



## Barbara J. Hoedema

April 12, 2019

Barbara Joan Hoedema (nee Smith) previously of Plymouth, IN passed away peacefully with her daughter Lisa Ann and son-in-law Steven Craig at her side Friday, April 12, 2019 at St. Ann's Rest Home in Milwaukee, WI at the age of 81 years. Barbara passed away following a battle with cancer.

Barbara was born in Lexington, KY to the late Charles Wendell Smith and Mary Ann Thomas. Barbara graduated from Bellville High School in 1955 alongside her husband, the late Larry Allen Hoedema. Barbara graduated from Eastern Michigan University with a B.S. in Education in 1959 and later an M.A. in Education with a Learning Disabilities specialty in 1971.

Barbara was a dedicated teacher who spent the rest of her working life teaching learning-disabled children to read, write and prepare for life. Barbara married her high school sweetheart Larry on September 6, 1958 and spent each day of the next fifty-seven years at one another's sides. They lived most of their married lives in Hillsdale, MI where they raised their children Susan Alice (Bardwell) and Lisa Ann (Freigang) and later in Plymouth, IN where they lived next to daughter Susan. Their lives also included opening up their home and hearts to German exchange student Andrea Gassner (Moeller) of Hamburg, Germany who to this day is considered daughter, sister and beloved member of the family.

Barbara is survived by her youngest daughter Lisa Ann Freigang and son-in-law Steven Craig of Bayside, Wisconsin. Her eldest daughter, Dr. Susan Alice Bardwell, passed away from cancer on August 25, 2012. Her husband, Larry Allen, passed away on June 19, 2016.

It is safe to say that one of Barbara's greatest joys were her grandchildren. She spent countless hours reading, walking in nature or on the beaches of Lake Michigan and baking cookies with them. She is survived by her 5 grandchildren: Anja Elise, Ella Ann and Craig William Freigang and Ian Edward Allen and Hayden Michael Lawrence Bardwell.

Those planning an expression of sympathy may wish to consider donations to St. Ann's Rest Home. Words cannot express the kindness and loving care given by the Sisters and caregivers at St. Ann's toward myself and my mother, Barbara. Whether it was help with paperwork, a hug or a kind word about my mother, these beautiful souls cared for all of us and I would not have made it through this journey without them. Donations can be mailed to St. Ann's Rest Home, 2020 S. Muskego, Ave. Milwaukee, WI 53204.

There will also be an opportunity to make a donation for a memorial bench for my sister, Dr. Susan Alice Bardwell, to be placed near the hospital where she worked at a later date. This was one of her final wishes that we are trying to honor. My parents were incredibly proud of the care she provided to so many children in the community of Plymouth, IN where they all lived.

Contributions can be made to Palmer Memorials 61300 US 31 S. South Bend, IN 46614 to assist with the cost of the memorial bench for Dr. Susan Bardwell. In the memo please write "Memorial Bench Susan Bardwell." Thank you for your support.

Memorial Visitation Tuesday, April 23 at The Rozga Funeral Home (703 W.

Lincoln Ave. Milwaukee, WI 53215) from 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM followed by a Memorial Service at 1:00 PM. Private inurnment at Oak Hill Cemetery in Plymouth, IN.

# Cemetery Details

## Oak Hill Cemetery

Plymouth, IN

# Previous Events

## Memorial Visitation

APR 23. 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Rozga Funeral & Cremation Services - Lincoln Village Chapel  
703 W Lincoln Ave  
Milwaukee, WI 53215  
(414) 671-5200  
<https://www.rozgafuneral.com/>

## Memorial Service

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# Tribute Wall

KS

“ 4/23/2019

*Ode to Barbara Hoedema*

*By Katharine Smith*

*My name is Katharine Ann Smith and Barbara was my Aunt and sister to my father*

*I'm going to tell you a story- and it's about a young girl who became empowered, took control, dug deep into her skillset, her genetic tenacity, her soul, and her legacy to leap head on into life and make it lived on no other terms- -but only the best I could reach for.*

