

# NEWSCORNER

Special Edition



## BARRY MORTON

1938-2021

William Barry Morton was born to Boyette Edgar “Sunshine” Morton and Dorothy Pritchett Morton on April 5, 1938, in the rural outskirts of Birmingham, Alabama – known then as Patton Chapel and today as Hoover.

One of five Morton children, two sisters and two brothers, Barry grew up enjoying the outdoors. After grade school at Shades Cahaba Grammar School, Barry attended high school at Shades Valley High School. In his time there, he made lifelong friends and took on two visible leadership roles: captain of the football team and president of the student body.

High school friends who later became business associates, Doug Smith and Gary Draper, remember their time together at Shades Valley fondly.

“My family moved to Birmingham when I was in the ninth grade,” Gary said. “I knew no one in Birmingham. I went out for football, and one day at practice, a guy held out his hand and said, ‘Hi! I’m Barry Morton.’”

Although Barry and Doug didn’t share a love of playing sports, their friendship flourished in the dense forests of Alabama, hunting and enjoying nature.

In the summers, Barry joined his father – concrete finisher Sunshine Morton – and brother Steve working for Robins Engineering as a laborer.

After graduating from Shades Valley High School in 1956, Barry went on to study building science at Auburn University, finishing his bachelor’s degree in 1960. He joined Robins Engineering full-time upon graduation.

### Career Growth and Lasting Contributions

Sunshine was a friend of Robins Engineering founder, Todd Robins. Their closeness is reflected in memories of family barbecues and even in the name of Barry’s brother, Allen Todd Morton. That relationship led to Barry’s high school summer job and eventually to his long-term tenure with the company.

One of Barry’s first projects as a onsite project manager was a \$4.5 million mini steel mill in Kankakee, Illinois – Kankakee Electric Steel in 1961. It was a significant project for the young company, as it served as an introduction to the lucrative Midwest industrial sector. After designing the facility, Todd Robins sent his best hands to make sure the six-month, fast-tracked schedule would be met. This meant sending Barry, and long-time superintendent H.C. Sizemore to the town 60 miles south of Chicago.

While Sizemore remained throughout the duration of the project, Barry’s unit in the Alabama National Guard was deployed to Germany during the Berlin crisis. He spent a year in-country and returned to Robins Engineering after completing his military service.

Over the next decade, Robins Engineering built more industrial projects and ventured into retail work. In the mid ‘70s, the company became The Robins Corporation and Todd began planning for the company’s future leadership. As Barry continued to excel, Todd admired the characteristics he saw in Barry: hard-working, ethical, loyal and intelligent. He could see no better path ahead than to transition the company’s next generation to Barry. In short order, Todd began to sell shares in the company to Barry, completing the transition in the coming decades.

With projects on deck like the Birmingham airport renovation in the early ‘70s, Barry knew that growth was coming, and change was inevitable. First, the company would alter its organizational structure at the project level. To be able to properly expand

geographically, the company would need to depend on more than one general superintendent covering multiple projects within a given radius. Instead, they would hire superintendents to be stationed onsite and who were willing to travel to the work.

This new generation of superintendent also needed to be well-rounded, including the ability to see the big picture and multiple scopes of work at a time, as well as proactively plan the projects instead of carrying out directives from a general superintendent. Furthermore, they needed to be able to interface confidently with everyone on the project – from clients, to architects, as well as trades – and understand their jobs well enough to effectively manage all parties. This changed the project’s management to a single point of responsibility.

Although it sounds commonplace in 2022, this was a seismic shift in the early ‘70s, but it was the way forward.

Barry also spearheaded another significant change around the same time: scheduling. After running into his high school friend Gary Draper in the airport, the pair caught up on where life had taken them since they last met. While Barry was at Auburn University, Gary attended Georgia Tech. He graduated, taught, and then later formed a construction scheduling company with two other industry professionals called DDR.

After hearing of DDR’s success in Atlanta, Barry had an idea.

Beginning with one project and stretching into a multi-year consulting partnership, Barry’s leadership in hiring Gary Draper and DDR changed the way The Robins Corporation scheduled its jobs forever. With greater sophistication in this discipline, and a strengthened project management approach, the company was prepared for the influx of work that was to come.

