

A Parting Shot - - Memories of Frank Wiseman

Article by Anita Westervelt, South Texas Border Chapter

Frank Wiseman was the quintessential group photo guru. No matter what, it either began with a group shot or ended with a group shot.



Friends and family of Frank Wiseman gathered to celebrate his memory. (photo by Sue Wiseman)

Sue Wiseman, Frank's sister-in-law of 53 years, knew this about Frank. Sue, even after losing her husband, Charlie, Frank's brother, just weeks after Frank's death in February, came down in October, with her son Mike, her siblings, their spouses and friends for a final celebration of Frank's life and to spread his ashes in the park that Frank loved. Here at Hugh Ramsey Nature Park he spent thousands of volunteer hours during a span of 20 plus years helping to revegetate and create native specialty gardens, first with the Arroyo Colorado Audubon Society, the Native Plant Project and then as a Texas Master Naturalist.

Sue designed a memorable send off for Frank, beginning with a picture journey of his life before any of us knew him. She had put together a notebook for us, sharing early photos of Frank, his awards and honors and telling us many things we didn't know, like his love of little theatre where he worked behind the scenes, but never on stage, and his time as an artist, his love of gardens, flowers and traveling.

During the journey of Frank's life, Sue talked about his career with the Department of Defense, where he taught high school children of American military and diplomatic personnel from all over England and Europe. Sue spoke of Frank's love of traveling and the many experiences he enjoyed – and his collection of bells from so many places – which she left on the Ramsey Park pavilion tables for us mourners to take as a remembrance of Frank.

More than a dozen of Frank's friends told stories and talked about Frank's memorable ways; we laughed and cried. He touched so many lives, sharing his knowledge, teaching about plants and the native habitat. Frank will be missed by so many.

Oh, yeah. The beautiful ceremony ended with a group shot. And if you're wondering, Frank's brother-in-law assured me Frank would get it – they were posting it “to the Cloud.”

Frank and Charlie Wiseman's mother was in the local Shell Club, probably from its inception. Frank also was a long-time member. A portion of Frank's ashes were co-mingled with Charlie's. The two brothers did not plan that, but it came to be, and as both men had wished, their ashes were spread on the beach in October by Sue and family.

I'd like to share a fun Frank-on-the-Beach story. One Christmas day, when my husband was deployed, Frank, Pamela Gregory (former Texas

had gas station burritos for Christmas dinner, sitting on the beach. We looked for beach things in the sand, played with the shells washed ashore that we called dragon eggs. We did so much fun! We quickly scrambled into Frank's car and splashed in the surf. Then he drove us around to the beach to look at the native plants for endless discussions! It was a great escape on the beach.