- *This is a soul-searching moment in honor of Barbara, and also my father, and ode to the Smiths and surrounding family-Freigangs, Bardwell's, Hoedema's, Francis'*

- *There are others that have influenced my defining moments-and one in particular that accompanied me here today-MOM-well...that's another soul searching, heart felt story!*

- *Family is the glue, the unique bond to those special loved ones. Aunt Barbara was certainly that and more to me and has a special place in my heart!*

- o *When stripped down to bare bones-the grit and essence that you originated from, the people that shared your most intimate, closest moments, those that cared for you and in return cared for them, and the legacy that sends you out into the world-- To me that's worth everything!! I care deeply for my family and I am glad and honored to be with you all here today. I would not miss a moment of it!*

- *The Smith's (and when I say Smiths- I mean the Freigangs, the Bardwell's, the Hoedema's, and the Francis') have had their fair share of tragedy and loss-*

- o *Barbara & my dad's unexpected loss of their mother-Barbara age 3, and my dad 6 months old at the time.*

- o *The Bardwell's/Hoedema's/Freigang's loss of their mother/daughter/or sister, and then short time thereafter-the Bardwell's loss of their father, and then...the unexpected loss of my own father-Bruce Smith-nearly 28 years ago.*

- *Barbara lived a full life-she was 81 y.o. She was a compassionate, intelligent, educated, strong-willed, honest, giving, and determined*

woman much like the Smiths I know before her.

- I am a Smith, a proud Smith! I take such pride in my given name and heritage.

- I wear my birth and maiden name to this day with confidence that the self-determined, hard-working, intelligent clan that shares my ancestry can hopefully be proud to sit within the same family circle with me.

I credit Barbara Smith-Hoedema with a large part of my self-realization, growth, and knowledge of my innate, true inner being-- to then go out and explore what I was given to the best of my abilities.

To help you understand, I'm going to go back about 30 years and tell you from my perspective what life looked like-

- My young adulthood began as a college student at UM- my dream school and one that I told my parents at age 7 that I was definitely going to. It was a lofty goal being that UM was an elite university, picky for its scholar student population, yet one that remained consistent over and through many moves outside of the state. This, made it NOT any easier to get accepted into its governance- being an out of state student. Nonetheless, I achieved my entrance as often my hard work and perseverance rewarded me with.

- However, it was short-lived as the unexpected death of my own father by age 19 caused me to leave school at the beginning of my sophomore year as I had no way to pay for an out of state tuition. I tried to get emergency financial aid, pondered joining the military, and ended up accepting my Grandfather's invitation to live with him while I pursued an affordable way to return to my beloved university. o I do remember feeling overwhelmingly thrust into a harsh reality that if I wanted to continue my successes, I had to work ever harder! o I also realized that there was no instruction book, and a large dividing boundary was formally established to grow-up now and fast, find your way, and survive! It was such a brutal reality and all of a sudden life's responsibilities smacked me square on - in my face.

to be cont'd- p.1



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- o I do remember feeling overwhelmingly thrust into a harsh reality that if I wanted to continue my successes, I had to work ever harder!

- o I also realized that there was no instruction book, and a large dividing boundary was formally established to grow-up now and fast, find your way, and survive! It was such a brutal reality and all of a sudden life's responsibilities smacked me square on - in my face.

*I made some mistakes, and struggled with grief for much of my 20's. My feelings of many successes in childhood and adolescence turned to feelings of many failures, roadblocks, and sense of harder than life moments.*

- As life would throw some curve balls into the best laid plan ahead, I ended up getting a part-time job while taking classes at the local community college in the aftermath of my father's death--and all of a sudden I had the attention of a boyfriend. Maybe this was a positive in my amended path, a way to cope, a new male loving figure in my life--and BOY did it feel good!

- I was Married by 21y to my 1st boyfriend, my 1st love- upon who I met leaving UM

- o I had 2 kids by 25 y.o.

- o Struggled to obtain a higher education and attain my initial dream -- I wanted to be a physician...but then there were some road blocks

- o The cost of education-I was on my own financially. Michigan was expensive and seemed far behind me, as well not an option for my love interest.

