



Lawrence Vincent Barbano

December 18, 1947 - October 18, 2023

Lawrence Barbano died peacefully on October 18, 2023 in the Intensive Care Unit of the Palo Alto Veterans Hospital, with his spouse, Donna, and friends at his bedside, and his son Mark and his spouse and two children in the room virtually, bringing an end to a four and a half month hospitalization. This outgoing, big spirited, unpretentious man drew people to him throughout his life. Giving all of us who knew him, the gift of his wonderful sense of humor and his ability to be real, to speak his mind and be the voice of reason. His well-attended honor walk as his body was wheeled from the Intensive Care Unit, with staff lining the hallway walls, was a testament to his magnetism. Lawrence Barbano was born into a large Italian/Sicilian family in Fresno, California on December 18, 1947. His father, Andrew Henry Barbano, was born in Maschito, Southern Italy, and his mother, Mary Anne San Filippo, was the daughter of Sicilian immigrants. When Larry joined the family, his older brother, Andrew Louis, was eighteen months old.

Many family members lived nearby. Larry's father was among the youngest in his family with several older sisters, including one older sister who he said essentially ran the family. By necessity, Larry grew up learning how to effectively navigate complex social systems. He attended Catholic school until about his junior year in high school. He was an altar boy, in fact and to some extent in his behavior (or so he said). Already during his school years, Larry's penchant for attracting and maintaining friends surfaced. He had lots of male friends and a few girlfriends. He and his guy friends had a car club, the Kruisen Kingsmen, a fond memory of early male camaraderie. Larry graduated from a public high school in Fresno. He acknowledged that he spent time in a pool hall during his high school years, since he had accrued so many credits from his Catholic school tenure, already showing his tendency to be his own person and engage with a situation for what it is. Following graduation from high school he worked as a butcher in a market owned by a man whose family was also from Maschito, his father's home town, and was good friends with the owner's brother. He worked long hours, and eventually dropped out of the local community college he was attending. He was required to register for the draft when he left school, and was drafted in 1968. He served in the Army from May 1968 to May 1970, including a tour in

Vietnam from October of '68 to October of '69. His military occupational specialty was Light Weapons Infantry, which meant in his case that he carried a machine gun most of the time when he was in the field. Although he spoke rarely about his combat experience, he did share memories from Vietnam, like when he contracted malaria, and had to be hospitalized at Cam Ranh Bay in December 1968. During which time he saw a Bob Hope Christmas show, an experience he could only describe as "surreal". For many years, he was out of contact with his Army friends, but began going to reunions in the late 1980's - early 90's. He looked forward to going to these reunions, where he could bathe in the camaraderie and connection with friends that was so nourishing for him.

After returning from Vietnam, he went back to school while working as a butcher for the same man as in his pre-Army days. However, this time he went to school consistently, first at Fresno Community College, and then Fresno State College, where he earned an MSW. He had some symptoms of PTSD, but never received formal treatment; he always said his classes and

talking to other people were his therapy. He worked at the Fresno VA after graduation in a non-social work job, and moved into his first social work position in about 1979-

1980 at the Loma

Linda VA. This is where he met this wife, Donna, while they were working in an alcoholism treatment program together. They moved to Northern California in 1981, where Larry worked at the National Center for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder treatment program at the Menlo Park division of the Palo Alto VA as a social work group leader. He co-facilitated the trauma focus group where veterans talked particularly about experiences in Vietnam, usually combat

experiences. He was great for the group given his own war zone experiences and his innate ability to be real and to challenge “bullshit” (the party line). The job was difficult, draining emotionally, and Larry left it in 1983. He remained at the Palo Alto VA and worked in several different areas until his retirement in 2003. Throughout his time at the VA, he was himself always, never worrying much about decorum. Fellow social workers remember his inimitable presence at meetings; how he would always bring a big bag of food and sit eating during trainings. Some of the more uptight social workers in the room would grumble about him eating or his keeping things real with his pithy comments. He had a unique outside-the-box way of seeing things that inspired others to think more deeply and take new perspectives

about things often taken for granted. Eventually Larry retired due to increasing medical problems.

A son, Mark, was born in 1986. Larry loved his little boy and was thrilled to be a father. He wanted to be a more involved and loving father than his own dad had been, and he fulfilled this wish. His father died after Larry returned from Vietnam, and as he aged, his father's death seemed to affect him more deeply. His mother died about 4 months after Mark was born. Mark graduated from high school in 2004 and moved to Oregon in 2007. He met his future spouse, Molly, in 2010 in Bend. Larry has two grandchildren, Mateo (almost 4 years) and Maela (21 months). He loved being a grandfather and would have loved it even more as time went on.

Circumstances (including COVID) made it difficult to see Mark and his family, and the decision was made for Larry and Donna to plan a move from California to Oregon. In a sense to recreate the kind of close knit familial network Larry knew in Fresno when he was growing up.

Larry's final year was difficult, as he was experiencing increasing weakness and pain, more difficulty getting up from a chair and in walking. Although he worked to keep his diabetes under control, the effects of the disease were apparent. In May of this year, the discovery of a tumor on a spinal nerve, helped to explain the significant physical problems he was experiencing. The

tumor's surgical removal resulted in the long Palo Alto VA hospital stay. This was a trying time for Larry with his loss of energy and quite possibly loss of hope that he could recover. The family plan for Larry and Donna to move to Oregon may have felt like more than he was up to doing. Or, perhaps, he was being his own person and engaging with a situation for what it is, acknowledging that the vitality he needed to make this next move, just wasn't there.

He is survived by his spouse, Donna Horn, his son, Mark and Mark's spouse, Molly, and their two children Mateo and Maela. All living close by each other now in Oregon. He is also survived by his older brother, Andy of Reno, Nevada.

