



Dr. Barrie Ina Wellens

March 10, 1936 - April 24, 2017

Dr. Barrie Ina Wellens, a pioneer in educational testing, passed away suddenly at her home on Monday, April 24 at the age of 81, after a long life of good health. The cause of death was a sudden heart attack.

Barrie, along with her longtime friend Joanne Lenke, who passed away in January, were a key duo who shaped educational testing in America. The cool and steady Dr. Lenke, who rose to be President of Harcourt Brace Educational Testing, was in a decades-long conversation with the perspicacious and spirited Dr. Wellens, Harcourt's guru of measurement, who was ever asking fundamental questions of fairness and equity in regard to a defining yardstick in so many lives.

Born in Far Rockaway, New York, the oldest child and only daughter of Cele and Nat Wellens, Barrie attended elementary and secondary school in Far Rockaway, studied at Queens College in New York City, and graduated from State University of New York in New Paltz. She went on to earn her doctorate in educational measurement at Syracuse University. She joined the test department of what was then Harcourt Brace and World publishers in 1967, moved with the company to San Antonio in 1986, and, until her retirement in 2000, was vice-president of Harcourt Educational Measurement, a subsidiary of Harcourt General, and director of educational measurement.

In that role, Barrie was the visionary and director of Harcourt's most esteemed and popular products, including the Stanford Achievement Test, The Metropolitan Achievement Tests, the Differential Aptitude Tests, and the Otis-

Lennon School Ability Test. In addition, she led the teams that developed many state testing programs and countless testing support materials. Known as an insightful and incisive editor, Barrie was also skilled at assembling a crackerjack team of people and inspiring them to create innovative educational products. Throughout her career, Barrie said her goal was to develop tests that are kid-friendly and fair for all children, and that every child taking the tests should be able to see a reflection of themselves in the test booklet. That vision helped change educational testing forever.

One of Barrie's strongest gifts was her ability to make presentations to groups of people, whether customers, employees, or friends. Barrie was a natural in the spotlight with a microphone in her hand. In fact, she always joked that when she opened the refrigerator and the light came on, she would "do three minutes." She could quickly win over an audience with her self-deprecating humor and hilarious stories. Often people commented that she could have had a career as a stand-up comedian, which was something she herself said she would have loved to do. And as much as Barrie loved making others laugh, she herself loved to laugh. Recollection of her signature "whoop" of delight brings a fond smile to those who knew her.

After her mother's death when Barrie was a child, she was embraced by her mother's sisters and eventually their extended families, a wide community of relatives, called "the cousins club," for whom Barrie was a leader of story, shtick and, eventually, a rich living memory. She often said, "stories are the vessels of life, that sail on long after the storyteller is buried at sea." Her brilliance as an educational tester was surely linked to her intuitive grasp of how perception and expression are shaped by story and song.

She was a gifted and intuitive musician, who loved listening to music, especially jazz, big band music and the Great American Songbook, and creating her own. She could sight read music, but especially loved playing by ear. In addition to piano, Barrie played drums, clarinet, and saxophone. She also composed intricate pieces on the piano and took piano lessons until the last weeks of her life. Playing piano in a bar or restaurant was at the top of her

bucket list.

As a Pisces, she loved the water, whether swimming laps in her backyard pool or sailing on one of her many around-the-world cruises. Times on the cruise ship, especially the days at sea, were among the happiest of her life. She made many wonderful friends on the ship and kept in touch with them all throughout the year. And as a true Pisces, Barrie was always empathetic to others' problems. Barrie will be loved and remembered always. She brought story and melody to many lives.

Barrie was preceded in death by her parents and survived by her beloved brother, David Wellens and his wife Marlene; her niece, Nora Wellens Silva; nephew, Craig Wellens and their families, and her vast array of adoring cousins, arrayed up and down the East Coast.

A Celebration of Her Life Service will be on Saturday, May 6, 2017 at 11:00 A.M. at Mission Park Funeral Chapels Stone Oak, 23755 US Highway 281 North, San Antonio, Texas 78258. A Reception will follow at the Funeral Home.

Previous Events

Celebration of Her Life

MAY 6. 11:00 AM (CT)

Mission Park Life Center at Stone Oak
23755 US-281
San Antonio, TX 78258
(210) 576-3377
<https://www.missionparks.com/>

Reception

MAY 6. 12:30 PM (CT)

Mission Park Life Center at Stone Oak
23755 US-281
San Antonio, TX 78258
(210) 576-3377
<https://www.missionparks.com/>

Tribute Wall

LJ

“ Love, Vern and Jean purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Dr. Barrie Ina Wellens.



Love, Vern and Jean - May 03, 2017 at 12:36 PM

JS

“ Jean Shimko lit a candle in memory of Dr. Barrie Ina Wellens



jean shimko - May 03, 2017 at 11:38 AM