

Tribute to a True Freshmen Fan

by Dot (Matviya) Lydic

Barbara (Pleischl) Frederich

November 8, 1939 – April 30, 2019

On April 30, I lost one of my long-time friends, Babs Frederich. We both were in our early teens when we were captivated by the unique, haunting sound of the Four Freshmen! Babs, who lived in Cleveland, started one of the first local FF fan clubs in the early 1950s and, because of her talents and enthusiasm, soon became national vice-president of "The Freshies."

In 1954, I inquired about starting a Freshmen fan club in Pittsburgh and began receiving letters from Babs (all her correspondence ended in "Forever More for the Four"). This was the start of a long-lasting friendship. Our families met and exchanged several visits between Cleveland and Pittsburgh in those early years.

In 1957, Bill Wagner became the group's personal manager and reorganized the Four Freshmen fan club. He launched the first-ever newsletter, called "The Fifth Freshman." Babs Pleischl was appointed national president, and Dot Matviya became national vice-president. This newsletter was the main connection between the Freshmen and their fans for over twenty years. In the meantime, Babs married Wayne Frederich and moved to Tallahassee, FL.

Much later, in the 1990s, the Four Freshmen Society became the official "fan club." Babs served on the Board of FFS until 2013, when she was awarded the title of "FFS Corporate Board of Directors Emeritus."

Beginning with the original Four Freshmen (Bob, Ross, Don and Hal), Babs met and encouraged all of the FF groups, until about six years ago. She attended most of the FFS conventions with her husband, Wayne, until he passed away on May 1, 2014.

Babs was a true and faithful Four Freshmen fan, working tirelessly to promote their music for over 60 years. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

Rest in peace, my friend.



An Ode for Jim

By Gil Peterson

On April 8, 2019, the Four Freshmen Society lost one of its most loyal members and I lost another wonderful friend. I met Jim Bell many years ago at the Bowling Green Convention.

If you remember, we had no assigned seating at those early conventions. It just so happened when Marsha and I arrived for the Friday night dinner/concert, Jim observed that we were looking for seats and he asked us if we would like to sit at their table. We accepted, of course, and as a result of that meeting, we remained steadfast friends through the years.

Jim was a low profile individual who never wanted any notoriety or accolades. Over the years, he was on a number of convention committees and was always willing to do anything asked of him. If you didn't know where he was at the convention, you could usually find him in the 113 Club assisting anyone who needed his help.

Jim was a Regional Representative with the Balfour Ring Company for many years. He had Balfour design a special "Four Freshmen Society" watch for us and made them available in the 113 Club each year. Although I have several watches, the FFS watch has always been my favorite.

Jim introduced his lovely future wife Candy to the Four Freshmen family at the Grand Rapids Convention in 2005. I don't think she had any idea at that time the impact that event would have on their lives. We were all together several years later on a jazz cruise when he proposed to Candy and they were married not long after that. They were wonderful for each other and Marsha and I shared many delightful times with the two of them each year.

I always cherish our friendship each time I look at my watch and I will remember my wonderful friend, Jim Bell. We will always miss you, Jim, more than you could ever know.

