession, and the people who are learning it, was real. During the time we shared on the PMI Board, I was so impressed with how David could articulate his passion for the membership so effectively and so humbly that like the old E.F. Hutton tag line, when J. Davidson Frame spoke, people listened.

One evening after a long day at a PMI event, David and I spent some time catching up on life since we'd last seen each other. As I was teaching Project Management at the University of Wisconsin, I was curious about how he saw himself in *his* role as a professor...what were his greatest rewards? He smiled and sat back, and said something I have never forgotten, Davidson once noted... "I think my greatest reward is helping people find the best inside them, and then seeing them making it flourish."

Well, Davidson, you certainly found the best inside of you. then you made it flourish.

And you passed so much of it on to others, whose lives are better because of you.

The project that was your life was delivered successfully.

I am honored to have had you as my professor, my mentor, my colleague, and most of all, my friend.

Hej då Tschüß

CJ Walker Waite, PhD, PMP, CCA

Former Director, PMI

Boise, Idaho, USA

First, I want to express my sincere condolences to Yanping, David's sisters, daughters and grandsons. And to all of his friends around the world. I think we have all lost a family member.

David Frame was a friend of mine. I think we met in 1991, which he reminded me of on several occasions. At the time, I was the PMI Dallas chapter president hosting the PMI'91 Seminars/Symposium (the previous name for PMI's annual conference); David was newly appointed Director of Certification for PMI. A few years later, in 1995 as PMI VP Public Relations and member of the PMI Board of Directors, I was responsible for the PMI Awards program. By that time, the PMP certification under David's stewardship was growing rapidly; David Frame was nominated for the PMI Person of the Year Award. It was actually competitive that year; as the responsible PMI executive in a tie vote, I cast the deciding vote in favor of David Frame. Needless to say, we were good friends thereafter.

I came to respect him so much over the years, visiting him once or twice at GWU and once at UMT. His books on project management were outstanding; his academic work amazing, his presentations and courses around the world so impressive. But his warm personality, openness and friendship were more important. As others have said, he was a mentor to so many. During our one meeting in his UMT office about ten years ago, we discussed project management, innovation and the chasm between creativity and commercialization. He reflected on his experiences teaching innovation at GWU; the discussion expanded to quantum physics, politics and even poetry. Yes, he was a poet too. ([check out his book of Murphy's Bedtime Poems here.](#))

From a project management perspective, I think his most impressive accomplishment was the following: David Frame turned a big dream into a big project and accomplished it – creation of an entire new university based on project management principles. That seems absolutely unbelievable! What an achievement! And when you watch the PMI video about his life, you will see that the university that he and Yanping founded allowed thousands of others to achieve their dreams of higher education, including master's and PhD degrees.

I always looked forward to meeting with David and Yanping at annual PMI congresses and meetings of PMI Fellows. I enjoyed introducing them to my wife Carla, who I also met in 1991. We shared stories, and philosophies, those occasions now precious memories. (*photo: Yanping and David, Washington, DC, 2010*)



I was looking forward to seeing them again last October in Atlanta, as PMI Fellows from around the world gathered. Wondering about their absence, worrying a little, but little did we know that just a few weeks later David would be fighting for his life in a hospital bed. I am still in shock!

Just three years older, David seemed like an older brother to me. I looked up to him; I liked him very much. I miss him. I feel much like I did when my father died. I wanted one last visit, to ask him questions about his life, to get his advice. To see his smile one more time.

David Pells

PMI Fellow, HonFAPM, ISIPM

Managing Editor, PMWJ

Addison, Texas, USA

Other information about Prof. Dr. J. Davidson Frame:

[UMT News Release announcing PMI Distinguished Contribution Award to Davidson Frame in January 2021.](#)

[PMI Make Reality Stories video \(November 2020\): click here.](#)

[Dr. J. Davidson Frame on Decision Making \(2015\): series of 11 videos](#)

[Books by J. Davidson Frame](#)

[University of Management and Technology](#)