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A South Carolina Fish Farm Fit for a CEO

The Fish Farm, a 163-acre property outside Orangeburg, S.C., was designed for trophy bass fishing by Jim Copeland, the onetime CEO of accounting giant Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu. It is on the market for \$2,199,995. – Sarah Tilton

Location: Orangeburg, SC

Price: \$2,199,995



Jim Copeland was publicly best known as the CEO of accounting giant Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu from 1999 to 2003, but family and friends also remember his passion for fishing. ‘My dad lived by faith, family and fishing,’ says his son, David Copeland. Mr. Copeland, who died in January at age 72, spent more than 10 years creating this approximately 163-acre property outside Orangeburg, S.C., called the Fish Farm and designed for trophy bass fishing.

Their original purchase in 2005 included a circa-1890 home. They later bought an additional piece of property across the road. The farm has three homes as well as eight lakes and ponds. The couple added a three-hole golf course. The couple spent approximately \$1.65 million on the land and more than \$500,000 on improving and maintaining it over the years, says Mrs. Copeland.



Jim and Patricia Copeland were living in Atlanta and had a beach house north of Charleston, S.C., when they started looking for a fishing property. It was Mrs. Copeland who first spotted the farm. She and a friend were going from Charleston back to Atlanta. ‘We were on the back roads and I saw this “For Sale” sign,’ Mrs. Copeland remembers. She called the real-estate agent only to find out the property was in contract. But then the agent called back later to say the deal had fallen through. ‘I said “I’ll be there tomorrow.” ‘ We looked at it and we bought it,’ says Mrs. Copeland.

‘It’s been a great family place. The kids learned to ride their bikes there. When they came through that gate they were free to roam and play. My grandchildren just love it there,’ says Mrs. Copeland, age 70. She will miss the quiet and the wildlife, she says. The couple made the more than 2,700-square-foot, four-bedroom, three-bath main lodge their home. ‘It’s very comfortable,’ says Mrs. Copeland.

A South Carolina Fish Farm Fit for a CEO *continued*



‘The joy that it brought kids really meant a lot to Dad,’ says Mr. Copeland, adding that his parents hosted children’s groups at the farm and it was almost guaranteed that everyone caught a fish. The goal was to grow trophy largemouth bass, he says. Creating the infrastructure and environment for the bass from the fish feeders to raising the right bait fish is a science he notes. ‘When those fish feeders go off it looks like piranhas—this feeding frenzy of bait fish. For us experienced anglers we’re not going to go fishing off that, but when you bring children out it’s a fish on every cast,’ he says.



The family is selling as they feel it’s the right time. ‘That was dad’s place,’ says Mr. Copeland, a 47-year-old entrepreneur who lives in Peachtree Corners, Ga., where he has his own 8-acre fishing pond in the backyard. ‘Our grandchildren are getting older and I’m afraid we wouldn’t use it as much,’ says Mrs. Copeland. The guest cottage, shown here, has two bedrooms, two baths and a kitchen. It overlooks the approximately 32-acre main lake. Mrs. Copeland’s favorite memories of the home include setting up three long picnic tables near the cabin for a Thanksgiving dinner.



‘We’re fanatical, over the top, bore-you-to-death fisherman,’ says Mr. Copeland. He will miss time here with his children and the memories of his father. ‘One of the neat things about the property is the ability to fish from the bank or get in the boat and sport fish,’ says Mr. Copeland.

Mrs. Copeland says she never imagined that she’d know so much about bass. Her husband was an investor in Bass LLC and a director of the company, which holds fishing tournaments and publishes fishing magazines. Mrs. Copeland doesn’t fish nor does she clean the fish that her family catches, but she is happy to cook the catch of the day on the outdoor grill. She also made jam and jelly from the 20 fruit trees they planted at the farm. ‘It was very relaxing. We thoroughly enjoyed it,’ she says. The brick house shown here has two bedrooms.



There are four docks on the main lake and a boathouse. ‘There’s a pond we call the Money Pit that we started from scratch. It was a dry pond. We dug trenches and built humps and undulations on the lake bed to make it a premium habitat that largemouth bass like and we stocked it and grew 8-pound bass in three years,’ says Mr. Copeland. He estimates that duplicating the water features would cost around a million dollars. ‘It’s a fishing property, but someone can do what they want to,’ says Mr. Copeland, adding that they also shoot sporting clays.



‘I liked to be out with him [her husband] at sunset on the lake. We went out on the lake during the eclipse last year and caught fish during the eclipse,’ says Mrs. Copeland. The Fish Farm has an asking price of \$2,199,995. CJ Brown of Jon Kohler & Associates has the listing.



Photos by Jon Kohler & Associates