



Raymond Barry Schwartz

July 18, 1939 - February 18, 2025

Raymond “Ray” Barry Schwartz was born on July 18, 1939, in Tredegar, Wales and passed away on February 18, 2025, in Summerville, South Carolina, from complications due to dementia.

Ray was married for over 55 years to Andrea Weller Schwartz, who passed away two years before him. He is survived by his daughter, Heather Schwartz, her spouse, Erin Schwartz; his son, Dustin Schwartz, his spouse, Samantha Schwartz; their daughter and Ray's granddaughter, Savannah Schwartz, and by his brother in life, Larry Solomon.

In Wales, Ray grew up fast. He rode buses at night with his mother—his “mummy,” Beatrice (“Bea”)—while the lights were dimmed because of wartime bombs. He once looked at the sky and thought the bombs were balloons, a memory that stayed with him his whole life. Even though they had very little, his parents took in a young boy, Larry Solomon to save his life during the Nazi era. Though they couldn’t take in his twin sister, Larry was like a brother to Ray and lived with them for seven years until he went to live with an aunt in the United States.

At age 7, Ray emigrated with his parents, Bea and Sam and his sister, Patricia (“Patsy”), to the United States. Because Patsy had an intellectual disability, they were held at Ellis Island for an extended time while a lawyer worked to

help them gain citizenship. It was a painful time to be separated from his mother and housed with his father, with whom he wasn't close. Sam often pressured him to learn Hebrew and study the Torah and this turned Ray off from religion/spirituality for the rest of his life.

When they were finally released from Ellis Island, Ray drove his family from New York to Goose Creek, Texas. He was only seven years old. Those first years weren't easy. His family was so poor they ate leftover baby food from the tenants before them. At school, he was teased for wearing knickers and shoes that didn't quite fit because they weren't his own. Despite all this, his mother was doting and saw much potential in him which he worked to develop.

Even as a kid, Ray showed determination and will to create a better life for him and his family. At twelve, he started teaching swimming lessons. To pay for college, he picked strawberries and hauled heavy sandbags—work that left him with a sore back for the rest of his life. He was a true intellectual: he taught himself calculus, devoured languages, loved poetry, literature, art, and museums. For a time, he dreamed of becoming a history professor but he wanted a career that would provide for him and his family.

Medicine, however, became his true calling. With a scholarship to Baylor University, Ray earned his medical degree and discovered his passion for anesthesiology. He enlisted in the Air Force for four years during Vietnam as a doctor and became a Captain.

He went on to complete his residency at the University of Pennsylvania. His career started in private practice in Fresno, California, where his children were born, to chief of Anesthesia at Albany Medical Center in New York, and later at the University of Pittsburgh. Colleagues and friends often said he was the smartest person they knew.

Outside of medicine, Ray loved to tease and surprise friends, family, and colleagues. One of his favorite tricks was telling lunch ladies that he “worked in the basement”—the operating room—and letting them think he was a janitor rather than a doctor.

As a young parent, Ray loved to call himself “Wonderful Daddy,” sweeping in late at night with hugs and kisses while Andrea, who was handling the daily tasks, often felt a little left out and more than a little upset, though she knew this was his sense of humor. Though they were very different, Ray and Andrea both loved each other and their relationship was playful and full of life! Each also had fulfilling careers, and together shared a dream of giving their children every opportunity. Ray also supported his parents financially, buying them a house and car and taking care of them for most of their lives.

Ray and Andrea also shared long, enduring friendships. Ray loved conversations with friends over lunch or coffee—about medicine, books, history (especially Winston Churchill), movies (his favorite was *Pride and Prejudice*), and politics. Though he started out conservative, he grew more liberal over the years, often watching MSNBC and yelling at the TV about the state of the world.

Ray was endlessly curious. For more than 40 years, he studied French—taking two immersion trips to a school in the South of France and keeping up weekly tutoring sessions almost until the end of his life.

Ray also loved wandering through art and history museums, taking photographs (of his kids and nature, always in black and white), and blasting opera and classical music—always loud enough to drive Andrea a little crazy. He loved to tease Andrea, but underneath his teasing was great affection.

Though Ray claimed agnosticism, he was always curious, and on occasion would ponder, “Do you think this is all there is—or is there something beyond? I’d like to believe there’s more.”

Now, we imagine him carried into that great “more,” unfolding beyond words.

He will be deeply missed.

Tribute Wall



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