- o Dependents-I had 3, and yes this includes my spouse who depended on me as did the babies.

- o Medical profession demands which I knew called for a marriage and dedication to a career. Its own path required a support system in which the kids were looked after, the bills were paid, and the time and attention to the devoted education, training, and work ahead was well accepted. This in my case was not the case.

- At 27 y.o. I was divorcing, a single mother, living 100's miles (in Grand Rapids, Mi) away from family or that support structure.

*o Obviously, there was much to feel disappointed with and I was definitely my biggest critic.*

*o Life certainly was following an unplanned path -an Of Mice & Men story being played out-the best laid plans gone awry.*

*I was in Crisis:*

*• You see- I have had Hx of success before this-an honor student, involved in many competitive sports at high levels, well rounded and felt I usually achieved whatever I set my mind to.*

*o I was a perfectionist-If I wanted to play Violin (did in grade school), then I practiced, studied, and played violin and at the top of my class. I was one of the best and that was the only way I knew to be.*

*o Same goes for school, studies, basketball, softball, football, track, all that I endeavored in--I studied, I practiced, I excelled, and wanted to be the best and usually performed at that level.*

*• But in my early to mid 20's, I struggled with getting ahead, felt I was lagging behind quite a bit actually, and yet found life's large responsibilities on my shoulders and contesting with my dreams and best laid plans.*

*o So, here I was in my late 20's divorcing, with 2 small children, no career, no method to support my family, 100s of miles away from a support structure and I wondered*

*□ -who am I?? why am I the way I am, LARGELY-How have I gotten here and why am I so unhappy?*

*□ Other questions surfaced too: Why do I act with such stubbornness, critical analysis, strong opinions, and driven determination?*

*□ What has influenced me and how did I formulate my beliefs on religion, politics, values, etc. Boy I had some strong convictions—but where did they come from??*

*• That lack of that instruction book was weighing on me- I reached out to friends, coworkers, family, my mom, I joined a church, got confirmed, I searched for those answers in every place I could.*

*You might ask-How does Barbara figure into this young adult life story?*

*• Barbara had probably seen large signs of my grief, took interest in helping my path, and also probably knew this well from her own experience.*

*o I imagine she related to losing a parent before becoming an adult, searching for that instruction book, and trying to understand oneself to fully realize oneself and to move forward with purpose. I'm sure she related on many levels to my painful search of who the heck am I and why am I here?*

*• For me, I understood at full capacity as an adult that my behavior, attitude, and mannerisms largely resembled my own father's. But I did not understand how those attributes worked, how they brought me here, or what his thoughts were that made it work well or not so well.*

*• I wanted so bad to talk to him and understand. I craved honesty whether good or bad. I wanted to know!! For all those bickering moments we had in my adolescence...I just wanted to share my honest adult thoughts and feelings, know him, and then know myself. I'm fairly*

*and whole heartedly sure, that my father and I would have a lot in common to share and understand in my adult view. If only we had the opportunity for those adult heart to hearts!*

*Here enters Barbara who I saw with some frequency being that I lived with Grandpa Smith and in Michigan during this decade of my life.*

- *I envision Barbara and my dad shared a unique bond from the events of their early lives. At a bare minimum- possibly only had each other and suffered some long-lasting effects- from the absence of the nurture and love of a mother.*

- *As Barbara sat down with me in my anguish and asked, "What can I tell you or help you understand, what do you want to know about your dad that I may know?"*

- *She was so succinctly honest, told me not what I wanted to hear, but how it was. There was an understanding, an analysis, a well-traveled path that we both identified with. She knew what I was experiencing, how I felt, what I craved, why my response was this way, and related to that inner self-maybe as my father could have.*

- o *So, Barbara was, is, resembles maybe the closest link to my father through the Smith and possibly also the Thomas homage, and thus, myself that I know.*

