Celebration of James T. (Jim) Barron's Life

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Celebration of The Life of
James Tilton Barron

October 22, 2006

Born: September 25, 1947

Died: October 18, 2006
Opening Remarks and Prayer: Reverend Laura Friedman

Opening Hymn: For the Beauty of the Earth

_for the_ beauty of the earth, for the beauty of the skies,
For the love which from our birth, Over and around us lies
(refrain) Lord of all to thee we raise. This our hymn of grateful praise
_for the_ beauty of each hour, Of the day and of the night
Hill and vale, and tree and flower, Sun and moon, and stars of light (refrain)
_for the_ joy of ear and eye, For the heart of mind's delight,
For the mystic harmony, Linking sense to sound and sight (refrain)
_for the_ joy of human love, Brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth, and friends above, For all gentle thoughts and mild (refrain)

Scripture Reading: Reverend Laura Friedman

__I will lift__ up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.
My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.
__He will__ not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.
Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.
__The Lord__ is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.
The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.
__The Lord__ shall preserve thee from all evil; he shall preserve thy soul.
The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore. (Psalm 121)

Reminiscences and Tributes from Family and Friends

John Barron, brother
Will Barron, brother
Anyone else who wishes to speak

Poem¹: read by Jeremy Barron, son

_Let me_ live in a house by the side of the road where the race of men go by …
The men who are good and the men who are bad, as good and as bad as I.
I would not sit in the scorner's seat, or hurl the cynic's ban …
Let me live in the house by the side of the road and be a friend to man.

¹ Poem: "The House by the Side of the Road" by Sam Walter Foss
I see from the house by the side of the road, by the side of the highway of life, The men who press on with the ardor of hope, the men who are faint with the strife. But I turn not away from their smiles, nor their tears, both part of an infinite plan … Let me live in the house by the side of the road and be a friend to man.

I know there are brook-gladdened meadows ahead, and mountains of wearisome height; That the road passes on through the long afternoon, and stretches away to the night. And still I rejoice when the travelers rejoice and weep with the strangers that moan, As I live in my house by the side of the road and be a friend to man.

**Scripture Reading: Reverend Laura Friedman**

To Every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace; (Ecclesiastes 3, 1-8)

**Closing Hymn: Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee**

Joyful, Joyful, we adore thee, God of glory, Lord of love; hearts unfold like flowers before thee, opening to the sun above. Melt the clouds of sin and sadness, drive our fear and doubt away; giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.

All thy works with joy surround thee, earth and heaven reflect thy rays, stars and angels sing around thee, center of unbroken praise. Field and forest, vale and mountain, flowery meadow, flashing sea, chanting bird and flowing fountain, call us to rejoice in thee.

Thou art giving and forgiving, ever blessing, ever blest, well-spring of the joy of living, ocean depth of happy rest! Thou our Father, Christ our Brother, all who live in love are thine; teach us how to love each other, lift us to the joy divine.

Mortals, join the happy chorus; stars of morning, take you part; love divine is reigning o'er us, binding those of tender heart; Ever singing, move we onward, victors in the midst of strife, joyful music leads us sunward in the triumph song of life.

**Benediction**
A Favorite Saying on the Refrigerator

"Life should NOT be a journey to the grave
with the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and well-preserved body,
but rather to skid in sideways,
Chocolate in one hand - martini in the other, body thoroughly used up,
totally worn out and screaming
"WOO HOO, What a Ride!"
Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take,
but the moments that take our breath away."
Eulogy: John Barron (brother)

Thank you for coming to share in this remembrance of my brother, Jim. I have some short remarks to make, and they may be even shorter than planned if I lose my composure.

Is the glass half empty, or half full?

For the past three days, I have viewed the glass as half empty. I have lamented all that I, that we, and that Jim, lost due to the Jim’s unexpected and untimely death. But, Jim would not want this, so henceforth I choose to view the glass as half full.

There are many choices we make in life, and the quality of your life depends on these choices. However, some events are beyond our control. When I was born in 1948, one event beyond my control was that I came into the world having a big brother 13 months older than I. I did not choose Jim as a big brother. But I could not have done better.