For the remainder of the ‘70s, The Robins Corporation performed many successful school renovations

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Bill Morton  
Chairman/CEO

*I gave the eulogy at Dad's funeral. I believe it truly reflects the way he lived his life and felt about the company. Some of you heard it in person, but It is printed below for those who were unable to attend.*

I loved my Dad very much and will miss him dearly, as I know you will. I have to admit this has been terribly difficult as we weren’t at all ready for him to leave us, but we have a sense of comfort knowing he was ready, and he has now been called home.

So, now I'd like to take a moment to tell you what a great person he was, brag about him a little bit and then tell you about the wonderful life he lived.

Dad and his four siblings grew up in a very undeveloped area of Birmingham called Patton Chapel – which is now Hoover. His family home was situated on a beautiful, 15-acre piece of property which bordered Patton Creek on one side and pastures and stands of hardwoods on the other. They had a slew of animals – horses, pigs, chickens, two coon dogs, possibly a mule, and for sure a milk cow named Nancy that was tethered out in the yard to make it easier for Dad and my Uncle Steve to milk it every day before and after school. They basically lived on a working farm in what is now a suburb of Birmingham.

Dad loved roaming and hunting the land around their family home so much, he chose to build our first family house on the property, even though the drive to work was much longer than other options at the time. Dad liked to say we were like the Clampetts but without the oil or the big house.

Both of his parents had a very strong work ethic and they instilled this in their children at an early age. Dad also learned the value of hard work from working alongside his father, who went by the nickname, Sunshine. As luck would have it, his father happened to be a concrete superintendent for Todd Robins of Robins Engineering.

So, with the early training from his father and the hard work around the farm, Dad became a natural leader, selected as the president of the student body and the captain of the football team for the class of 1956 at Shades Valley High School.

We have always been told that our Dad really had some “wheels” on him – and we have always just assumed that he must have benefited physically from all of the coon hunting, chasing livestock and other animals up and down the hills around their property or maybe it was the hard work of pouring concrete with his father. Either way, Dad was selected as the starting running back for the football team during his junior and senior years. To top that off, he also set a new state record in the 440 – or the quarter mile as some call it – in the spring of 1956, his senior year. The interesting thing is, and this was typical of him, Dad never once talked about any of these things. We had to learn these kinds of things from old friends or family members or come across an old newspaper article or some other source, but never from him.

Dad worked his way through Auburn as a co-op student. Auburn was on the quarter system at that time, so to help pay for school he would work a quarter and go to school a quarter. He still finished in four years. Then, he did a stint in the service in Germany and then back to Robins Engineering, which he ultimately purchased from Todd Robins and renamed it Robins & Morton.

We have all benefited from Dad's strong, and sometimes obsessive, organizational and planning skills. In fact, I believe this is why Dad and Mr. Robins worked so well together. They were both very process and goal oriented, which are, in my opinion, the two most critical traits needed to be successful in the construction industry.

The same applied to his personal life and his expectations of everyone around him, including his children. From family members to his co-workers, you could bet that your name was at some point included on one of his continuously running action lists – for Dad it was a relentless pursuit of completing tasks and it was impossible for anyone to escape.

And of course, there's Dad's famous “Things to Do” card with the numbered lines and company logo. I'm sure these look familiar to many of you from the Robins & Morton family. Dad used these cards to hold himself and other people – mainly other people, like me – accountable. I was frightened of what was on these cards when I was younger. If you were with him at any point, a casual breakfast or lunch and he started removing this card from his front left shirt pocket, I knew I was in trouble – it was similar, in my mind at least, to being deposited or being pulled over by the police when you’re doing 80 in a 55. It’s over!

One of Dad’s greatest character traits was his deep empathy. I looked up the definition of empathy and it is the ability to understand, be aware of and be sensitive to the feelings, thoughts, and experiences of another person. That characteristic helped him develop great friends, hire great people, understand when someone needed help and develop a unique people-friendly company culture. His concern for each individual carries on to this day in the way we operate the company.

One great example of this was Dad's concern for the financial well-being of our people. In 1990, he put in place a profit-sharing plan for the company. He believed that our people are everything to us and that we had a responsibility to share the profits of the company in return the hard work of serving our clients – he really wanted to help our people be able to live a good quality of life in their retirement. I'm really proud to tell you that, because of Dad, the company has contributed 10% or more of our pretax profits into the plan every year since its inception.

