



Robert J. Barnett Sr.

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Robert J Barnett Sr., age eighty-six, of Vancouver, WA, passed away at PeaceHealth's ICU on December 6, 2025. He was in the presence of his loving family when he passed. He was born at Musgrove Farm in Point Pleasant, West Virginia, on August 16, 1939, to Robert Kesil Barnett and Cornelia America Stutler Barnett.

Bob's parents divorced when he was four years old; and he and his older sister, Nelliejane, went to live with their paternal grandparents on their farm. At this time, their father left West Virginia and came to Oregon, to work in the shipyards during World War II. Times were hard then he and his sister performed daily chores they were little farm children.

In 1948, his father picked up Nelliejane and Bob from West Virginia, and brought them to Portland with him. The train on which they arrived came through the 1948 Vanport Flood waters, which was a big deal. In fact, the whole train trip was a big deal to both children. They had only known farm life. At this time in their lives, they did not remember their dad, he had been gone for years. Life in Oregon was vastly different than their life on the farm. Everything was different. For example: their new neighbors did not have a

Southern accent, customs were different, bread was in slices and not home baked. Even indoor plumbing was new to them. It was a total life change.

Bob had difficulty adjusting to the new school. He was held back a year in hopes he would adjust easier in his second year in school. His father met and married Grace Gooding. She had two children from an earlier marriage: Nancy and Robert Gooding. Later, they had an additional two boys: Daniel and Stephen Barnett. Bob's father started working at Alcoa at this time and moved the family of eight to Vancouver, WA.

Bob had good memories of living in the Salmon Creek and Felida areas. He roamed all over, and fished in different places. Later in life, he was continually shocked at the loss of land to subdivisions in those areas.

When Bob was sixteen, he wanted to leave home. Initially, he wanted to join the Army when he turned seventeen; however, his parents said they would only give permission if he went into the Navy. Nelliejane decided to leave home at the same time. In August of 1956 he and his sister both joined the US Navy the same day.

In August of 1957, Bob returned to Vancouver on leave with a set of rings; and he asked his childhood friend, Sharon Hamilton to marry him. Bob only had thirty days of leave and he spent every day of that leave picking beans with Sharon. They thoroughly discussed marriage and life while picking beans to help Sharon earn school money. Sharon took a pre-arranged week of absence from her junior year of high school to get married. Bob and Sharon were married in St. James Catholic Church on May 21, 1958.

Bob had one week leave, he came home on Saturday, they married on Wednesday and they rode a Greyhound Bus to Seaside, OR for their honeymoon; and he returned to duty on the following Saturday. Sharon

returned to Fort Vancouver High School and Bob went back to San Diego to finish his school and then went aboard the USS Midway Aircraft Carrier (CVA-41). This was the beginning of Navy life as it would be for the next eighteen years.

He returned home in March 1959; and he and Sharon went to Oakland, California to begin in earnest their life together. Sharon finished the last two months of high school at Oakland Tech. They have always held the City of Oakland dear in their hearts. Their time there was the sweetest of times.

Bob saw duty on the USS Midway (CVA-31), Oakland Naval Supply Center, U.S. Naval Magazine in Guam M.I., USS Bon Home Richard (CVA-31), Commander Service Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, Norfolk, VA, USS Forrestal (CVA-59), and finally, the Naval Supply Center, Norfolk, VA.

The time in Norfolk was as close to normal as we ever were in the service. We lived in a nice neighborhood, close to schools, our church, and Bob's duty station. We had wonderful neighbors and our children have referred to this as the, "Beaver Cleaver" time.

It was at this time school busing was mandated. So, our two youngest boys were required to attend schools in downtown Norfolk: Young Park and Chesterfield Heights. They were in kindergarten and 2nd Grade. This was a disappointment to us as we purchased our house about two blocks from the Little Creek Primary and Elementary School to keep our children close to home. It was a long distance from North Camelia Acres to the schools in downtown Norfolk.

Bob retired from the Navy on June 26, 1976 as a Senior Chief. He wanted to take the whole summer and visit places we did not have the time to see in our

earlier travels. So, we sold our house, loaded up our VW Van and drove all over the country until one day at breakfast at the lodge in Yellowstone Park, our oldest son announced he would rather be eating Coco Puffs at Grandma's, and I don't like Coco Puffs. They all agreed and so we headed in earnest to Vancouver, WA., purchased an old farm house on five acres, finished raising the children and had a heck of a good time in that old house.

