

# Biography: Norfolk Photographers

## James Earle "Jim" Mays (1924 - 1990)

James Earle "Jim" Mays was born 19 September 1924 in Parsons, Tennessee, and grew up in Decatur County, Tennessee. He joined the Navy in 1942 during World War II and received training in photography while serving his first duty at Norfolk Naval Air Station. In addition, he was instrumental in setting up the Atlantic Fleet School of Color Photography. Mays taught at the school for two years before being assigned to the carrier *USS Midway*. Upon leaving the Navy, he joined the *Virginian-Pilot* as a photographer in 1947 and married Katherine Wood of Norfolk the same year. They had three children.



Mays was an avid fisherman and outdoorsman who loved surf fishing at the Outer Banks whenever possible. His position as outdoor photographer for the *Pilot* allowed him to combine his love of the outdoors with his work. In 1962, Mays was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize for his columns on illegal duck trapping on the Eastern Shore. Later in his career, Mays rose through the ranks within the *Pilot* as chief photographer, reporter,



columnist, and public relations director. In 1967, he left the *Pilot* for the WTAR television and radio group in Norfolk as Director of News and Public Affairs. Mays rejoined Landmark Communications, the parent company of the *Virginian-Pilot*, as Director of Communications in 1981 when Landmark Corporation sold WTAR. He retired in 1985 to Virginia Beach where he dedicated his time to tending his vineyard and nursery. He died on 14 May 1990 and is buried at Colonial Memorial Park, Virginia Beach, Virginia.





**Photograph:** Portrait of Jim Mays taken on 03 March 1955. Sargeant Memorial Collection's Photographic Collection, Norfolk Public Library.

**Source:**

Family Interview with Rob Mays and his widow, Katherine Mays.

Unknown. "James E Mays, Was News Photographer and News Executive." *The Virginian-Pilot*. 16 May 1990. D2

Staff Writer. "Mays to Become Landmark Director of Communications." *The Virginian-Pilot*. 31 February 1981.

Hutchinson, Bob. "Ex-outdoor editor was just a-Mays-ing." *The Virginian-Pilot*. 6 February 1985. A9