Here’s another example: In 2005, we were considering converting our traditional health insurance program to a self-insured program. Even though Dad was retired at this point, this was such a big change I wanted to run it by him to make sure he was on board with it. His response to me was simple: “If the new plan will allow us to better take care of our people when they are having health issues then we should do it.”

This is just another example of his empathy towards others and his love for the people at Robins & Morton.

He often said, “Being blessed gives an opportunity to be a blessing to others.”

People often ask me, “What was it like to work with your Dad?” I really loved the working relationship that we had and feel blessed to have had the opportunity to work alongside him for so many years. I can’t say enough about the influence and impact he had on me. I believe one of the reasons our working relationship went so smoothly is because Dad made the decision before I started with the company that I would never report directly to him. If I had reported to him, there's no question he would have fired me!

Seriously, Dad was a wonderful role model, mentor, advisor, friend and business partner. After living alongside him for 57 years – and having worked so closely with him for 33 years – he never ever stopped being my Dad. He was always there for us, my sisters and me, he always cared about our well-being.

After my dad retired from being a builder with Robins & Morton, he never really retired from being a builder.

As his wife Catherine would say, Dad always needed to be working on a project. He loved the planning and management that is required to bring a project to completion. Dad, always with involvement and encouragement from Catherine, managed many projects aimed at supporting or improving facilities run by charitable organizations that help children or families in need.

But I know what Dad would say was his biggest and best project: It was the conversion of a rundown horse farm in Sterrett into a beautiful and pristine piece of property he named Sunshine Farm. Dad knew about the success and popularity of JH Ranch in California and wanted to create and build something locally for rural and inner-city kids who would never be able to go to California. His desire was for those who visited Sunshine Farm to grow closer in their relationship to Jesus Christ by experiencing the beauty of God’s creation. Over the past 15 or so years, literally thousands of youth from small church groups, inner-city schools, ministry organizations and athletic teams have gone to Sunshine

Farm. Among his many joys was hearing leaders give the Gospel message at the chapel and watching kids get baptized right there at the farm!

In the same way that people were important when he was at Robins & Morton, people continued to be important after his retirement.

For example: Dad helped several workers at Sunshine Farm become U.S. Citizens; he helped other young people by paying for their college tuition or by setting them up with learning a new trade. He just cared for people.

He often said, “Being blessed gives an opportunity to be a blessing to others.”

On the day of Dad’s passing a dear co-worker said, “The Lord gained a mighty man today in Barry. Heaven is looking better every day.” It could not have been said any better.

I recently read that the purpose of life is to discover your gift and the meaning of life is to give your gift away. My dad discovered that his gifts were building, managing and caring for people and he lived his life giving those gifts away.

Well done, Dad. You will be missed, but not forgotten.



Robin Savage  
President/COO

As your life and career go by, you inevitably meet certain people who have a profound effect on you as a friend,

mentor and model. Barry was important to me in all of those areas and had a major effect on my life both personally and professionally. I have wondered occasionally how things might have been if Barry had not been a friend, colleague and yes, a “boss” to me. It would have been a significantly different life for myself and my family.

I remember the first time I met Barry in detail. It was at the Auburn Building Construction Awards banquet in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1982. It had been a great night of networking, being with friends and meeting industry leaders from all around the state and region. As the evening drew to a close, I headed for the exit door and Barry made a point to greet me and strike up a conversation. Not many contractors were heavily involved in the program in those days, but Robins & Morton–The Robins Corporation at the time—had stepped up its support and Barry provided some great input about the company and the value of the degree I was about to receive. It was typical Barry: he spoke to you personally and with a purpose. He encouraged a meeting in the future in Birmingham. Jobs were not easy to come by at that time and I was thrilled to meet one of the industry leaders in our state and get a chance at joining the organization. It was brief, cordial and very personal, and my lucky day! I have often wondered what life would be like today

if I had gone out the side door and missed a chance meeting with a class individual like Barry.

