



Barry Lee Kelsey

April 13, 1938 - October 7, 2018

Barry Lee Kelsey, 80, of St. Augustine, Florida, died on Oct. 7 after a brief illness.

Barry was born in Wichita, Kansas, on April 13, 1938. to Roland and Margaret Kelsey. He was an only child for a decade until the birth of his sister, Karen. He grew up and attended school in Waynoka, Oklahoma, before joining the US Navy. He attended the Navy School of Music and served as a member of an admiral's band. In Boston, he met a young hospital worker, Judith Blanchard, and six months later they married. Their marriage lasted 58 years, until his death.

He earned a Bachelor's degree in Musical Education from Oklahoma State University and attended graduate school at North Texas State University, where he played saxophone in the renowned One O'Clock Lab Band, widely considered the nation's premier educational jazz ensemble. As a graduate assistant, he also conducted the Three O'Clock and Five O'Clock Lab Bands.

Barry played with many notable musicians throughout the Southwest and with his own band, Montage, which produced a hit single called "Natural Inclination." He taught music in several school systems in Texas and Oklahoma. In the mid-1980s, he and Judy relocated to St. Augustine Florida, where he worked briefly as a high school band director before retiring from teaching to focus on his professional career as a saxophonist, flutist, vocalist, and musical arranger.

Working in St. Augustine and Jacksonville and in the state of Georgia, Barry performed before many thousands of people, particularly with his jazz ensemble, "Barry Kelsey and the EZ Street Band," including a stint as the official band for the Jacksonville Jaguars during their initial years as an expansion team. Later in life, Barry became a mentor for many local St. Augustine and Jacksonville musicians. He taught, encouraged, and embraced the talent of dozens of musicians who took music seriously and loved the art. He was a fierce life-long proponent of equal rights for all, despised bigotry in any form, and became politically engaged in the last decades of his life. Concerned about the human costs of systemic poverty, he charitably supported causes that worked for the betterment of the lives of children. After the adoption of his beloved black lab mix, "Rosie," he stopped eating red meat and became a proponent of animal rights and supported no-kill shelters.

He is survived by his wife Judy, his son Chris Kelsey (Lisa), his daughter Juliette Kelsey Chagnon (Robert), his daughter Jennifer Brigandi, his grandchildren Jasmine, Jasper, Rory, Harper, and Meret, and countless devoted friends and students. He was preceded in death by his parents and his sister.

At his request, no funeral is planned. A celebration of life will be held at a later date to be announced. In lieu of other remembrances in memoriam, his wife Judy requests donations in his name to the World Wildlife Fund.

With his passing, there is a little less melody in the world. He will be missed.