

## Tribute to Barry Smith

(1933-2010)

Barry and I met at The Ohio State University in the fall of 1953 as we were both entering the Naval Reserve Officer Training program. Barry was several years older than me, and had been on active duty in the Navy. Jim Steyer and I became friends with Barry almost immediately...and Barry became the big brother neither of us had. I was an immature seventeen year old and needed the steadying hand of an older friend. Barry served as a good role model as he was balanced, smart and understood the navy and many of its rules and customs. These early months turned into a lasting friendship....four years of college, flight school and continued distant communication throughout our lives.

Nancy and Barry married the day before Ruth and I married and they were about to celebrate fifty-three years of married life when Barry died. Theirs was a marriage that produced seven children and an action packed life. After a long civilian career in leadership roles with Ohio Bell, AT&T, Sprint and finally was Senior Vice President of Fidelity Investments, Barry retired. His first volunteer activity as a retiree was to drive a school bus for profoundly retarded children. Barry did this for two years, I suspect to honor those who had helped one of his own grandchildren who had suffered severe learning issues. Being a good bus driver helped Barry in the next phase of his retirement as he and Nancy purchased a motor home and hit the road for three or four years....traveling all over the United States (including Alaska) and Mexico. Being a road warrior was not enough for Barry and Nancy and they then purchased a houseboat and lived on the Jacksonville River for several years, before settling in Ponce Inlet, FL.

My favorite story about Barry involves his great interest in health food supplements. I was speaking at a convention near where their houseboat was docked, and Ruth and I spent an afternoon with them. Barry was espousing the benefits of special vitamins and supplements and I asked Nancy if she took all these pills. She said that over time, Barry had increased the number of supplements he took and recommended she do the same. One day when Barry had added one more pill to the daily regimen, Nancy noticed that they would not all fit into her open hand...that when she added a pill, another would fall from her hand. She said she turned to Barry and said, "Bear, I will only take one handful of pills a day...decide which ones it will be!" At the telling of this story, Barry just smiled and held up his two cupped hands indicating that she should be using two hands to hold the needed supplements.

Barry and Nancy had one of those rare marriages that seemed to work at all levels. They had a family they loved, children who returned that love and provided challenges as well, they had fun together, they loved life, they both had a deep faith, and Barry loved vitamins. They lived a good life together and now Nancy and one of her daughters live together, raising a granddaughter. Nancy said this has been a wonderful blessing in what might have been a more lonely life without Barry.

Barry died too soon, but packed so much into his life. His was a life well lived. A life that still serves as a model for me.