On a professional level Barry always brought judgment, guidance and high expectations that things should be done right, and he believed in accountability from everyone. He was extremely detailed to the point that he expected everyone to keep up with “actions”—and the time in which they needed to be done – as he was a stickler for organization and timeliness. Several of us – Vice President of Operational Support and Planning Mike Thompson, Vice President Phil Yance, and Senior Vice President Jim Poole, among others – learned some very good management habits through Barry's expectations of us.

He may not have told you directly, but he led from the “top down” by example. It was just one of the many good training efforts he passed down to help make us successful. He also brought a great amount of wisdom to every meeting or session he attended. Barry was one of those people that

listened and when he spoke, it was right and always provided good direction. He had that management gift of good judgment and his credibility was high because of a track record of success in most every situation. If Barry didn’t know the answer, he knew how to manage things to get it. I once recall a meeting with Barry when I pointed out that we may not

have the resources to pursue a certain project – I still can’t believe I actually said that to him! I remember his reply very well: “There are resources everywhere, you just have to get out and find them.” In other words, if you have a challenge, just find a way to get it done, and he truly believed that. When it came to sales in our industry, Barry set the example of how selling was really accomplished: through relationships. I often observed how he spent the right time with the right people to

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On a personal level, I will simply say that Barry was a very good friend in a considerate and guiding kind of way. As President, CEO and eventually Chairman of the Board, interaction with Barry was often in groups and in a little more formal setting. However, when the opportunity arose to discuss things one-on-one, he was very engaging on a much more personal level. I remember once having the opportunity to ride to a jobsite for a few hours and we discussed everything from horses to family issues to how much toughness is sometimes required to be successful in the construction business. Barry served as a “formal” mentor to me at one point. We read a book together that served as a catalyst for numerous discussions on an array of topics, both personal and professional. In his later years, he routinely brought many of us fresh farm eggs, vegetables and even a “sleep” elixir that he swore would help assure a good night’s rest! All of these things were representative of how he was truly caring of the people around him.

In the early ‘90s, Barry had the opportunity to take the company to a new level of expansion. However, with that opportunity came a significant amount of risk of his personal assets to guarantee some of the bonding for the projects we were pursuing. It was a pivotal point in the growth of the company, made possible by Barry basically “putting everything on the line.” This willingness by Barry to take us to the next level has created the opportunity that we all have today at Robins & Morton. Without that, we would be a very different company today. Everyone in our Robins & Morton family should have a sincere appreciation of his actions that created the company we now have.

Barry had a presence to him that has had a lasting effect on me and for many in the company that knew him personally. Maybe that is due in part to the fact that he was the “Big Boss” for much of the time he was with the company, but I think it’s much more due to his wisdom and his caring, considerate nature-qualities from Barry that are in our culture to this day. Even after he had stepped down 15 years ago from his day-to-day management role, his presence from all those years still helped guide us. I will miss his friendship, his presence, and his guidance.



# A Leader, A Mentor, A Friend

CONTINUED FROM COVER

as they poured their focus into significant operational and process improvements. However, it was the ‘80s that would put these improvements to the test.

Under the leadership of Todd Robins, Barry Morton, and Wayne Gordon – who would become the company’s CEO in 1996 – the company landed a big fish that would change the course of the company’s history. Although The Robins Corporation was known for its integrity, quality work and relationship-focused approach to business, it lacked a specialization. The firm performed work in every market sector based on availability and opportunity. It was only after two successful healthcare projects – Shelby Baptist Hospital in Birmingham in ’72 and Downtown General Hospital in Chattanooga in ’76 – and an introduction to an important healthcare client that the leadership team began to think that working in the healthcare industry could be the company’s future.

And they were right.

Wayne and long-time estimator, Earl Johnson, were key conduits to cultivating a critical relationship with a Hospital Corporation of America (HCA).

Earl was known far and wide across the southeast for his trustworthiness and commitment to his word. His and Wayne’s connections provided a gateway to a meeting between Barry Morton and HCA. As was typical of Barry, he closed the deal, securing a trio of hospital projects. This was also the beginning of the company’s Nashville office, officially established in 1982.

While it was a clear win for the company, it was also a test. HCA was expanding rapidly and needed to know that they had a partner who could deliver. Fortunately, the Robins team didn’t disappoint and took on 80 projects for HCA alone in that decade. Even more impressively, it’s a partnership that continues to this day – more than 40 years later.

