

FSU Newsletter (August 2010)
A TRIBUTE TO BARBARA SHEEHAN WITHERS

Barbara you have been so unbelievably wonderful by hosting our annual reunions we wanted to dedicate this "FSU Gymnastics, Gymkana and Friends Newsletter, Fifth Year Anniversary Special Edition" as solely honoring you.

For many years you have so generously offered your home and houses on the beach for our annual reunions and then you go ahead and work like the energizer bunny preparing all the food and arrangements for the entire gang....and always with a smile full of love..... And.... your doing this all while we bums are totally relaxing and enjoying the atmosphere and companionship of longtime friends, sunning and swimming at the beach, cozy lodging and lounging, plus delicious food served by the hands of the Queen and her court.

Kindly, you told me once that you will traditionally pour yourself a hot cup of coffee, sit down in a soft easy chair to read and enjoy the Newsletters. I can envision that now you will be sitting there many times reading all these wonderful, and richly deserved words, from those who love and appreciate you and want you to know how they feel.

Keep the wind at your back and my love in your heart We love you, Fondly, Jack

Beverley Cude & Bill Beaton | 55-59 | "My "bestest" friend, Barbara,

For so many years we have kept in touch and have been able to see each other from time to time. This has been due to the fact that you have always been your ever-welcoming generous self. I have lost count of the number of school March breaks you provided for me, sometimes with offspring in tow, over the years. My breaks invariably clashed with your busiest days of the year.... those nightmarish Income Tax deadlines. Nonetheless, you gave me a car and left me in bliss at Alligator Point as you went off to slave in your office. You drove daily to and from Tallahassee in order that we could share some time at the beach.

Now, for the last 6 years....over the Memorial Day weekend of each May from 2005 through 2010, you have extended that same hospitality of yours to unlimited numbers of our FSU Gymnastics family. You have provided lodging at considerable sacrifice to yourself; time to relax for all, except for yourself again. The timing of people's comings and goings, munching and snoozing, or choice of activity faze you not one bit. Together this group has shared memories and created new ones. What in some cases were simply names or photographs have become real people, new friends. We have spent precious hours talking, laughing and being ourselves in your beautiful setting.

Dear Barbara, thank you so much,.....Love and Huge Hugs,.....Bev”

Merik & Anna Ceska | 55-60

“I have been and am privileged to have known Barbara ever since our FSU College years.
She has not changed since then.

In this world it is almost impossible to find anyone of her kindness, optimism,
and readiness to help others.

For me - she is like my sister and an ever shining sun.

It is difficult for me to put my feelings into words.

But, thank you Barbara for everything you have done and are doing
for all of us gymnasts, and for all that you’ve done, and have been doing for me
and your love which you have so richly given to us.

Miroslav and Ann”

Mike Mann & Fran Millians | 57-67

“Barbara is about the warmest person I’ve ever met. She is gracious and calm in the midst of all the coming and going during one of the reunion weekends. Everybody is welcome; there is enough food and drink for all. All of us who has enjoyed her hospitality leave each time wondering how in the world to express our appreciation for not only the good time we had there but for the ease with which she hosts so many people over so many days. It is a great idea to pay tribute to this generous, warm, friendly, lovely woman. This issue of the newsletter is (most of) our long-overdue and heartfelt thank-you letter to Barbara.Fran Millians”

Gail Sontgerath & Bill Whitney | 62-67

'Thanks Barbara for all you do for us. It seems the older you get the fonder the memories and having a place to congregate with people associated with those memories is priceless. Your kindness and generosity will be remembered by everyone associated with FSU. Thanks to you for keeping FSU and Gymkana alive in our minds and hearts. We love you. Gail'

Benny & Carolyn Wallace | 51-55

"Barbara: I believe that I attended the very first reunion at your house in 1982. Now I haven't seen you in another 28 years! That can make a big difference. Even so, I haven't forgotten the party at your house.

Carolyn and I remember you as a strikingly beautiful young girl, always pleasant, and struggling along with the rest of us. In those halcyon years, there was no way to know how we would all turn out. Most of the guys were ruled by hormones but (most) grew out of it. Among the women, you had the worst chore: Dealing with Bob Murray -- nice job!

So we grew old and learned a thing or two. Then there were reunions. You apparently found your niche and, from what I've read, became a house mother.

For numerous reasons, I have drifted away but the memory lingers on.

We gymnast are a sorry lot but always -- including Bob Murray--knew how to choose a wife. Sorry, forgot Jack, but he's still learning.

Thanks for that "Enchanted Reunion of 1982." Benny +1"

Bruce & Rita Davis | Coach & Writer

As you know Jack, I have written articles about the FSU gymnastics greats: Ashmore, Cicio, Gutting, Holder, Lecuona, Price, Rotzheim and you. Rita and I have enjoyed participating in the annual FSU reunions at Alligator Point with the FSU bunch and have been made to feel that we are part of the group. In the beginning Rita and I never anticipated meeting a woman as warm and wonderful as Barbara Withers. We enjoyed a special experience of attending the Mystere Cirque show at the Treasure Island Hotel and Resort in LV with Barbara and her son.