My twin brother Will and I would often kid Jim that, at least physically, he was not our big brother. However, this was the only way in which Jim had to look up to us. In every other respect, from Jim's intelligence, to his compassion, to his integrity, to his generosity, to his insights, Jim far surpassed us. I was blessed to have Jim as my big brother for 58 years. Jim provided me with wise counsel, advice, witty banter, and the unquestioned loyalty of a brother. He was always there for me. That's the glass half-full.

But, that is not the only way Jim has been a blessing to me. Jim met and married Linda, bringing into the family an exceptional person in her own right, a rare equal to Jim. Together, Jim and Linda created and molded two children, Jeremy and Kate, who have become exceptional adults in their own right, and have attracted equally special soul mates in Julie and Aaron.

So, I celebrate Jim for what he brought to my life. Without Jim, I would not have in my life Linda, Jeremy, Kate, Julie and Aaron. The best times in my life are our family gatherings, and these will continue into the future. And, remembering that the glass is half-full, I'll use Linda, Jeremy, Kate, Julie, Aaron, -- and maybe future little Jims -- to remind me of how much I enjoyed my big brother and how much I learned from my big brother.

I know I will sorely miss my discussions with Jim, discussions that ranged from his most recent housing project to the state of the computer industry to the best set of tools for a certain task or how to plan for retirement. I'll especially miss the time during these discussions when Jim will say: "Hey Jackie, what type of beer do you want?" Jim always stocked the best beer. However, when I feel this way, I'll remind myself of the blessings I received from having Jim as my big brother. Such thoughts will - I hope - replace the pain I otherwise would feel. And, this approach is one that Jim would endorse. Once again, Jim has helped me make the right choices.
Eulogy: Will Barron (brother)

Jim Barron was born September 25, 1947 in New York City, the first of three sons of Tilton and Sue Barron. Almost three months premature, Jim had the good fortune of coming into the world at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital where they had recently developed one of the first neonatal intensive care units in the country. At that time it was quite rare that a baby born so prematurely would have survived. His good fortune – of surviving those first days and weeks of life, and then thriving – has brought good fortune to us for the past 59 years.

Jim, the eldest of the three “Barron Boys”, spent most of his youth in Worcester. With only 13 months of separation between him and his twin younger brothers, Jim learned quickly that to “maintain his alpha male dominance” over two younger – but bigger – brothers, he had to develop a quick and keen wit. Always the smartest of the three, Jim also was the most adventuresome. And though this may have contributed to a certain “wildness” that showed itself in his youth, his openness to new experiences made for a varied and full life – filled with good and longstanding friends and with more than a lifetime’s worth of memories and accomplishments.

Sometimes death eases and insinuates itself into our lives, robbing and sapping us of vitality and substance – until then nothing survives. That was the kind of death that our mother experienced a scant 9 months ago. Gone at age 92, having been blessed herself with a full and rich life. During that time of her dying, Jim and I spend lots of time together, coordinating our activities to help Mom die in a graceful and dignified way. Jim had a gentle tenderness with Mom. I saw the careful and meticulous way that he handled her affairs during her decline and after her death. Those times brought us closer together. They were special to me.

Sometimes death takes us aggressively in its grasp, crushing the life out of us, ripping it from us – and leaving no time to prepare, to say our goodbyes. Such was how death overcame Jim last Wednesday afternoon. Weeks after celebrating his 59th birthday and days after spending a glorious fall weekend at the cabin in Maine with Linda. A full life… but too short! A life blessed… but too short! He had the happy blessing of a 35-year marriage to Linda, a strong and stable and loving partnership. We mourn the loss of what could have been…. but what they had! As all parents do, we want to see our kids into adulthood, secure in their work and relationships. Jeremy and Julie, Kate and Aaron, great kids, great young adults, and great partners to each other. Jim was able to see them through to that, and that is a blessing.

