



Barton De Palma

November 26, 1937 - December 1, 2023

Retired art professor, artist, father, and grandfather Barton De Palma passed away on December 1st, 2023. He died peacefully at age 86, surrounded by his children. A true renaissance man of innumerable talents, Bart will be greatly missed by the many people he touched during his life.

Bart was born to Vivianne and Anthony F. De Palma in November of 1937 in Newark, New Jersey. Raised in Philadelphia, he attended Friend's Central School. There he was quarterback for the football team, a goalie for the soccer team, and acted in school plays including playing the choirmaster in *Our Town*. During his youth he also discovered his lifelong love of the arts and burgeoning talent for painting and photography.

Graduating high school in 1956, he began his college education at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia. After two years at Washington and Lee he decided to find a program to focus on his passion for art and moved to the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. He received B.F.A. and M.P.A degrees while at the same time receiving numerous awards for his paintings. In 1962, Bart moved to California to teach fine arts at Foothill College in Los Altos Hills. He spent his entire career at Foothill College and was known for his encouragement and deep insight of the creative process by students and faculty alike. Over the years at Foothill, he took several sabbaticals to paint and exhibit his art in Philadelphia, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Palo Alto.

When Bart first arrived in Palo Alto, he and his wife Alice Whitaker had two sons, Christopher, and Cameron. Although Bart and Alice later divorced, they remained friends throughout life. In 1994, Bart remarried to Marilyn Harmon and helped raise her children Lexi and Brent. Marilyn and Bart retired in Taos, New Mexico where they enjoyed shared interests and a rich life full of children, friends, and travel. A doting and loving husband, Bart cared for Marilyn until her death in 2020.

Bart was best known for his many hobbies, interests, and talents. He loved technology and over the years he built televisions from scratch, participated in the computer revolution, and never met a gadget he didn't like! Bart was also fascinated by astronomy. In his youth, he trained his telescope on the Apollo spacecraft as it went by, and in later years became a self-taught astrophotographer. He could often be found standing out in the snow for hours to capture a nebula on a clear, starry night. His interest in photography also created a love for scuba diving. He traveled the world capturing underwater sea creatures and met many lifelong friends, always speaking fondly of a trip to the Great Barrier Reef in particular. In addition to his own art and photography pursuits, he also assisted his brother, Brian, on several motion picture films throughout his career. Most notably, in the movie "Femme Fatale," Bart created a brilliant montage of cityscape photography which was later displayed at the Centre Pompidou Museum in Paris, France.

He and his wife Marilyn were also well-known for their warm and welcoming dinner parties, filled with beautiful hors d'oeuvres, impressive dishes, and loud laughter. A true creative, Bart regularly showcased his talent in the kitchen. To this day, no restaurant comes remotely close to his coq au vin recipe. For years, he would jokingly announce "another triumph!" with a wide grin after any dinner he served. Anyone who visited Bart's home could also easily see his love for gardening and wildlife. He was perpetually circling his property tending to his flowers, working on drip systems, admiring his aspen grove, feeding the birds and deer, or setting up warming beds for stray cats in the winter.

Though a celebrated artist and teacher, he is remembered most by his family and friends for his intelligence, incredible knowledge of history and art, wit, humor, sarcasm, and generosity. Bart often proudly recited an observation made by one of his good friends: “for such an asshole, you sure do have a lot of friends!” This remark was always followed by a wide smile, a chuckle, and an air of gratitude— revealing Bart’s incredible heart that was always lurking just below the surface.

Until cancer edged its way in, Bart truly never grew old. He was forever chasing and creating beauty, preparing for new adventures, making new friends, and cherishing old friends. Bart was an extraordinary man who inspired many, educated enthusiastically, loved deeply, and lived fully. Bart was preceded in death by his parents, brother Bruce, and beloved wife, Marilyn. He is survived by his brother Brian De Palma, his sons Cameron De Palma and Christopher De Palma, stepchildren Brent Harmon and Lexi Brandt, grandson James Brandt, and nieces Lolita De Palma and Piper De Palma.

Tribute Wall

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Brent Harmon - September 05, 2024 at 09:09 PM

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“ 1 file added to the album *Barton*



Brent - September 05, 2024 at 06:40 PM