At Barbara's beach home we have always felt a part of the group due to Barbara's graciousness. Barbara has shared many of her personal experiences with me about Florida's governmental history and political leaders in the State of Florida.

A big event in my life occurred when Muriel, my sister, made the 1956 Olympic team to Melbourne and wouldn't you know it; Barbara and her wonderful life time friend Bev Cude were in that same final trials gymnastics competition at Penn State.

When it comes to tennis, it is a joy to partner up with Barbara. I particularly enjoy watching some of Barbara's former beau's competing for her attention on and off the court. I guess we can say that it is "love, set and match" when it comes to Barbara Withers. Thank you for the opportunity to allow Rita and I to express our affection for Barbara. May the FSU reunions go on for ever!

Sincerely,.....Bruce and Rita Davis, "Seminoles by Adoption"

Sandy Hennessy | AKA...Jack Miles' daughter

Barbara has helped me feel loved and welcome always. Like I was a member of her family. In a world that leaves you feeling very unloved and unwelcomed sometimes, it is a treasured feeling. She has helped me do my taxes for a pittance, when I could not afford anyone's help.

I had a dream about her the other night, where she was in my house, helping me and every one of my family members with different things, making every one of us feel special. Then we were outside looking at many different houses and people were coming out of each house talking about how she was doing the same for them.

I realized that she is not just my angel, but the angel for many people. That is a heavy load to bear, but she bears it with a smile and grace always. I love you Barbara. Thank you for being the person you are.

Sandy Hennessy

Jim & Arlene Fadigan | 52-56/58-62

"About Barbara: A beautiful girl walks into Gym; but she's married, damn! - always fun, always there for you, and yes, always handles you in her beautiful way. Also knew her during her painful times both in Tally and in Boston during which she never complained and went straight forward. Wonderful memories are vast but our half time trampoline act at the Boston - FSU game was a highlight when I saw her talents and beauty combine to awe an audience. So many fond memories but it wasn't until we got into the reunion years that I saw the special, deep beauty that makes Barbara - BARBARA. What a giving, always there for you, and caring friend. That's one hell of a combination!

We love you Barbara - Jim & Arlene Fadigan"

Chick & Jennie Cicio | 54-59 | Hi Jack....Here's one for you. Went to Barbara & Bob's house in West Campus to pick Bob up to get to class. Barbara made a cup of coffee for me while waiting for Bob....here comes Bob in the kitchen....naked as a jay bird....I got a little flustered....Barbara says....well Chick, we both have seen him naked before....Sooooo!!!! how do you respond to that?
Ciao & God Bless.....Chick & Jennie”

Carmine & Daneen Regna | 50-55 | “Barbara,
I personally want to thank you for all that you have done for the group. Also, for what you have done for me. I've only been to your place two or three times, but each time was memorable. As a hostess you are the best. Your time, effort and money spent were above par. I am sorry to have missed the past two reunions, but the timing was not favorable to allow me to attend. I sincerely hope to attend at least one more time.
Thanks again for making these reunions such a pleasurable event. Carmine Regna”

Don & Connie Holder | 51-57 | “O’Barbara O’ Barbara
Somewhere in the mid fifties, a young vivacious teenager enlightened our FSU Gymnastic World with her wit and beautiful smile along with that very noticeable Bostonian accent (PAK THE KAR). Barb and Bob joined most of us married poor folk at the married housing called West Campus. I believe I was the one who related public sentiment to the love birds to make there tie legal. Barb became a member of our Gymkana troupe and made many show trips. Connie was influential in guiding Barb into Gymnastics.

Barbara deserves much accolades for working and putting herself through College, not an easy task. Then going on to become a successful business woman.

Connie and I left FSU for the Army and into teaching. At Jack’s first reunion in Ft. Lauderdale we met with many former Gymnasts and Barbara. At this point it was difficult to match the accent with the body since now there was a distinct Southern drawl, what a change. Seems like Barb had quickly adapted to the South, the sound was even sweeter than before.