Jim went through life with, as the saying goes, “A chocolate in one hand – a martini in the other.” We will remember him for his love of life, of good food, drink and sociability, his love of books, his meticulous and careful craftsmanship in all of his woodworking projects, his command of the written word, his steadfast partnership with the love of his life, Linda, the pleasure he took from his children… and for his fine taste in beers and wine.
Eulogy: Kate Barron (daughter)

My dad was a precise individual. My speech was always corrected if a word was used improperly. I learned early on not to request help on my math homework because his explanations of the theory behind the algebraic equation took far longer than actually figuring out the solution on my own. Our house was always in transition because while he was a very skilled woodworker, he spent about five times longer to complete a task than any other person would due to his tenacity for perfection. I was sometimes roped into assisting with the more simple projects, like painting sideboards, but my brush technique had to be corrected more than once. Needless to say, working under dad’s direction was a demanding chore.

Despite this stipulation for perfection, my dad had a generous heart. I grew up in a household that opened its arms to any neighbor stopping in for a beer or two (or three) or to ask advice from my dad on a home project. As much time as he spent working on our home, he was always willing to help out a friend. He was a born volunteer, always ready and able to do whatever was asked of him.

My dad loved a good cocktail party. Each summer, my family would spend a week at my grandmother’s cabin in Maine and the tradition of the Point - as the locals call it – was the nightly cocktail party starting promptly at 5 PM and generally at my grandmother’s cabin. Shrimp cocktail and crabmeat hors d'oeuvres were on hand in generous proportions and the liquor flowed liberally as well. In Brookfield, this tradition was continued, but alas, not with the decadent fare of Maine. Instead, it was cheese and crackers, my dad’s homemade hummus with plenty of garlic and lemon, and if you were lucky enough, my dad’s famous margaritas were whipped out too. On Fridays, our home was oftentimes the gathering place for the teachers of North Brookfield where my mom works. There were always plenty of drinks, food, bemoaning of students, and lots of laughter.

My father was a born host. He welcomed old friends and new ones alike. This past summer, the Barron side of my family joined together in Maine for a memorial cocktail party in honor of my grandmother who had recently passed away. During this party, I was struck by the fact that my father singled out a neighbor who was kind enough to stop by after only summering on the Point for a short period of time and really didn’t know anyone. My dad immediately latched onto him, introducing him to the various family members and giving him a tour of the cabin and gardens. He continued to chat with this gentleman, making sure that he was comfortable at the party before mingling with other guests.

At the last party I had the privilege of attending, my dad wowed my co-workers with his bottomless margaritas, his good humor and his ability to make anyone feel at ease. They have told me time and time again since that party “how cool Mr. Barron was” and with this I have to agree. From playing beer pong with my friends at my college graduation party; to taking dancing lessons in preparation for my wedding and finding out he actually liked it; to calling me when he was at Barnes and Noble to ask me if I had already read the new book by one of our favorite authors and if not, should he pick me up a copy; to e-mailing me jokes or just to say hi; to making really awful jokes, which he was well-known for, my dad will always be the coolest dad to me. My special nickname for him was Daddert and I would just like to say this to him: Daddert, I love you and I will always miss you.
Eulogy: Jeremy Barron (son)

The following Poem “The House by the Side of the Road” by Sam Walter Foss was read by Jeremy Barron

Let me live in a house by the side of the road where the race of men go by …
The men who are good and the men who are bad, as good and as bad as I.
I would not sit in the scorners seat, or hurl the cynic’s ban …
Let me live in the house by the side of the road and be a friend to man.

I see from the house by the side of the road, by the side of the highway of life,
The men who press on with the ardor of hope, the men who are faint with the strife.
But I turn not away from their smiles, nor their tears, both part of an infinite plan …
Let me live in the house by the side of the road and be a friend to man.

I know there are brook-gladdened meadows ahead, and mountains of wearisome height;
That the road passes on through the long afternoon, and stretches away to the night.
And still I rejoice when the travelers rejoice and weep with the strangers that moan,
As I live in my house by the side of the road and be a friend to man.

