



Mr. Francis "Boo" Whitaker Smith

April 25, 1952 - October 13, 2023

We celebrate Francis "Boo" Whitaker Smith who passed away peacefully on October 13, 2023 after a long and courageous battle with cancer, a testament to his strong will to live and determination to leave the world better than he found it. Born April 25, 1952, Boo was known for his unparalleled athleticism, commitment to mentorship, passion for the arts, and love for his family and nature. We love him endlessly for his humility, loyalty, and playful sense of humor.

Boo wanted to be remembered for his athletic career both as a coach and athlete. He entered the Gilman school in 1956 graduating as a 13-year man in 1970 where he received the William Cabell Bruce Athletic Prize, Tyler Campbell Lacrosse Trophy, and CB Alexander Wrestling Cup. Upon graduation he headed to the University of Virginia (UVA) where he participated in wrestling and lacrosse. His proudest accomplishment is UVA's first National Lacrosse Championship in 1972 and his recognition as an All-American and recipient of the Schmeisser and Outstanding College Defenseman Awards. In 2005, he was further celebrated with nomination to the U.S. Lacrosse State of Virginia Hall of Fame.

Boo finished his time at UVA with a Master of Arts in Education in 1975. He started his teaching career at the John Carroll School as a History Teacher, later serving as the Dean of Students.

He was also a successful wrestling and lacrosse coach, taking on the position of Head Varsity Lacrosse Coach from 1978 – 1996 where he led 10 teams to championships. He has been widely recognized for his coaching, winning 1980 MSA Coach of the Year, 1983 Harford County Lax Man of the Year, and induction into the John Carroll School Athletic Hall of Fame for Coaching lacrosse and wrestling in 2006.

After 22 years at John Carroll, Boo returned to his alma mater Gilman as a teacher and coach in 1997. He taught Art History, served as Dean of Students, and coached wrestling, lacrosse, and squash. As Head Squash Coach he won 10 consecutive MIAA championships not losing a single match (record of 130 wins to 0 losses). He shared his artistic talents with the whole Gilman community photographing varsity sports, posting photographs on the community bulletin board and online for all students. He stayed connected to Gilman till the day he died as a mainstay in the community for teachers, students, and alumni.

Boo married the love of his life, Susan Senft, in 1973 after she followed him to UVA courageously joining only the second year of women at the school. In 1981 they celebrated their first daughter Helen Culver Smith followed by Margaret Whitaker Smith in 1983. Boo was an incredible husband and father leading endless family adventures from roller-skating the halls of John Carroll to canoeing and tubing the Susquehanna. He loved taking care of the property at his home in Stevenson creating beautiful landscapes of trees and flowers. He is further survived by grandchildren Eliza, Wrenn, Alice, Daisy, and little boy due in December. They will miss riding on “GrandBoo’s” tractor, his jokes, and exploring nature with him.

Boo was always proud of his deep connections to Baltimore and U.S. history. He is a descendent of U.S. Senator and Major General Samuel Smith who is known for leading an American victory at the Battle of Baltimore in 1814

during the War of 1812. Boo is a lifetime member of the Society of the War of 1812 in Maryland and shared this rich history with his children and grandchildren.

Boo is predeceased by his loving parents Tom and Betty Smith, his sister Virginia Wrenn Smith, and survived by his older sister Margaret Smith Green of Stevenson. In lieu of flowers please make donations to the Gilman School.

A celebration of Boo's life for family and friends will take place at the Gilman School Auditorium on Saturday April 13, 2024 at 11 AM with a reception to follow at Upper School Library Reading Room and North Terrace at Gilman

Previous Events

Memorial Service

APR **13**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Gilman School Auditorium
5407 Roland Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21210

Tribute Wall

BH

“ I had the pleasure of being in the first class that Boo taught at John Carroll. he was my homeroom teacher, Western Civilization teacher and coach.

He was a tremendous educator and coach. More importantly, he was a great mentor and friend.

I was so glad to see him at our 40th class reunion. We were able to share memories and a few laughs.

Most importantly, I was able to thank him for his mentoring and friendship.

I remember a great conversation we had my senior year. He said, "You know there is going to be life after high school and sports. You need to figure out what that is going to be." He then looked at me with a big smile. "When you figure out what that is going to be, you will do great!"

I can only imagine the thousands of other students and athletes that have been impacted by his mentorship.

Thank you Boo for your advise, counseling and friendship. I will never forget you and the positive impact you had on me.