Besides the great work that Mike and Jack are performing, much thanks goes to Barbara for keeping all of us associated with FSU Gymnastics, together every year. A very unique happening. In fact a few years back, Connie and I along with Barbara and Dick Gutting surprised Jamile Ashmore in Las Vegas for his retirement. Spoke to many older Gymnasts as to whether they had reunions. All said no and were shocked to hear of our good fortunes. So we are all blessed to have Barbara and all her sacrifices enabling us to gather every year. Love, hugs and kisses to you Barbara,
Don & Connie Holder”

Larry Bestmann | 55-58 | “Accolades for our Barbara”.
“Without the kind, generous hospitality of Barbara, there would be sparse FSU Gymnastics reunions; likely none. I’m happy and thankful for the three I have attended and will be for the future ones I intend to attend. Where else can you see how your college gymnast team mates have aged so much more than you have?
Lawrence Bestmann”

Bill Beavers | 57-61/69-70 | “How does one describe Barbara?
I think "Mother Teresa with "attitude" fits best. Barbara is the most giving, accommodating and genuinely nice person I have known. The annual reunion would not be the same nor as much fun at any location but Barbara's beach "Compound". It is not just the setting, but the host who makes the event special and everyone feel relaxed and pampered. Thanks for everything Barbara. Bill Beavers”

Carol Beavers | 57-61/69-70 | “I'm so glad you're doing this. It is a wonderful tribute to a great lady.
What we all hope for when we go to the beach is sunshine, warmth, comfort, and a gentle breeze. With Barbara, we get all of these. Her disposition is unfailingly sunny, she embraces each of us with her warmth, she provides all the physical and psychological comfort one could ask for, and she is, always, that “breath of fresh air.” She is remarkable in her generosity, her graciousness, and her good humor. Unlike most of you, I was not privileged to know Barbara in our youth, but she is one of those women who other women regard as “a keeper.” I’m so glad now to be within the circle of friends of this remarkable woman. It is a joy to be in her presence and even distantly, happy memories bring smiles, thinking of her and her welcoming beach home.
Big love to you, Girl! Carol Beavers”

Joe Gusic | **51-52/55-58/60**

“Barbara,

words don't express how much you have given of yourself. Your hospitality all these years is beyond measure. I'm glad that a friend like you came into my life and I thank you. I always look forward to our visits and next time a little tennis which we didn't play this year. If it wasn't for you, I would not be at a reunion with friends I have known for over 50 years? Thank you again, Joe”

Joe & Carol Regna | **50-54/81-83**

“Although I have not been a frequent participant at the reunions, I cannot say enough concerning the part Barbara has played in the success of the meetings. Her unselfish generosity in providing housing opportunities as well as meeting facilities (the use of her home among other activities) has played a major part contributing to making the Reunions as great as they've been. Barbara, you are one in a million.....Joe & Carol Regna”

Claire Essig Traynor | **59-62**

“Dear Barbara,

Just a note to let you know how much we appreciate you..... and all you do for us at our annual FSU Gymnastic Reunions. You have given us back some wonderful memories of years ago. We will always treasure these friends and our visits in your beach home and we'll never forget your great hospitality! Thank you!!
FondlyClaire Traynor”

Harold Chiles | **Claire's Friend**

“Dear Barbara,

I just wanted to thank you so much for your warm hospitality on my visit with Claire to your lovely beach home in May. It was interesting to meet so many former FSU gymnasts, and especially, having my son Joe, see Bruce Davis after all these years. It was an honor to have been with Claire among so many wonderful, warm, people!!
Kindest RegardsHarold Childs

Jay Schwarzman | **51-55**

“Barbara Withers

“In the years that our annual Gymnastic/Gymkana reunion has been hosted by Barbara at her home at Alligator Point, I have participated in most of them. I have always found Barbara to be a very energetic and gracious hostess who works hard so we can all enjoy the reunion and each others company and remembrances. Her home is the perfect location for the reunion and she prepares excellent meals.
I appreciate all that Barbara does to make our reunions very enjoyable.....Jay”

Mike Mann | **57-67**

“Barbara”

I am sure everyone will comment on what a fantastic hostess Barbara is so I will not, although it is very, very, true. Barbara is extremely generous to her friends. I believe she would literally give the shirt off her back even if it meant risking arrest for indecent exposure. That would not matter if a buddy needed something. I know she has hosted at least two dinners at the Governor's Club to help the cause or a friend to celebrate. She is also always ready to provide a bed for someone visiting from out of town whether at her beach places or at her home in Tallahassee. In the fall, tickets to an FSU football game for visitors.

Barbara is extremely intelligent. I was a professional computer geek from 1962 through half of 2007, forty-five years. Most of that time was spent in the analysis, design, and programming of business systems. In that capacity I have known many, many, accountants. I have watched many, some with their Masters in Accounting, attempt the CPA exam many times before passing, and some never did. One of the first stories that I heard about Barbara, when I was just getting to know her better, was that she had passed her CPA exam before getting her BS. Impressive to say the least when I have seen so many fail.

Barbara is very hardworking, goal and results oriented, she had to be. I also worked my way through school with almost no support from my family so I know what it takes. Of course, she is a successful business woman, she doesn't know how to do it any other way.

So here is to one of our very favorite people”

**JOIN MIKE AND RAISE YOUR GLASSES ON HIGH AND SHOUT,
“HIP HIP HORRAY
FOR OUR GAL BARBARA
WE LOVE HER”**