- o *Barbara helped me where no one else had. She taught me about myself through her eyes and her experience. She cared for me, nurtured my emotional health, spent the energy I so craved to enable me to know and be that unique Smith self that I am so proud of today. It was a turning point for me where I switched from survive to thrive! My 30's were a much different story and a timepoint where I exploded onto the scene as Katharine Ann Smith!*

*So fast forward a couple decades later....*

*Knowing that Barbara was sick, 1st with dementia- a chronic neurocognitive disorder that affects memory, reasoning, complex tasks, and psychological, behavioral functions-I knew I needed to visit and care and nurture her as she had extended to me.*

- o *On that visit last Summer, I was not sure what to expect, or even.... I think I had no expectations that she would even know who I was especially since I had not seen Barbara in years.*

- o *You see Dementia often affects short-term memory 1st and long-term memory later.*

- *But, when I came within her view and greeted her, she broke out in a welcoming wide smile and said, "Oh hi Kathie it's so good to see you!"- It was like we hadn't missed a day and that shared close connection was still evident on 1st sight.*

- o *In that visit, I did see the old Barbara in other ways, too. The school teacher Barbara surfaced as we were on our way to the lunch room.*

*We passed another resident, Barbara greeted her and said in a friendly manner, "well hello"! When that resident did not respond in a timely way, her tone deepened into, "Well You CAN Say HELLO Can't YOU!" It was an epic moment and you just knew it was in fact Barbara.*

*Shortly thereafter my visit, I learned Barbara was now sick with cancer*

*and likely her time was finite. I returned and visited this time in the New Year with my mother and brought a collection of photos to share. Lisa, Anja, Mom, and I reminisced for a short while showing pictures and reminding her of the family and occasions within.*

*• However, there was one photo in particular-of Virgil and Harry that she seemed to immediately recognize. She stared in long thought repeating their names and appearing very reminiscent.*

*o I can only imagine what Harry and Virgil meant to her as they were the ones that took in Barbara and my dad at such a young age to help my Grandfather cope in the wake of Mary Ann's unexpected death. Who can imagine losing a mother before you can remember that mother, or even to feel and know a mother's love as a routine basic human need while growing up -truly devastating! I do wonder what Barbara was thinking in that long stare...*

*In Summary, I am so thankful to be here today amongst my family, to share my story in Barbara's memory, to be a part of the Smith Family, and to celebrate a life that was precious and meaningful in my eyes.*

*• To Lisa, you have been a strong pillar in your family's story. You have carried your own grief within tragedy. Cancer has struck your family in too many evil faces. But you have chosen to cope, learn in the aftermath of adversity, and spread your learnings. Your Mom is at peace and I hope you take comfort in that! She knew she was loved and vice versa- told you incessantly with every visit to her.*

*• You hired social workers to get her in earshot of family, lit her room up with photos of loved ones, clocks placed of her favorite TimeMaker, her room was brightened with diffusing natural oils to remind her of the wonderful scents of nature as well promote her health, you brought her homemade smoothies when it was too painful to eat, you and Anja played violin to soothe her ears. You are the backbone and resilient leader -and your family-Anja, Ella, Craig, Ian, Hayden, and Steve are lucky to be within your reach too!*

**THANKS AND LOVE TO YOU ALL!!**

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**Katharine Smith** - April 23, 2019 at 11:14 PM

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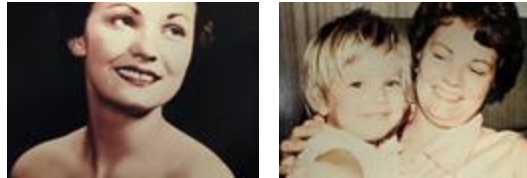
“ *Barbara and Larry were great neighbors here in Hillsdale. They talked us into living on the same street and Larry and my husband, Larry Lundy, worked together. There were just not neighbors but great friends. We certainly missed them when they moved away we missed them terribly. Loved the Hoedema family and always will! Our love and prayers are with you Lisa.*

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**Carolyn Lundy** - April 16, 2019 at 07:00 PM



“ *2 files added to the album Memories Album*



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**Rozga Funeral & Cremation Services** - April 15, 2019 at 05:06 PM