Rest in Peace.

Bob Hickey - February 26, 2024 at 10:48 AM

HT

“ Mr. Smith was a terrific teacher, mentor, and coach. He always found ways, either big or small, to support me and countless other students at Gilman in the classroom, advisory, or on the athletic field. If there ever was a representation of a mentor who cared for the well-being of their student community, it was him.

Hal Turner - October 23, 2023 at 10:13 AM

NA

“ hey Mr. Smith - in my memories you still look exactly the same as you did sitting across the desk from me in the office at JC, asking me to explain how Timberland boots, and baggy white Fila jeans fit that day's Spirit Week theme of "Farmer Day"... i'll never forget that conversation - and how, rather than talk to me like a problem child, you asked me to help be part of a solution for the good of everyone, and take a leadership role in helping others make good choices. it took a while, but i'm doing my best to do that every day now. thanks for being a good influence. peace be with you Mr. Smith.

nathan - October 20, 2023 at 08:13 AM

BH

“ Mr. Smith was my favorite person at John Carroll. I am flooded with happy memories of the time that I spent with him. I was lucky to be his "intern" during my senior year. He treated his students with respect. Mr. Smith's kindness and humor were unmatched. I am so fortunate to have known him.

Britney Lauren Harant - October 20, 2023 at 06:36 AM

BW

“ *Mr. Smith was truly remarkable. When it came time to show our creative projects to our 10th grade Art History class, I presented a small motorcycle that I had welded together, and we instantly hit it off. Seeing my mechanical inclinations, he then offered me the prestigious opportunity to come to the family farm in Stevenson and be the official grounds keeper - driving the good ole' John Deere tractor and keeping the property in good shape. The gig even paid!*

I then had the opportunity to meet his mother and family and felt so welcome. We would then have continued conversations through the years about anything mechanical, whether it be power tools, cars - you name it.

I very much appreciate Mr. Smith's ability to recognize my interests and help nurture and encourage them outside of the classroom. That is a true sign of a mentor, leader and friend. I cannot imagine the amount of lives that he touched in a similar way.

*Rest Easy Mr. Smith,
Bobby Watts, '06*

Bobby Watts - October 19, 2023 at 12:17 PM

DH

“ *One of my first ever "grown-up" conversations was with Boo while at Gilman. Boo invited me into his office during a time when I was headed down the wrong path and leveled with me on a person-to-person level instead of dean-to-student. That conversation got me back on track during a challenging time, and I will never forget it. I can only imagine how many lives Boo positively affected with this uncanny ability during his tenure at John Carroll and Gilman. My thoughts and prayers are with the Smith family.*

Duncan H. - October 19, 2023 at 12:08 PM

RR

“ No finer leader of team defense and overall team player. May all who have been impacted by Boo as a their coach and mentor with so many life lessons, always carry him with you. Boo will always be with me. Impact folks never leave us. Our most supportive thoughts to Susan and family. Rodney and Carol Rullman

Rodney Rullman - October 18, 2023 at 08:06 AM

KC

“ I'd like to share my sincerest condolences to Mr. Smith's family. He was such a great man who had such a tremendous impact on my life. He was my history teacher at John Carroll and someone I looked up to tremendously. He also had a sense of humor like no other teacher I ever had. I remember, as a sophomore, falling asleep on history class (lol) and him coming to the desk and slightly shaking it to wake me up. He was being funny and he def woke me up! I loved the way he approached life, his sense of humor, and his love of lacrosse. I will miss him. I'm sending prayers your way.

Krista Capurso - October 18, 2023 at 06:23 AM

PN

“ Mr. Smith was a true renaissance man. During my time at Gilman Mr. Smith would be quick to lay down the hammer on foolish behavior and be just as quick to back it up with a story from his time as a student. He really did make an impact on me. I remember coming back to campus not to long ago and having a short conversation with him as he got into his convertible in the parking lot. Mr. Smith will be missed!