“Barry and I met in 1981 shortly after Hospital Corporation of America, HCA, retained

Robins & Morton as one of the general contractors to build HCA hospitals,” said Exley Hill, former construction manager at HCA. “Over those 40 years Barry and I maintained a close, mutually respectful relationship. I admired the corporate culture developed under Barry’s leadership as outlined in their Creed and Mission, Vision, Values statement. He walked the talk.”

In 1985, Barry ascended to a new rank: President of The Robins Corporation.

The late ‘80s brought another unique project to the company, only miles from their home base in Birmingham. Called the Birmingham Turf Club, the six-building, 300-acre campus would host world-class horse races and events. It was the most expansive project to date for the company and as Barry Morton himself put it, “It was like a city within a city.”

“My first job [at Robins & Morton] was the project manager at the Birmingham Turf Club,” Senior Vice President Robert Gambrell said. “It was a big job, and a big job for the company. Barry stayed very close to the project and worked with me. I gained tremendous respect for him. He was a hands-on, roll-up-your-sleeves kind of guy.”

Right on its heels, the company took on another high-profile Birmingham giant – construction of an exhibition hall, products mart, hotel and parking deck for the Birmingham Jefferson Civic Center (BJCC) in 1989. The successful completion of this mammoth project set the team up to pursue another monumental opportunity, only this time, in Bristol, Tennessee.

In 1991, the company was awarded the new 600,000-square-foot Bristol Regional Medical Center project in Bristol, Tennessee. Because of its size, the bonding company initially rejected the request to indemnify the project. However, because of the hospital’s existing business relationship and Robins’ consistency in delivering work, an agreement was finally reached. In addition to stipulations on management, profit, and staff, Barry had to personally sign for the

project. This meant he would be financially responsible. If the project failed, not only would Robins be bankrupt, but it would also bankrupt Barry.

It was daunting with so much at stake, but there was no hesitation. Barry was all in and, in the end, Bristol was a total success.

The success of the HCA partnership and the Bristol project became a foundation that paved the way for another long-term relationship.

It was 1991 when the company embarked on its first project with Huntsville Hospital – another partnership that continues into the present.

Senior Vice President of Operations at Huntsville Hospital Health System, Rudy Hornsby, recalls his first meetings with Barry, and said they set the foundation for the years of respect between them to follow.

“I met Barry for the first time in ’89 or ’90, when we were building a project on Silvey Road,” he said. “We were reviewing a project contract, which can sometimes be a difficult thing. He was the nicest man you’d ever meet – congenial, a great listener. He really made an impression on me and made me feel good that we had chosen Robins as our contractor. Everything about his behavior reinforced that.”

After 33 years and 100 projects, Rudy remembers Barry as more than a colleague, but also a friend.

“I was his customer and friend,” he said. “He leaves a legacy of excellence and customer service. The culture he created, I see it instilled in [our Robins team here]. It shows a lot of influence and consistency. He put an indelible mark on the company, and his son, Bill.”

## The Road to Chairman Emeritus

It was also in 1990 that The Robins Corporation celebrated its first, but not its

last, #1 ranking on Modern Healthcare’s Top Contractors list. Two years later, the company was also renamed to reflect its new majority shareholder, Barry Morton. Keeping the iconic red rectangular logo, the company became “Robins & Morton.”

The company truly hit its stride in the ‘90s, securing more healthcare work and completing landmark projects beginning in 2000, such as Gerald Champion Medical Center in Alamogordo, New Mexico; Sierra Providence East and University Medical Center in El Paso, Texas; Winnie Palmer Hospital for Women & Babies in Orlando, Florida; Levine Children’s Hospital in Charlotte, North Carolina; and MaineGeneral Medical Center in Augusta, Maine.

In 1996, Wayne Gordon was promoted to President/COO, and Barry was named Chairman/CEO. Within six years, Barry’s son, Bill, moved into the President’s role, and long-time leader Robin Savage assumed the COO role at the same time as Wayne’s retirement.

Barry retired in 2005 and he officially transitioned into the Chairman Emeritus role in 2015.

While growth continued for the company with additional offices, consecutive record sales years, and a celebratory 75-year-anniversary, its unanimous among Barry’s colleagues and peers that his leadership solidified the company’s unique culture, positioning it to thrive in a new era.

