

Mark Berg '80 -



Mark went into hospice on Monday, May 15. His mental decline was rapid and dementia ensued. Swallowing became difficult, and his body continued losing its battle with cancer. He passed away this morning. (May 27, 2023) He suffered from chronic back pain for years, and hospice provided freedom from that for the last two weeks. He did not want a funeral service, but from what I understand the VA will provide a service and he will be buried with

service members.

Recently his oncologist (pancreas and liver) said his numbers were looking better. Shortly thereafter his confusion worsened, and soon was unable to walk.

Angela says he went peacefully and that the services provided by the Big Bend Hospice House in Tallahassee during his last two weeks could not have been more compassionate, comfortable and supportive.

Mark offered me unlimited support over the past few years as I struggled greatly trying to manage my wife, Gail's, rapid onset of dementia. She transitioned to a memory care facility last October and my burden was made a little lighter. It was around this time Mark's puzzling long-term health issues were diagnosed as cancer.

For all the comfort he provided me these past few years, the flip side of the coin is a deep, deep, deep sense of loss and profound grief.

I saw Mark in Tallahassee last February and his outlook was bleak but his spirits were positive. He somehow found peace within his grim prognosis, which he spoke of as knowing he did not have much longer to live.

He was a fiercely loyal and honest friend. He was complicated and combative, but never selfishly. He was driven to make right and injustice he spotted. He did not suffer fools gladly (I am among those who clashed with him). But, he was smart and sincere, self-disparaging and humble, and a wonderful storyteller with a keen memory who was witty, funny and poignant.

His fierce loyalty, I believe, came from his mom, Myra Berg, who taught at T.A.R. and with whom he had a strained relationship. His intelligence and love of music came from his father, Elmer Berg, who taught music at T.A.R., with whom Mark was very close. Both are deceased.

The perplexing thing about Mark was that he had run-ins with many people, usually because of some small injustice he spotted. But, he NEVER spoke badly of anyone (really). He liked people, and he remembered everyone (I heard the stories!) and if you ever met him you held a place in his heart. He loved his memories from Berlin, the good and bad, which, oddly, is a healthy way of embracing life.

Written by Paul Bergly '80