



Barney Heeney Jr.

March 6, 1924 - May 8, 2017

Born in St. Joseph, Missouri

Barney J. Heeney, Jr., was a lifelong Kansan, but he was born March 6, 1924, in St. Joseph, Missouri, because that was the closest hospital. Barney was reared in Beattie, a small town in northeast Kansas. Barney's parents, Elizabeth Delaney and Bernard (Barney) Heeney, owned and managed the First National Bank of Beattie.

The Heeney Family

Barney met Marjorye Savage on a blind date in Lincoln Nebraska in 1948. They dated for several years, and Marge broke off their engagement to attend radio and drama school in New York. After several years of being a bachelor, Barney's uncle, Dick Delaney, encouraged his nephew to find his true love. So, inspired by his uncle's advice and undeterred by Marge's previous uncertainty, Barney located Marge in Oklahoma City and their courtship began again. They married in 1956 at St. Joseph's Church in Cheyenne, Oklahoma.

Was a Practical Joker

Barney had a reputation throughout Beattie/Marshall County as a practical joker. One of his favorite practical jokes was when he and a pal planted a car whistle in one of the neighbor's cars. The car still required a hand crank for starting, and while his neighbor was cranking the car the whistle went off startling the neighbor and causing him to throw the hand crank into the

bushes. The boys were quickly given away by their laughter. However, the laughter faded when the brunt of their joke forced them to help find his hand crank.

Professional Education and Career

Barney attended the University of Nebraska intending to pursue a career in music, but World War II interrupted his plans and he became a pilot. After the war, he returned to Nebraska where he earned his law degree. He also attended New York University where he received his LLC. Barney relocated to Topeka where he joined Harold Schroeder to form the law firm that became Schroeder, Heeney, Groff and Coffman. Barney retired in 1989, and the firm operates today as Coffman, DeFries, and Nothern.

Known for his celebration of St. Patrick's Day

Together, Barney and his wife Marge helped found the Saint Patrick's Day celebration in Topeka. He was known for celebrating "the high holy day," which included his tradition of dressing up as a true leprechaun. His outfit was complete with a top hat, tails, and a white and green striped vest. The Heeney clan including his brother, Richard Heeney, would gather and celebrate with bagpipes, dancing, music and frivolity.

Music and dance

At a very young age, Barney's mother encouraged him to dance and play music. His dancing began with tap dance lessons. Barney and Marge explored many other styles of dance and were great dancing partners and competed in ballroom competitions. As a teenager, Barney played the drums and formed a small quartet - that included his mother playing piano - that traveled around the region earning him five dollars a gig. He would later join Jimmy Canton's Orchestra, a well-known regional band, as his drummer.

Worldwide traveler

Barney enjoyed traveling. As a child, Barney's family did not go far from home, so he made a commitment to travel as an adult. Barney piloted the plane that took his family to many destinations both in and outside the United States. Although atypical for an attorney, Barney took a sabbatical in the late 1970s. Barney, Marge, John and Dan relocated to Tucson for one year. During the sabbatical, Barney worked in the parts department at a local general aviation airport. In 1990, during its civil war, Marge and Barney traveled by pickup truck from Topeka to El Salvador to deliver the truck and its supplies to the communities of that beautiful country. His travels included trips for 30 Elderhostel programs that they both taught and attended. He and Marge took trips to many exotic places to visit their daughter Mary and her family on their sailing trip around the Pacific Ocean.

Last Word

Barney and Marge bought their tombstone in the 1990s and had it inscribed, "Off on another adventure" - who can argue with that?

Survivors include his wife of 60 years, Marjorye "Marge" Savage Heeney of the home; four children: Bernard Heeney (Sarah Leach) of Topeka; Mary Heeney (Louis Dietz) of Mountain View, CA; John Heeney (Melissa) of Westwood Hills, KS.; Dan Heeney (Colette) of Dolores, CO; five grandchildren: Emily Dietz, Martin Dietz, Nancy Heeney, Megan Heeney and Jack Heeney. He was preceded in death by his parents, and his brother, Richard Heeney.

An Open House will be held at the Topeka Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 4775 SW 21st Street, on Sunday, June 11 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

In lieu of flowers please send contributions to: Topeka Collegiate School, 2200

SW Eveningside Drive Topeka, Kansas 66614 or <http://www.topekacollegiate.org> (Click on Make a Gift button on the home page) or Topeka Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 4775 SW 21st Street Topeka 66604.

Previous Events

Open House

JUN 11. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

Topeka Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
4775 SW 21st. St.
Topeka, KS 66604

Tribute Wall



“ *Barney Heeney Jr.*

January 28, 2023 at 12:08 PM



“ *Sorry to hear about Barney's passing. He was always a person who smiled on life. His son, John, and I were friends in high school. Barney and Marge were always willing to open their house to us. Loved the Limo rides to and from band practice. Prayers to the family, we know that Barney has been welcomed into heaven!*

Jeff Vonfeldt - June 26, 2017 at 08:13 AM



“ *I will always remember Barney from St. Patrick's Day Committee meetings. He and Marge were always the lifeblood of that group. What an amazing, interesting life he had! Such a privilege to call these people friends - much love and light to the family!*

Maura Dingman

Maura Dingman - May 17, 2017 at 11:28 AM

JP

“ MAY 16, 2017

Dear Marge and family,

Barney was a wonderful man and you two made a wonderful couple. He was so delightful to be around, and we know you all have wonderful memories of him, as do his loved ones and friends.

Words say very little at a time like this, but knowing people care, maybe helps. I hope so.

Please accept my deepest sympathy.

God bless you.

Jackie Campbell Petersen

Jackie Petersen - May 16, 2017 at 09:28 PM

DT

“ *My sympathy. Certainly one of the pleasures of living in Topeka was those chance encounters with Marge and Barney Heeney. Always a treat; always a pleasure. Off on another adventure. Fond memories, David Tangeman*

David Tangeman - May 15, 2017 at 08:36 PM

RB

“ *Marge, we wanted you to know we're thinking of you at Barney's passing. He seemed like a totally fascinating person. We know you'll have wonderful memories for years to come.*

Ronn & Sylvia Boyd

Ronn & Sylvia Boyd - May 14, 2017 at 08:35 PM

WH

“ Marge & family: I was fortunate to have practiced law with Barney in the mid-late 70's. One of the best tax attorneys in Kansas at the time, Barney was a huge influence on my life and practice. One cherished memory I have is becoming aware of the possibly little-known "Heeney Principle" of away- from-home dining. This became known to me on the many occasions when Barney and I, during one of our many travels, would be looking for a local restaurant for lunch or dinner. If a cafe came into view, Barney would count the cars/trucks parked in the driveway and, if less than six, would pronounce it probably not a good choice because even the "locals" avoided it. We still rely on the Heeney Principle to this day in selecting dining venues! I am certain that it has its basis in fact somewhere!
My condolences to you all; he was "one-of-kind" and I will cherish his memory and value his teachings.

Warren "Cricket" Hummer
Grapevine, TX

Warren C. Hummer - May 14, 2017 at 06:49 PM

DS

“ Dear Marge, I always enjoyed seeing you and Barney at League and other meetings. You both stayed involved as you aged which provided an example and an inspiration to me. This obituary told me much that I hadn't known about Barney and your family. What a great life! May his memory be a blessing to you all. Diana Siegal

Diana Siegal - May 14, 2017 at 04:30 PM