“He kept our business strong by not wavering from what worked and not being caught up in the ‘latest and greatest,’ former Senior Vice President Rocky McMichen said. “It’s a testament, but a long story, of how the company came to be what it is today based on Barry’s no-nonsense approach to business and life. Through Barry’s daughter Lynn, I met my wife Dani; through his son Bill, I got an opportunity to do more than I ever expected; through Barry, I had a true friend.”

# Memories

“Barry displayed many qualities that I admire. He was soft spoken, likeable, respectful, fair but firm, sincere, honest, a man of great integrity, confident, and always focused on process improvement...Anyone that knew and worked with Barry could only view the relationship as being positive and impactful.” *Exley Hill, former construction manager at HCA*

“Barry was all about relationships. He was all about treating people fairly and working together for a common effort. In his personal life and his business life, that was the center of Barry Morton: building friendships, relationships.” *Robert Gambrell Senior Vice President at Robins & Morton*

“He made you feel welcome and was easy to talk to. I’m sure, when he needed to, he could be tough, but I was never in a position where he had to do that. I’m sure he had to do it on my behalf, but as his customer and I’d like to say friend, I never saw anything but a nice, warm guy. We’re going to all miss him.” *Rudy Hornsby, Senior VP of Operations at Huntsville Hospital*

“Barry left a legacy that is a model for great achievement. He successfully worked his way up in a privately held company to become the CEO/owner and successfully transitioned the company management team, while maintaining its privately held ownership to one that, still to this day, holds true to the same mission, vision and values it began with 75 years ago.” *Exley Hill, former construction manager at HCA*

“Construction’s a risky business. You can see the best in people, but you can also see the worst in people. I always thought the best of Barry. We were working to solve problems. He always approached things fairly and calmly.” *Robert Gambrell, Senior Vice President at Robins & Morton*

“The testament to [Barry] was the culture. It has always stayed the same. Not only was Barry a customer-oriented guy and did what he said, he instilled that in the entire team. Now Bill does the same. Somebody has to get credit for that.” *Rudy Hornsby, Senior VP of Operations at Huntsville Hospital*

“In the time before iPhones, [Barry] took panoramic Polaroids of the [Birmingham Turf Club horse racing track] lay down area from the roof of the track. I admired his imaginative artistic approach but quickly learned that this was not Barry’s art project. I had to admit the pictures caught the site as it was: a bomb cratered maze of spaghetti rebar, discarded equipment and assorted trash. When Barry wanted to make a point, he made a point.” *Rocky McMichen, retired Senior Vice President at Robins & Morton*

“When I started with Robins, we were doing about \$30 million worth of work and had primarily one healthcare client, HCA. When Barry started stepping away, we were at \$800 million a year and the number of healthcare clients had blossomed into many. We grew tremendously and there was a big transition period from ’84 to ’04.” *Robert Gambrell, Senior Vice President at Robins & Morton*

“I never knew how he could make the proper call but invariably he could read a fellow and call their hand. He kept our business strong by not wavering from what worked and not being caught up in the latest and greatest. It’s a testament...of how the company came to be what it is today.” *Rocky McMichen, retired Senior Vice President at Robins & Morton*

“I watched Robins & Morton grow and evolve over the years, almost continually working on a project with them during this period... They only continued to build on the foundation Barry laid and kept improving the processes. I observed from the very first that Barry, and thus Robins & Morton, valued their reputation and would make every effort to protect it and strive to deliver the best possible project for the client. This provided me with great comfort representing the client and fostered a great, mutually beneficial relationship with Barry and the company.” *Exley Hill, former construction manager at HCA*

“My family didn’t have a car, so Barry took pity on me and taught me how to drive. He instructed me in his 1949 straight-shift Studebaker. Barry was both patient with my driving and tolerant of my grinding of the car’s gears. By the way, don’t let anybody tell you Barry was conservative when it came to cars. That Studebaker was as slick looking as you could get back in the ‘50s.” *Gary Draper, friend and business associate*



Leisure Time and Sunshine Farm

From his days of hunting and working outdoors as a young man, to his love for a good sports game, Barry Morton truly appreciated the great outdoors.

