

Sue Barbour Remembers Jane Withers

Jane Withers was born April 12, 1926 and died on Aug 7, 2021. I had the chance to get to know Jane Withers when she started dating Ken Errair of The Four Freshmen and later became one of The Freshmen wives. Until her passing, Jane and I were the last two remaining wives of the early Four Freshmen.

Jane had been a famous radio personality and child movie star who played the antagonist to Shirley Temple's good girl image. She told me that Shirley Temple's mother never let her mingle with the rest of the cast. As a result, she and Jane didn't have a chance to become friends.

When we all came to California, The Four Freshmen and Bobby Troup became good friends. Bobby was dating Julie London after she had divorced Jack Web. Julie decided to throw a big cocktail party on January 14th, 1955, to introduce the group to a lot of important musicians in Hollywood.

We wives worried about what we should wear to our first Hollywood party. When Ross and I arrived at Julie's house, she opened the door and welcomed us. She was wearing black pants and a white silk shirt with a button missing, and she was barefoot. We felt comfortable immediately.

Betty and David Rose were among the guests and they brought Jane Withers with them. That is where she and Ken Errair met for the first time. Ken didn't even realize she had been a child star. We kidded him, because when we first found out we were going to Hollywood, he joked that he was going to marry a movie star. They started dating and fell head over heels in love.

Jane was so great to us wives when we were in Hollywood. She took us shopping at Orbach's, on the Miracle Mile in Beverly Hills. She saw some shoes she liked so she bought a pair in each color. We were so impressed. She also took us to Blum's, where they made delicious Coffee Crunch Ice Cream Sundaes. Later, Blum's was where she had her wedding cake made.

When she was working in the cast of the movie *Giant* she took us with her to the set one day. We were disappointed that Elizabeth Taylor was not on set that day, but we did meet others in the cast, including, Chill Wills, Rock Hudson and James Dean. They were very nice to us.

Once The Four Freshmen left Hollywood and returned to the road, Jane came to spend time with Ken in several different cities. One night when we were in Dallas, Texas, she called me and asked if she could come and talk to me while the guys were at work. I told her we were just staying in a little motel room. She said that was fine. She and I sat on the bed (there were no chairs) and she told me about her unhappy marriage to Bill Moss and how broken up she was when they divorced. They had three children together. She asked me if I thought she
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Another Group Milestone: THE STAR

by Bob Ferreira

In the day-to-day chaos to get things done and push forward, one often forgets some of those milestones of the past that acknowledge why it is we do what we do. Our esteemed Fresh News editor, Barbara Meyers, asked if I would be interested in writing an article about when the group received its star on the Palm Springs Walk Of Stars. I said, "Sure!", but honestly had to ask for some help in remembering some of the details about that day because around that time Group 22 was all hustle! Our amazing manager, Dina Sheets-Roth, always comes through in a pinch when I need help remembering the occasional detail. Thanks Dina!

It was January 20 of 2013 and we had just performed two shows the night before in Indio, California. Our recording of Love Songs had been released some months earlier, and although it had been over a year, we were all still reeling from the losses of our dear friends and group founders Bob Flanigan and Ross Barbour. With all this I think we can all appreciate what having a special ceremony to honor the continuing legacy of this amazing group would mean to everyone. It was both a fitting and much-needed acknowledgment.

Almost a year before, a devoted fan of the Freshmen by the name of Dr. H. William Brown had mentioned that he wanted to sponsor a star for the group on the Palm Springs Walk Of Stars. Dr. Brown loved the Freshmen sound, both past and present, so much that he felt utterly compelled to do something that would further cement The Four Freshmen name into history (no pun intended), even if it was only in his neck of the woods in Palm Springs. Dr. Brown worked tirelessly to make that a reality and we are continually grateful for such a grand gesture of appreciation.



Left: Group 22 with Dr. Brown during the Star Ceremony.



It was quite a gathering that was attended by multitude of fans, friends, colleagues, and passersby alike. Frank Busseri (The Four Lads), Tim Hauser (The Manhattan Transfer), and if memory serves, Tony Butala (The Lettermen) attended the ceremony and all had nice things to say about how the Freshmen had inspired them into creating their own successful groups. It was quite an homage that I am sure was appreciated by Sue Barbour and one of Bob Flanigan's sons, Stephen Flanigan, who were also in attendance that day.

Following the official ceremony there was a soiree at the nearby Hyatt Regency Hotel, but we in Group 22 were only able to attend for a brief time before hopping in our van to head back to Las Vegas and get ready for our

next show and road adventure because that's what we do in the music business.

As I have touched on in previous articles in different ways, I believe that age tacks on a compounding appreciation for those special moments we experience in life, but may not have fully appreciated at the time. For Group 22 at that time