My Dad would have been so happy to see all these wonderful people gathered in one place.
Thank you all so much for coming, it means a lot to us.

Eulogy: Peter and Trudy O’Connell (friends)

For Jim
October 22, 2006

We ache with the loss of this wonderful man. We mourn for Jim’s family, for ourselves, for a world moving forward without him. We all carry in our hearts memories that will get us around the next corner and the next, but we have more than memories, because by knowing Jim, we have each absorbed into ourselves something of who he was.

When you greet a friend who arrives at the door unexpectedly and ask first not why they are there, but whether they can sit down for a while and join you for a beer, that is a bit of Jim in you.

When you encourage someone who is down on their luck and give them the chance they have not had from others, that is a bit of Jim in you.

When you don’t just loan the tool, but bring yourself along too to help get the job done, that is a bit of Jim in you.

When you get a call from a friend whose car has broken down in the middle of a snowy night and you hurry to shovel out your own driveway so you can get there to help, that is a bit of Jim in you.
When you believe that if you can read, you can learn to do anything, that is a bit of Jim in you.

When you feel a wry and merry twinkle in your eye or observe the ridiculous in a part of the world around you that takes itself too seriously, that is a bit of Jim in you.

When your principles are more important to you than convenience or conformity, that is a bit of Jim in you.

May our memories stay fresh and sustain us now, and may all the bits of Jim that live on in each of us give us joy and be cherished and nurtured in our future.

With love from Trudy and Peter (Hear! Hear!)

Eulogy:  Aaron Cohen (son-in-law)

For the past several months, I have had the remarkable good fortune of having Jim as my Father In-Law. I didn't get much sleep the night before I met Jim and Linda. But Jim's first inclination was to buy me a beer. As long as I didn't want a light beer. Jim welcomed me into his home, and later into his family, and he will be missed.

Eulogy: Mitch Cohen (Father of Aaron)

My name is Mitch Cohen. My son Aaron had the great good taste and fortune to marry Jim Barron's daughter Kate. So first Aaron brought Kate into our lives, and then Kate and Aaron brought us Jim and Linda and then the four of them brought us Jeremy and Julie and a wide circle of loving and welcoming friends and family. We have been nothing but grateful ever since.

I didn't know Jim Barron for very long. Long enough for his famous Margarita's to get the best of me at least once. Not long enough to get most of his jokes; but long enough to feel his kindness and open-heartedness.

In the end Jim Barron's heart failed him, but I suspect it seldom failed any of the rest of us in this room. My grandfather, my mother's father, used to like to tell me that he didn't believe in the after-life, that he didn't believe in heaven and he certainly didn't believe in hell. But he did believe that we live on after ourselves in the values and beliefs we imbue in our children. And so, while I am getting the great enjoyment that flows from experiencing my daughter-in-laws depth of character and kindness, Jim Barron's memory will be alive and well in my heart.
Eulogy: Stephen Brewer (friend)

Portion of the remarks made By State Senator Stephen Brewer

Death Is Nothing At All
by Henry Scott Holland (1847-1918)
Canon of St. Paul’s Cathedral

Death is nothing at all. I have only slipped away into the next room.
I am I, and you are you.
Whatever we were to each other, that we still are.
Call me by my old familiar name,
speak to me in the easy way that you always used.

Put no difference in your tone, wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.
Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes we enjoyed together.
Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.
Let my name be ever the household word that it always was,
let it be spoken without effect, without the trace of a shadow on it.

Life means all that it ever meant.
It is the same as it ever was; there is unbroken continuity.
Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight?
I am waiting for you, for an interval, somewhere very near, just round the corner.
All is well.