Private Name - October 17, 2023 at 10:23 PM

AA

“ *Mr. Smith was a fantastic Dean and teacher. It would be a stretch to call detention with him a punishment because we normally just talked sports and ate some twizzlers. He was an amazing guy who left a positive impact on almost everyone he met, including me, my family, and my classmates. Gilman was a better place because of his presence. RIP Boo Smith.*

Aaron - October 17, 2023 at 09:16 PM

KH

“ *Sue & Boo have a very special love story! I've known all the Senfts since Sue & I were in kindergarten together at R.P.C.S. Their wedding was truly magic & their love for one another was extremely strong, sentimental & fun! Boo had a huge heart & the void in their loving family will be tremendously felt. I am sending lots of love, strength, hugs & prayers to the entire family. XXOO*

Kim Hupfeldt - October 17, 2023 at 12:03 PM

JH

“ *Boo had a tremendous influence on my life. He was a teacher, dean, coach, and mentor while I was a student at John Carroll. As an adult, I have tried to follow in his footsteps and am appreciative of the impact he had both here at JC and at Gilman. In so many areas, Boo cared about people and made a difference. Boo was a good man, just a good good man! May God bless your family and know that we are all praying for you.*

Jake Hollin - October 17, 2023 at 11:29 AM

AA

“ I can count several times where Mr. Smith helped shape me into the person I am. Sometime he led with the carrot, and others he had to leverage the stick :). Mr. Smith had was a great teacher and a better person. I am happy I was able to learn art history and values from him at Gilman. My sympathies with your whole family.

-Aaron Salsbury (Class of 2004)

Aaron - October 17, 2023 at 10:30 AM

CO

“ Susan

So sorry to hear about Boo! Boo and I were first opposing coaches in lacrosse while I was Head Coach at Friends School where we had some epic contests. We always remained close friends over the years regardless of who was victorious. Later on, I had the pleasure of playing on Mt Washington with Boo. I real gentleman and a fierce player on the field.

Bless you and your Family,

Rest in Peace my friend.

Carl

Carl E Ortman, PhD

Carl E Ortman - October 17, 2023 at 10:25 AM

DB

“ Tremendous leader and coach. I will forever be thankful for his mentorship. RIP Coach Smith

Drew Beynon - October 17, 2023 at 08:52 AM



“ *What a great guy and mentor. Had Boo for Western Civilization at John Carroll in 1977. At that time he was good friends with my homeroom teacher. He never forgot me after our first meeting and always had kind words, even at my most recent JC Reunion where he mentioned that he had been fighting cancer.*

Jeff Comen - October 17, 2023 at 07:49 AM

MC

“ *I was a sophomore at John Carroll when Coach Smith, Boo, first started teaching. He was our wrestling coach. He was of the best coaches I ever had! After he arrived, our team went from mediocre to exceptional. A kind and humble man! Rest in Peace!*

Mark Cirincione - October 16, 2023 at 08:04 PM

DM

“ *To say that Boo and I did not hang in the same groups at Gilman would be an understatement. The fact is, though, is that he was the last person in our class to physically see me in person (at least as best as I can remember) about 4 years ago when I was in town for the 50th anniversary of the first Gilman African-American graduates. I had a great talk with him at that time. I can affirm that he will be truly missed.*

Derrick Matthews '70

Derrick Matthews - October 16, 2023 at 07:07 PM

GS

“ So sad to hear this news about Boo. I have a wonderful memory of him meeting our daughter Caroline when she was about 5. He came over to her, crouched down and asked her name. She replied Caroline Smith. He pretended to be shocked and said his last name was Smith, too. Then he asked her if she wanted to know his first name to which he loudly replied Boo. They both laughed out loud and she talked about him for days. Such a kind gesture. Love to Susan and her family.

Grace Smith - October 16, 2023 at 05:00 PM

MR

“ Susan - I've been thinking about you and your family so much. In time I hope that your many happy memories will ease the heartache that you are feeling right now. Please let those of us who have known you even longer than Boo did, help you. Much love to you, Helen and Maggie.

Meg Rice - October 16, 2023 at 10:49 AM

AH

“ I remember Boo as being a great devoted educator and filled the halls of Gilman school with pride and care for the young men.

Annie hunt - October 16, 2023 at 10:21 AM

CC

“ 4 files added to the album Boo



Cesare Ciccanti - October 16, 2023 at 08:37 AM

KH

“ *Boo Smith was my supervisor for over 18 years but he never treated me as just his secretary. He was a mentor, a trusted friend, and person I looked up to and I will forever be grateful for his kindness, compassion, sincerity, and care. He was great with the boys and they new his care and concern was sincere. One of my favorite memories with Boo was when we moved to the Hound Pound and we got to use one of the golf carts for the Deans office - he was so thrilled that he went out and got sheriff stickers for it and made the cart his own. He really enjoyed that. His love of life and humor will for sure be missed.*

Kimberly Hammer - October 15, 2023 at 10:11 PM