

Remembering Wendell A. Smith

Wendell Atkins Smith, 93, passed peacefully on April 13th, 2025, surrounded by his wife, daughter, son-in-law, and three grandchildren, all holding him in boundless love and gratitude.

Wendell was charming, and quick-witted. His dry humor and perfectly timed one-liners were legendary among friends and family—even to the very end. He often had his family rolling with laughter thanks to his silly antics.

Born in Flint, Michigan, on January 21, 1932, Wendell was a sweet, only child who brought a strong sense of integrity and civic duty to everything he pursued. He spent parts of his childhood in Indianapolis, Milwaukee, and Kalamazoo, where he had a newspaper route, picked cherries on his uncle's farm, worked at a drive-in movie theatre, and eventually became an Eagle Scout. His family later moved to New Jersey, where he attended Haddonfield High School. There, he played on the school's undefeated football team, lettered in track, worked as editor of the school newspaper and yearbook, and was affectionately described by his classmates as "mirthful."

Wendell went on to attend Johns Hopkins University on an ROTC scholarship, where he pursued his love for history, played football, and honed his recipe for Fish House Punch for his fraternity. During his senior year, he met his first wife, Joan, on a blind date, and the next day wrote her a 12-page letter asking for her hand in marriage! Six months after their wedding in 1955, while attending Michigan Law School, Wendell was deployed to Korea, where he served for 18 months just after the war. He returned home and earned his law degree in 1959. Though he once dreamed of becoming a sports broadcaster, Wendell found deep satisfaction in the law and forged a meaningful path as an attorney. He joined the firm now known as Greenbaum, Rowe, Smith & Davis LLP as a partner in 1968, and was an integral member of its renowned real estate practice for over 50 years. Wendell was broadly recognized as one of New Jersey's preeminent authorities on the legal issues impacting condominiums and community associations in the state. Throughout his distinguished career, he represented many prominent real estate developers, hundreds of condominiums and cooperative communities, and a long list of other clients. He was a proud co-author of *New Jersey Condominium and Community Association Law*, a longstanding resource as the penultimate legal treatise for professionals in that field. Wendell was a founding Fellow of the prestigious American College of Real Estate Lawyers and the College of Community Association Lawyers, and a Fellow of the highly selective American Bar Foundation. He was the founding President and General Counsel Emeritus of the Community Associations Institute's New Jersey Chapter, which honored him with its inaugural Lifetime Achievement Award in 2011.

A giant in his communities and a mentor to many, Wendell was loved and led by example. He was tough, but never without compassion. His ability to navigate complexity and build consensus made him a natural leader whose influence extended far beyond his legal practice. He served on the Johns Hopkins Hospital Board and was a trustee of Johns Hopkins University. In Holmdel, he was a former trustee and board chair of the Bayshore Community Hospital and its charitable foundation, served as President of the Holmdel

School Board, and co- founded the Holmdel Drama and Arts Association. He also served on the Holmdel Cemetery Board and co-founded the Holmdel Theatre Company, which he supported for over 30 years.

Wendell was a people person and loved to have fun, whether it was through bowling, tennis, fishing, golfing, or throwing unforgettable parties back in the day. He was also a lifelong, fiercely loyal Mets and Giants fan—cheering them on with gusto through every season. But what Wendell felt most proud of was his family. He always found time to coach his kids’ sports teams, take family boating trips up the Northeast coast every summer, and travel internationally. Joan, his wife of 55 years, and their children nurtured in ‘Smitty’ a deep appreciation for the arts. In memory of their son, they founded the Duncan Smith Theatre, and they took great pride in Kala’s theatre work in New York.

Wendell was a supportive father to his children, a devoted husband to Joan, a fun-loving “Grandpa Moustache” to his three treasured grandchildren, and a wonderful partner to his second wife of 13 years, and soulmate, Judy. In retirement, Wendell introduced Judy to more sports and news than she could ever imagine, and for a kick, he watched her soap operas and 90-Day Fiancé. They traveled widely, found a home in Mount Dora, Florida, and laughed together every single day.

Known affectionately by his family as “Big Bear,” Wendell will be remembered for his service, playfulness, and generosity.

Wendell is predeceased by his mother, Dorothy Atkins Smith; his father, Louis Wendell Smith; his wife, Joan Nielsen Smith; and his son, Duncan Smith. He is survived by his wife, Judy Ferrari Smith; his daughter, Kala Smith; his son-in-law, Michael Quattrone; and his three grandchildren, Willow Quattrone, Jasper Quattrone, and Fox Quattrone. He is also survived by his sister-in-law and brother-in-law, Marilyn and Gerry Legato; his brother-in-law, David Ferrari; nieces and nephews; and thirteen cousins-in-law in Denmark.

Visitation:

Monday, April 21, 2025; 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm and 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Holmdel Funeral Home

26 South Holmdel Road

Holmdel, NJ 07723

Phone: (732) 946-3322

Funeral Service:

Tuesday, April 22, 2025; 11:00 am

The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd

112 Middletown Rd

Holmdel, NJ 07733

Tel: (732) 842-4596

Press Releases (Cont.)

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests donations for the Holmdel Theatre Company at the Duncan Smith Theatre, P.O. Box 182, Holmdel, NJ 07733.