While he enjoyed many hobbies and past times, horses were one of his favorites. Former HCA Construction Manager Exley Hill recalled that horses were an interest he and Barry shared.

"I invited Barry and Catherine to my home in Franklin, Tennessee, a few years ago to do some trail riding with my son and I," he said. "We had a great ride and enjoyed the conversation and fellowship together in non-work environment."

These interests and an interesting opportunity coalesced into Barry's most hands-on retirement project that he eventually called Sunshine Farm.

In 2006, Barry heard about an abandoned farm in Sterrett, Alabama. He toured the property with Catherine, and while she admittedly saw more work than potential, Barry thought otherwise. The years of building his clients' visions helped him imagine his own.

He envisioned a full-service farm with animals and gardens, but with all the available space, he also saw an opportunity for a Christian camp. The farm component reflected much of his

In fact, Barry was known to fellowship with his co-workers and clients at football and basketball games at one of his favorite places – Auburn University.

"We would see each other at ball games, and he was always fun to be around," Senior Vice President of Operations at Huntsville Hospital, Rudy Hornsby, said. "He always took an interest in you as a person."

upbringing, as his 15-acre family home was what you might call a "working farm." After many years of hard work, visitors can see the fruits of his and Catherine's labor.

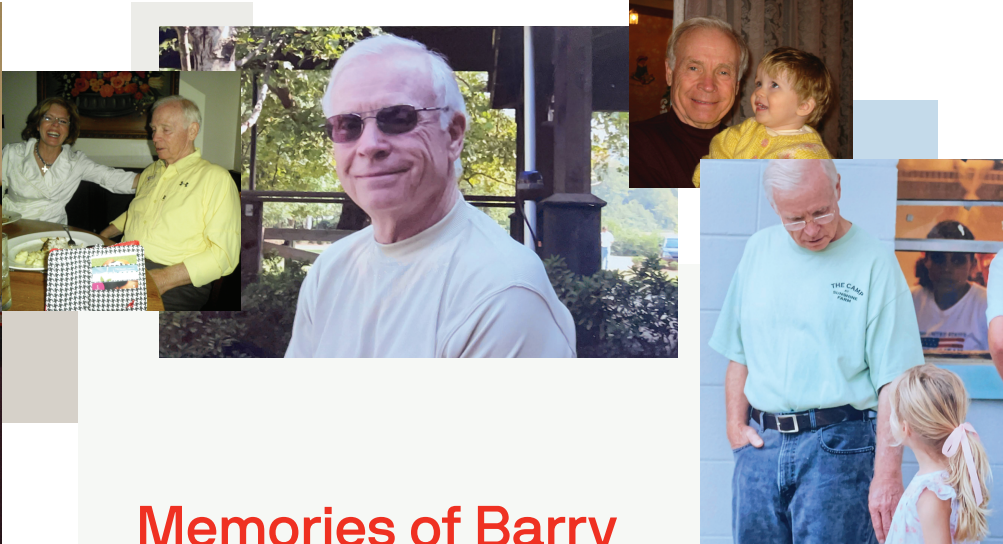
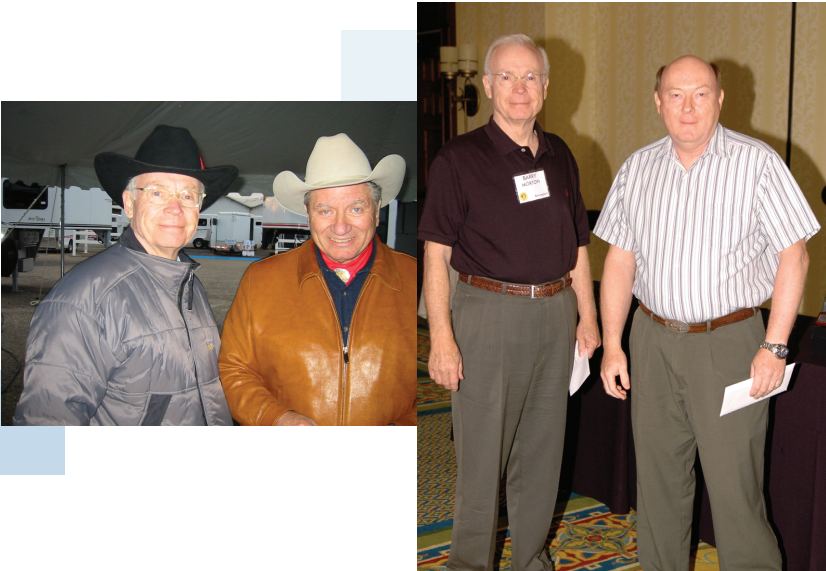
Upon entering the gates at The Camp at Sunshine Farm – named for Barry's father – visitors come upon a fork in the road. To visit the Morton's family home, continue straight, but to visit the campgrounds there's a slight left.

