

OBITUARY



William H. "Bill" Barker, 69, of Hope Township, N.J., died on November 13, 2015, after a long battle with cancer. Bill was born on April 27 1946, in Jersey City, N.J., to parents William and Mary Barker. Bill moved to Hackettstown, N.J., as a child, attended St. Mary parochial school and graduated from Hackettstown High School in 1964. He attended Seton Hall University for one year before leaving to support his mother and younger brother. Bill worked in hardware sales for most of his adult life, including as sales manager at Singer Hardware, and as a sales representative for Wally Lobo. Bill's great loves, beside his wife, Diane, were politics, animal welfare, and sports. No human being loved a vigorous political debate more than Bill. He was always a champion of the working person and the disadvantaged, which made him a lifelong Democrat. In his home county of Warren, Bill worked hard as a volunteer for the Democrats in the 1980 and 1990 campaigns, and when Democratic candidates grew scarce in an increasingly conservative county, he supported sensible Republicans. Bill was deeply gratified to witness the election of our first African-American president-twice. He was looking forward to voting for our first female president in 2016. Bill's big heart led him to rescue the abandoned dogs and cats that made their way to his home. All these pets became dear friends. He regrets leaving behind his last rescued friend, "Fred the cat." Bill rooted for all the New York teams. His favorite Sunday ritual was watching the Giants and Jets play and, then, especially after a Giants game, calling his sister-in-law Genie to commiserate or rejoice. His wife discovered early in their marriage that January didn't really bring sports season to an end because there was college and professional basketball, then Major League Baseball -- always a game on that had to be watched. She became accustomed to rushing home from Sunday brunches with friends to "catch the Giants game," and grew to enjoy watching Bill watch his games; she even listened and watched the replay when he explained in detail an "exciting" play. Bill took pride in the tough but generous typical New Jersey resident character. He never could imagine living anywhere else, no matter how greedy the mosquitoes or politicians. Bill is survived by his beloved and loving wife of 47 years, Diane (Sosnovik) Barker; his loving sisters-in-law, Genie Rogers, Carolyn Masar and husband, Paul, and brother-in-law, Frank Sosnovik and friend Sandy; his nieces and nephews; his brother, David Barker, and his dear friends, Anne and Bill Wolfe, and Cheryl Burket. He was preceded in death by his parents. Bill was also preceded in death by his beloved uncle, PFC William "Billy" Biedenkapp, who was killed in action in the Korean War on Oct. 24, 1952. As an assistant gunner of "G (George)" Company, Uncle Billy was hit by a sniper; according to Army interviews with his foxhole buddy, PFC Biedenkapp died instantly. His body could not be recovered from the North Korean site known as Pike's Peak. His name is inscribed on the Courts of the Missing at the Honolulu Memorial. Private First Class Biedenkapp was awarded the Purple Heart, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Korean Service Medal, the United Nations Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Korean Presidential Unit Citation and the Republic of Korea War Service Medal. Uncle Billy sent Bill a letter and pictures from his time in Korea that Bill kept and cherished all of his life. He often spoke of Uncle Billy as a hero of the "Forgotten War." Cremation was private. A celebration of Bill's life will be held at a later date. Those who wish to honor Bill's memory may contribute to their local nonprofit animal rescue organization.

The Star-Ledger: November 15, 2015

NAME: Barker, William H.

DATE OF DEATH: November 13, 2015