There were a number of other tributes from friends, including Mabs King (lifelong friend) Bob Hughes (who explained his revised definitions of dark and hot after meeting Jim) and Rudy Heller (a friend from town).
Obituary
Worcester Telegram and Gazette and Boston Globe
(On-Line)

James T. "Jim" Barron

Jim Barron died unexpectedly late Wednesday afternoon in his home. He was 59 years old. Jim was born in New York City, grew up in Worcester, Massachusetts, graduating from Classical High School and Clark University. Jim lived a full and varied life, albeit far too short. He is survived by Linda, his wife of 35 years; by their son, Jeremy and his fiancée Julie Dyckman of Charlton, MA; their daughter Kate and her husband Aaron Cohen of Acton, MA; his brother Will and wife Shelley of Newton, MA; his brother John and wife Cathy of West Lafayette, IN; and his sister-in-law Lisa Earle and her husband Rob of Voorhees, NJ. Jim had four nieces, seven nephews, one great-niece and three great-nephews.

Always a principled individual, Jim served two years at various hospitals as a conscientious objector during the Vietnam War. He and his wife Linda then moved in the mid-1970's to a farm on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, where they homesteaded, before moving back to the states to raise their children. Jim pursued further education in technical writing and worked for many years in that field, most recently with BEA Systems, Inc. of Burlington, MA.

Jim had a generous heart and spirit. He is survived by a wide circle of friends and family. He took great pride in his woodworking skills, and spent much time renovating and restoring his 19th century village colonial farmhouse. He was a voracious reader with eclectic tastes, ranging from mysteries to science fiction to Patrick O'Brien historical novels. He enjoyed spending time with Linda, family and friends in Brookfield and at their cabin in Maine.

Visiting hours for friends and family will occur October 22, 2006 at the Pillsbury Funeral Home on Old West Brookfield Road (Rt. 9), Brookfield, MA from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m., with a Celebration of Life Service immediately following.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Heifer Project, Habitat for Humanity, the Audubon Society, or to the North Brookfield High School Gift Book Fund.

Published in the Worcester Telegram & Gazette on 10/21/2006.
Notice • Guest Book • Flowers • Gift Shop • Charities

Today's Worcester Telegram & Gazette obituaries
James T. Barron  

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Published in the Boston Globe on 10/22/2006.

Today's Boston Globe death notices

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Guest Book for

James T. Barron


October 27, 2006

 briskly and Jim's amusing comments and unique perspective and never failed to make me laugh or smile. I can think of no more honorable, profound, and ultimately happy way to spend a birthday than celebrating the life of an inspirational human being, and being reminded to be grateful for life itself.

Thank you for that gift, Jim.

Kristen Abbott (Nashua, NH)

 Contact me

 October 25, 2006

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In one of J.D. Salinger's stories, the narrator recounts a Taoist tale about Chin-fang Kao, a man who is supremely gifted at selecting fine horses. "So clever a judge of horses is Kao," the tale goes, "that he has it in him to judge something better than horses."

The narrator then uses this tale to comment on the character of his own deceased brother. Since his brother's demise, the narrator says, he can think of no one to send to look for horses in his brother's place.

Many of us who were lucky enough to know Jim are now left with that feeling.

Doug Borsom (Pasadena, CA)
Contact me

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Linda,
I'm so sorry to hear about Jim's sudden passing. Paul Bowler let me know yesterday. We will all miss his humor and sincere intelligence. If there is anything I can do, please let me know.

Gregg Hamm (Hudson, MA)

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I only knew Jim for a few months but he certainly made a great impression on me. He was always smiling and such a nice guy. That meant a lot to me. Thanks Jim.

Melanie Sharkey (Woburn, MA)

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Linda, Kate, and Jeremy,
When I arrived home from last evening's services, I overheard some discussion on the TV where an interviewer posed the question, "If you could spend a day with one historical figure, who would you choose?" The interviewee answered: "Mahatma Gandhi" - an acceptable answer for sure. However, my answer at the time (and today too) would have been "Jim Barron."

I know one day would be far too little, but Jim had the wisdom and generosity of a great man and the joyful, self-effacing humor of a wise man. When we worked together, he often made me feel like his most important friend. I'm sure all of us felt the same. In bad and difficult times, he could cheer me up and make the difficulties dissolve.

I could sure use his help now. I expect that it will come over time, as I reflect on the privilege I have had of knowing him and being his friend and colleague.