Along the road, there are fenced grazing fields of alpacas, donkeys, sheep and horses, all positioned ahead of cabins, a horse barn and gardens. On the top of the hill sits a small chapel with high ceilings and a baptismal pool.

Since opening The Camp at Sunshine Farm, thousands of young people from church groups, ministries, schools and athletic teams have come to fellowship, fish, practice archery, hike, kayak, swim, learn basic farming, ride horses, and acquire wilderness skills.

In the months before Barry passed away in December, he spent time in many of his favorite places with his favorite people. He visited Auburn University to see his youngest daughter, Mary, and watch a ball game. He enjoyed the birth of his first two great-grandchildren and hosted a wedding for a granddaughter at Sunshine Farm. He also spent time with Catherine at the beach.

However, of all the places and activities he loved, it was his family that he loved the most. He often referred to them as "his world," and watching his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren grow up was truly his greatest pleasure.



Memories of Barry

by Doug Smith  
Board Member 1972-2022

It began in the fall of 1952; as freshmen at Shades Valley High School, we met through mutual friends. That was almost 70 years ago. Little did we know at that time we would become lifelong friends and share every important event of our lives.

Barry was an athlete—football and track. While I was not, we did share the love of hunting. Therefore, over the years we have spent time together squirrel, bird and rabbit hunting. Why I never hunted raccoons with Barry is a mystery...perhaps because coon hunting is a nocturnal event and I suppose I was doing other things.

After we both choose Auburn for college it was a given we would become roommates. That first year we pledged Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity. Barry needed to work every other quarter to earn money for school. So, on alternate quarters I would need to find a substitute roommate. In 1958, our sophomore year, I got a new roommate and wife, Sylvia, and Barry vacated for the Pike house.

After graduation we separated for a brief period while he did a one-year military tour in Germany and I went to graduate school at Alabama (he tolerated my defection to the enemy camp in silence). After Germany and graduate school, we began our careers—Barry at Robins Engineering and me at IBM.

A few years after my transfer by IBM to White Plains, New York, in 1966, Todd and Barry invited me to join the Robins board as its sixth member. I remember my first board meeting in August 1974 at which Todd proudly announced that he could see the possibility of topping \$12 million in revenue that year. In the 47 years since, the company has grown to almost \$2 billion.



Having known Barry almost all his life, I would like to share what I believe made him an outstanding person and wonderful friend. First, he worked hard. That may sound a bit cliché but what it meant to him was being at work early every day, thoroughly understanding a problem and not quitting until the task was complete.

He even worked hard at having fun. For example, we went bobcat hunting with our fraternity brother in Florida. This involved starting cat hunting at about 3 a.m., quail hunting at 7 a.m., dove shooting in the pecan groves at noon and quail hunting back in the fields until sunset. That, to Barry, was sheer fun—some might say it sounds like hard work. He loved it!

A special characteristic of Barry was his deep personal belief in individuals. Having earned his trust, you could count on him to help in any situation. More than once, I saw him change a person's role in the company to take full advantage of their unique strengths.

Barry was always on the lookout for anyone in need. He would go out of his way to lend his support to those dealing with financial, family, work or health issues. The difference I saw in Barry's actions is that while most of us are willing to help when presented with specific needs, Barry was constantly on the alert for a way to help others. I could cite many examples but to Barry they were personal and private.

Finally, Barry had an inner compass, which always pointed him in the direction of fair treatment for everyone, unquestioned integrity, loyalty to his friends, true concern for each person's well-being and the desire to be the best person he could be—and to inspire that in everyone around him. He certainly inspired me.