



Mr. Lester Earl Barnes

June 20, 1929 - November 24, 2013

Lester Earl Barnes, Jr. died on Sunday, November 24 at the Alabama State Veterans Home in Bay Minette, Alabama following an extended illness. He was born June 20, 1929, in Enfield, Illinois to Lester Earl Barnes, Sr. and Esther M. Barnes, now deceased. Les lived in Carbondale, Illinois from an early age, attending school there. His youth during the depression was filled with family, school, hard work at the lumber yard that his father managed, inventiveness and enthusiasm. He studied and worked to be a journeyman carpenter. He served in the U.S. Army during the Korean conflict, graduating at the top of his class in Basic and “Number One Candidate” from Officer Candidate School.

At the end of his service in the Army, Les returned to Carbondale and Southern Illinois University, where he completed his undergraduate degree and obtained his Master’s. He went to the University of Illinois to pursue doctoral studies. Les became immersed in computers at the time when they were the subject of developmental research, were wall-sized and maintained by replacing tubes. He always joked that he learned computers in “the pits” and about never having taken a computer course, because there weren’t any! During his doctoral studies at the University of Illinois, he was recruited by Northern Illinois University at DeKalb to establish the Production Management Curriculum.

Les spent his career at NIU where he taught a variety of classes in the College of Business, became a Certified Data Processor, consulted with industry on production and computer systems, brought micro-computers to the College of Business when they were considered to be a fad, and networked the College of Business. He established and managed computer labs for the College, where he trained many undergraduate and graduate students. He was a member and leader in a variety of professional and personal organizations, including a single-parent organization, where he enjoyed planning educational programs and family activities, and where he met his to-be wife, Jacqueline. Les was a tireless contributor.

Les was a life-long learner, whether it was technical, craftsman, recreational or personal skills and knowledge. He was a skilled IFR-rated pilot, using his flying in his consulting work and with the Civil Air Patrol on search and rescue missions. He was an athlete and at SIU became “Coaching Captain” of the gymnastic team. The group put on

demonstrations at high school basketball games and Les even did jitterbug demonstrations at the well-known White City Music Hall in Illinois, where all the famous Big Band Era groups performed! He was a competitive swimmer, diver and tennis player in his youth and continued many of these interests into his adulthood.

He was a serious bicyclist, later became an RVer, world traveler, and was throughout, as we called him, "Mr. Fix-it." Les was highly rated: highly intelligent, highly productive, highly rational and highly organized, a problem solver and a caring and supportive father, grandfather, family member, friend and husband. He managed his personal business affairs with knowledge and skill (and spreadsheets!), patiently coaching his family to do the same. His adventurous youth became a serious-minded adult, yet he never lost his quiet sense of humor or his perceptiveness about people.

Les is survived by his son, Steven L. Barnes and family of Cedar Rapids, IA, daughter Cathy E. Barnes of San Antonio, TX, his step-daughter Victoria Hollenberg of Beaver Dam, WI, two grandsons, Dr. Jeffrey M. Barnes of Seattle, WA, and Kevin L. Barnes of Cedar Rapids, IA, sister-in-law Shelba Barnes of West Lafayette, IN, nephew Michael Barnes and family of Cincinnati, OH, niece Leslee Finney and family of Decatur, IL his wife of 36 years, Jacqueline A. Barnes of Gulf Shores, AL, and far-reaching extended family. He was predeceased by his parents, his step-daughter Deanna A. Hollenberg, and his good friend and brother, Jack R. Barnes of West Lafayette, IN. Les was loved, appreciated and admired by his family, friends and colleagues. He will be greatly missed.

His ashes will be interred with services in the State Veterans Cemetery in Spanish Fort, AL. and headstones placed in two family cemetery plots. Several life celebrations are planned.

Contributions in Les's memory can be made to the NIU Foundation , where an appropriate memorial is being created by addressing checks to The NIU Foundation, DeKalb, IL with a note on the comment line, "For Les E. Barnes Memorial." Mail to: NIU Foundation, John Sentovich, Altgeld Hall, 132, DeKalb, IL 60115-2882

Cemetery

Alabama State Veteran's Memorial Cemetery

34904 State Highway 225

Spanish Fort, AL, 36527