-Dick
Dick Buttlar (Hollis, NH)
Contact me

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I'm sorry to hear of Jim's passing. We lost touch after he left Hitachi, and I regret that.

Jim McGrath (Concord, MA)

Contact me

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Jim McGrath (Concord, MA)

Contact me

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Mrs Barron and Family

I am so sorry to hear about the sudden loss of Mr. Barron. There are not enough words to express my heartfelt sympathy. You are all in my thoughts and prayers at this difficult time.

Anne Glanville-Adams (North Brookfield, MA)

Contact me

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Dear Mrs. B:

I cannot begin to express my sadness at the arrival of this news. The few times I met Jim he struck me as a happy and enthusiastic individual who made you laugh. That is a great legacy to reflect upon at this sad time. If you need anything at all, please feel free to e-mail me.

Daniel Page (West Hartford, CT)

Contact me

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I only had the pleasure of working with Jim for the past year. In that year I come to know Jim as an intelligent, wonderful person that I will sincerely miss. I tried to get to the services on Sunday but was thwarted by the dual accidents on the pike. Please accept my condolences. If there is anything I can do please let me know.

Hal Strausberg (Newton, MA)

Contact me

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Jim's passing reminds us all how fragile and temporary life can be. I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to meet and work with Jim at Hitachi, and to count him a friend thereafter, albeit a seldom-seen one. My sympathy goes out to his family on losing such a good and generous soul.

Nancy Harrison (Concord, MA)

Contact me

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I had the pleasure to work with Jim for the last eight years, and I cannot believe that he is gone. Jim was an extraordinarily intelligent, thoughtful, caring, and giving man, with a wicked sense of humor. He was, bar none, the best technical writer I’ve ever met and just plain old wonderful to be around. His devotion to his family and friends was legendary, and he set the character standard for the rest of us to follow.

Goodbye, my friend.

Kevin McDonough (Tyngsboro, MA)

Contact me

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Dear Mrs. Barron, Jeremy and Kate,
I am so sorry to hear of your loss. If there is anything I can do, please let me know.

Shelby Hill (O'Day) (Brookfield, MA)

Contact me

October 22, 2006

When I worked with Jim at Hitachi, a few of us called him "the admiral" because of his sailing stories. He was the kind of man that is easy to remember with great fondness and a smile. His sense of humor, good heart, and kindness were ever present, as was his quiet wisdom. He was a fine man and the world will have a hollow place now that he's passed on. And wherever that might be now, they'll be lucky to have him. Happy trails, sir. It was a genuine pleasure to know you.

Hank Watters (Littleton, MA)

Contact me

October 21, 2006

Dear Mrs Barron, I'm sorry to hear about your husband's sudden passing. If there is anything that you need feel free to contact me. Linda Murphy Class of 1999

Linda Murphy-Perkins (Lockport, NY)

My heart goes out to Jeremy and to his family during this difficult time. Please accept my deepest sympathies and know that my prayers and thoughts are with all of you.

Sabrina Cazeau-Class (Worcester, MA)

October 21, 2006

(From Mike Barron's Blog): I apologize that I haven’t blogged lately. My uncle Jim died on Wednesday and I am still processing this sudden loss. He was one of my two blood-related uncles, so we have visited him and his family almost every summer since I was born. Jim was an extremely intelligent man who had a wickedly dry sense of humor. He was handy too, adding much to the house he lived in with his family. It is difficult to imagine that he is gone; in my mind’s eye he is still sitting on a deck in Maine enjoying the crisp air, drinking a dark foamy beer, and laughing.

Mike Barron (Zionsville, IN)

October 21, 2006

(Response to Mike Barron's Blog) I knew your Uncle Jim well. We spent many days at HP talking within each others offices, giving advice to each other and going for walks at lunch. He was very well respected within the technical community and one of the most honest men I knew. He loved his family very much. I am very sorry.

Sincerely,

Charlie Costigan
James T. Barron
September 25, 1947 -
October 18, 2006

Passport Photo - 1975

Kate’s Wedding - 2006