



Jere Samuel Locke

August 20, 1944 - May 22, 2025

Jere Locke was born on August 20, 1944, to Katherine and John Locke at Ft. Still, Oklahoma, and died peacefully at home in Austin, Texas, on May 22, 2025, surrounded by his loving family. Jere's life was one of purpose and meaning devoted to working for peace and justice.

A graduate of St. Thomas High School in Houston, Jere continued his education at the University of Notre Dame, graduating in 1966 from the University of Texas at Austin. Jere subsequently earned a master's degree in family counseling from Antioch University in Seattle, Washington.

In 1967 Jere joined the Peace Corps and was posted to Kenya where he was known for speaking great Swahili, loving to talk and eat, and enjoying track workouts with the excellent Nandi runners. This experience was foundational for his life of service. Throughout his life, he worked on many peace and justice issues.

Jere served as Director of the Austin Peace and Justice Coalition in the 1980s. He also co-led the Austin-based Central American Peace Initiative's efforts to cut off U.S. military aid to El Salvador and the Nicaraguan Contras to promote peace. With others he convinced the City of Austin to end its investments in apartheid South Africa. After the first Gulf War in the 1990s, Jere worked to lift sanctions that were crippling Iraq and making it hard for children who had suffered radiation poisoning from bombings to get healthcare. While co-sponsoring a forum on childcare in Austin, Jere met his lifelong partner, Gale.

In 2002 Jere founded the Texas Fair Trade Coalition which organized advocacy campaigns to inform elected officials, churches, and organizations about the social injustices American workers face from free trade agreements. Campaigns he organized for the African Jubilee community informed many Texans of the harsh impact structural adjustments had on African health and educational systems as countries attempted to repay their debts.

In 2007 Jere founded and directed Texas Harambe (Swahili for "Let's all pull together"). In addition to funding a school in Vietnam for children with special needs due to Agent Orange, Texas Harambe helped tortured Burmese Democracy Workers obtain trauma counseling. Harambe also assisted Thai environmentalists to protect the Mekong River.

After attending the 2007 UN Climate Conference in Bali, Indonesia, Jere dedicated the remaining years of his life to raising awareness about humanity's urgent need to respond to the climate crisis. Under Jere's leadership, Texas Harambe ran a Climate Emergency Campaign advocating large scale climate legislation. Desiring to secure a future for his children and grandchildren, in 2009 Jere joined Alyssa Burgin in founding the Texas Drought Project. In the second decade of the 2000s, Jere, Alyssa, and Joshua Wallis conducted Drought Project campaigns seeking to give Texans an understanding of the impact of changing weather and climate patterns.

Jere will be greatly missed by his lifelong partner, Gale; his sons, Tristan and Sundaram (Suny); daughter-in-law, Jessica; granddaughters, Isadora (Izzy) and Emilia (Emmie); siblings Stephen, Martha, Mary, and Sarah; sister-in-law, Carolyn; and stepsiblings, Margaret and Max.

Many thanks to all the wonderful caregivers from Heavenly Care who brought so much support and joy to us during the past year. Many thanks, too, to Dakota and MaryAnn from Suncrest Hospice who offered Jere and his family compassion, love, and guidance during the last days of Jere's life.

Tribute Wall

DH

“ *In the mid to late 80's, Jere co-founded the Central America Peace Initiative. I saw him moving from the space of the Pantex Peace Camp to the work in Austin for the people of Central America. Making the connections between our country's imperialist foreign policies - nuclear weapons and the wars against poor people in Central America, Jere help create ways for us to stand for Justice alongside him. I'm thankful to Jere for the commitments he honored in his life for peace and justice.*

Donna Hoffman - June 06, 2025 at 10:17 PM

GS

BF

I am so sorry to hear this. Jere was a great warrior for the people. He will be greatly missed. Unfortunately I am in Massachusetts and will not be back in Austin until July 1. Please send my love to Gale.

SA

I am so sad to hear that Jere has entered the spirit world. The communities have lost a great compassionate and understanding person. Jere, was a man with so much knowledge and I know having that knowledge burden him at times. Jere worked to save Mother Earth and humanity.

SF

I'll be on the zoom. My condolences to you, Gale, family and friends. The only thing I ever saw Jere do was try to help the world and the other human beings that live in it. He was a good one.

BH

. We worked with Jere over the years, mostly to try and shut down the Fayette Power Plant, but on other environmental and social justice issues as well. We are very sad to hear of his passing. He was really wonderful and had such a joyous laugh.

Gale Spear - June 12, 2025 at 11:56 AM

JW

Jere was not afraid to tackle the biggest challenges and he did it not through his personal lens, but through the lenses of the most vulnerable people in the Global South as well as his own grandchildren.

He was an advocate for justice, whether it was around health, trade, education, or climate change, focusing mostly on people he'd never meet, or who have yet to be born.

Like any good organizer, he was stubborn in his beliefs, and motivated those around him to do more. I am lucky and proud to call him a friend.

Joshua Wallis - June 13, 2025 at 06:45 PM