We had wonderful neighbors. Jerry Barber was always after Bob to join the Merchant Marines since they needed Electricians! He and Bob spent some jolly good times fishing on the Columbia River. The children all went to school together. Ben and Wilma Fritz, Don and Lois Beam, Rudy and Maunte Fritz, wonderful friends, and neighbors.

Bob had dreamed of having a very large garden and he achieved that dream. That garden provided a feast of vegetables throughout the years. Although he left West Virginia at a young age, West Virginia never left him. He loved the time we lived on five acres and when it was time to go, he was more than ready, it was Sharon who really hated to leave, progress was on the move in our area as well.

Bob worked for fourteen years at Walkers Auto Electric. When our last child was married and settled, he joined the Merchant Marines; and went sailing again for seventeen years, and then retired.

He and Sharon had five children: a daughter Kacy, and four sons, Robert, John, James, and Joseph. They all married and had lovely families of their own, gifting us with grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He had a wonderful time with his large family. He just loved having all the children around.

Bob was a wonderful, caring father in every sense of the word. He had a very

deep and abiding faith that played into every aspect of his life. He was a member of Columbia Presbyterian Church and the Friday morning bible study, led by Dave Cram. He also joined the Tuesday work group at church and continued working with them through the remodeling. He loved precision shooting and he was a member of Clark Rifles and Vancouver Rifle and Pistol Club. Additionally, he was a Lifetime Member of the Coastal Conservation Association. He spent many years fishing the Columbia and the Pacific Ocean off the mouth of the Columbia. He loved this beautiful state.

Although he and Sharon had many years of separation due to work, their devotion to their marriage just grew stronger and their deep love, commitment to their family, and their faith never faltered. They had a shared sense of humor, loved to laugh and encouraged their children to be thankful for the blessings they had. They loved loud, large and food filled gatherings.

In May of 2022, Bob and Sharon's son John was savagely murdered in front of his workplace by a psychotic homeless man. Also, the next year, their son James died unexpectedly of natural causes. As anyone can imagine, these back-to-back tragedies took a toll on the whole family and devastated Bob.

Bob was preceded in death by his beloved sons, John William, & James Larson, his sisters Nelliejane Haverland, Nancy Sutton (Pat), his brother Robert Gooding (Dorthey), his father Robert K. Barnett & mother Cornelia Thornton, his step-mother Grace Barnett, his father-in-law and mother-in law, James and Bonnie Hamilton, brothers-in-law James H. Hamilton (Romell) & Ronald Hamilton (Maryfran) sisters-in-law Michaellee Roehrs, Jo Denise Coila (Loren). He is survived by his wife Sharon Hamilton Barnett, his children: Robert J. Barnett, Jr., Kacy Marie Gramckow (Jerry), Joseph M. Barnett, his daughters-in-law, Linda Barnett (Robert), Lynn Ott Barnett (John), Debbie Barnett (James), sister-in-laws Tracy Dahlman (Rob), Romell Hamilton, his brothers: Michael Scott (Pam), Daniel Barnett (Mary), Stephen Barnett

(Debra), grandchildren: Larson Gramckow, Robert Gramckow, Zachary Barnett, Tyler Barnett, Jenny Williams, Amy Britt, Haley Jo Barnett, Holly Ann Wheeler, Elle Barnett, Mitchel Barnett, Benjamin Barnett, Mikelle Forbes, Devon Barrows & Aidan Barnett. He is also survived by many loving great-grandchildren, precious nieces and nephews, extended family members, dear friends, his good neighbor & old fishing buddy Jerry Barber who also sailed in the Merchant Marines with Bob and last but certainly not least, his friend Lee Backman who sat with Bob during his recover from his coronary by-pass surgery and recently his last stay at the hospital.

Robert Joseph Barnett was respected, admired, and loved by his family. He was a loving husband for over sixty-seven years, and he is deeply missed.

His Memorial Service will be held May 23, 2026, at 2 P.M. at Columbia Presbyterian Church (805 Columbia Ridge Drive, Vancouver, WA 98664). Reception will follow.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Navy-Marine Relief Society at: PO Box 37410, Baltimore, MD 21298-9208 or The Deacons Fund at Columbia Presbyterian Church: 805 Columbia Ridge Drive, Vancouver, WA 98664