



Gary Wayne Smith

July 18, 1934 - July 5, 2024

Gary Wayne Smith passed peacefully from this world on the evening of July 5, 2024, after a brief stay at Whatcom Hospice. He lived a long and full life as a much-beloved son, brother, husband, and father. On October 18, 1934, he was the first of five children born to George and Hazel (Speirs) Smith, whose forebearers began to settle in Bellingham in 1868. He was followed by his brother, Grant, his sister Christa, and two more brothers, Glen and G. Winton.

Gary graduated from Bellingham High School in 1953 and soon joined the U.S. Navy, serving in the Pacific and often on leave in Japan. After his discharge, he began studying computer programming at Western Washington College of Education.

In the spring of 1960, he began a long career as a contract worker in the computer design of aircraft, moving periodically from one company to another and from one city to another. His longest stays were in Phoenix, San Diego, and Everett.

He was married twice. His first marriage was in 1964 to Nancy Bennett in Phoenix and was very brief. His second marriage was in 1967 in San Diego to Jean Martinez. They soon moved to Bellingham to develop closer connections with the Smith family. Gary commuted to Everett for work at Boeing. Jean got a job at JC Penny, and they worked hard together, at first building a house on

Valencia Street and later a much larger home in Ferndale. Unfortunately, the marriage dissolved in 1990.

Following his retirement in 1999, Gary often traveled to Costa Rica and Mexico for winter vacations. However, he always maintained his keen interest in family connections. For many years, he produced and distributed family calendars filled with photos of family celebrations – weddings, birthdays, reunions. After these calendars became too much work, Gary would still phone each of his siblings, sibling spouses, nephews, and nieces on their birthdays.

Gary is survived by daughters from each marriage, Heather Bennett and Christina Martinez, by his four siblings and their spouses, by seven nieces/nephews, and by their many children. Memories of him will be long cherished. Gary will be laid to rest in Bayview Cemetery in a private ceremony. His family will hold a memorial service at 5:00 pm on July 19 at the Samish Island Memorial Chapel, 9608 Samish Island Rd., Bow, WA. Refreshments will be served. Friends are encouraged to make memorial gifts to their favorite charities.