Cemetery Details

Northern CA Veterans Cemetery

11800 Gas Point Road
Igo, CA 96047

Previous Events

Graveside Service

NOV 2. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (PT)

Northern CA Veterans Cemetery
11800 Gas Point Road
Igo, CA 96047

Tribute Wall

TE

“ *Test test*

test - October 10, 2025 at 01:05 AM

DO

“ *Today we would have celebrated Larry's 77th birthday. Instead, we had a Celebration of his Life on 10/19/24. That was one day past the first anniversary of his death. I write this because, more than anything, I want people to remember Larry. He was so full of life, love, and good humor. Remember something he said or did that brought you a moment's happiness or relief from stress and anxiety. By reflecting on these moments, Larry continues to live and his love goes on.*



Donna - December 18, 2024 at 11:10 PM

WS

Donna

We were so dismayed finding out about your loss of Larry. Remembering how the two of you evolved and the role of our house as part of it saddens us deeply.

We are still here and are hanging in with our life challenges at 78 yrs old.

Much love to you and your son, Mark and his family

Robert and Diana Simpson

909 844-7994

wm Robert Simpson - January 13 at 09:42 PM

CJ

“ 3 files added to the album Tribute wall



Cj - November 26, 2023 at 07:11 PM

“ *The Larry Barbano Story*

I met Larry for the first time when he and Donna Horn came over to see what I was doing. My wife Jackie Becker was head of the Psychology Service at the Palo Alto VA. I was rebuilding the Becker house from a two-bedroom one-bath to a three-bedroom two-bath house. We came from different directions to be sure. Larry came from Fresno to the Big Red One. After serving his posting in Vietnam he returned to a more tranquil life with Donna Horn at the Palo Alto VA. I came from marching against that war starting with President Johnson's Rolling Thunder escalation in 67. I applied for Conscientious Objection at that time and dropped out of graduate school. I have remained a CO for ever after. It was the Palo Alto VA where my wife Jackie became head of the psychology service, where we tried to pick up the pieces of a war that even the organizers suspected would turn out badly. It certainly did.

Strangely enough it is the fable of the Giant Orange out on route 99 that an experience in common we had before we ever met and was an experience that is hard to imagine coming up at any time after we met. I ran into a Giant Orange when I migrated to the West Coast to go to graduate school at Berkeley. After leaving Copperopolis after going over the Sierras I was gobsmacked by a Giant Orange on 99. I stopped to have their choice orange drink. From the parking lot I looked West to the Great Central Valley of California to see fields weeded and picked by rows of migrant workers. I had lived in the Garden State of New Jersey with its family truck farms. I had also been given the impression that slavery had been defeated by the Civil War. Just goes to show that what you see is not always what you get.

Larry and I got on the topic of the Giant Orange while we were cruising around the Great Valley in his step-side 76 Chevy truck visiting military museums and such like. Upon coming upon a Giant Orange I suggested we stop. He said he couldn't. We were near Fresno where his mother had an Italian/Sicilian restaurant. The Barbaranos were at war with the Giant Orange. The next time we

went by it had vanished. It was one of those everyday small miracles that I discovered that it had migrated to Berkeley. I had come into contact with Tom Dslzell and his small walks through quirky Berkeley. The very Giant Orange we knew outside Fresno on 99 was in the backyard of Bruce Dodd up in the Berkeley hills. We didn't decide not to go, we just had more important things to do such as the 2002 World Series at Pac Bell Park. Joel Rosenthal got Donna, Larry, their son Mark, and myself tickets. The Giants won, Jeff Kent hit two home runs, but they went on to loose the next two games and the series to the Angels and the horrid funky monkey.

I would take up to Larry to meet an old Berkeley friend Les. When I had a shade tree car repair business, Les was on of my customers. We would cruise the area for interesting restaurants. Les was born in Idaho. He was a tailor and his shop on Hopkins was named the Blue Rose. The Blue Rose is for the stinking rose, garlic. For eating, we ranged from Alice Waters' Chez Panisse to The Three Daughters, authentic Mexican home cooking. There was loud talking and hard drinking.

The Becker and the Barbano/Horns began taking trips on bicycles. At first, in the Bay Area and then in Europe. One showstopper was our tour down the Danube River with overnights in local hotels. Our guide was a retired engineer. He played the accordion after dinner with a lot of local wines. We visited the concentration camp, Mauthausen, which was restored as a high school trip for young Germans to see what had happened in World War II. All nationalities who lost citizens to its crematoria have built memorials on its land.

All who knew him will miss Larry Barbano. He was a presence you had to deal with.

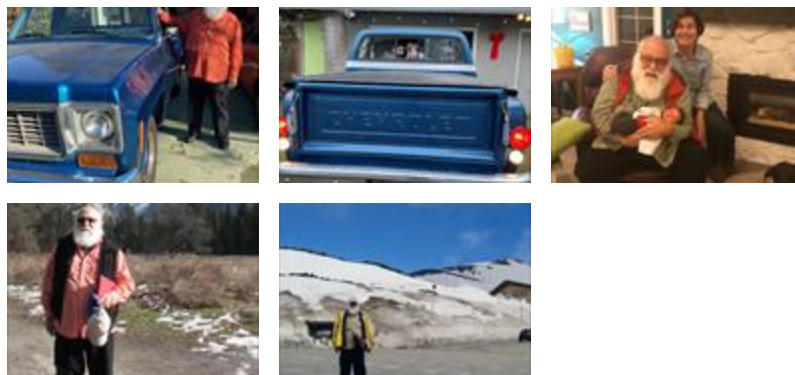
MP

“ It’s great to see all of these photos and to read what others have written. I feel fortunate to have crossed paths with Larry. Such a wonderful laugh.

Mark Patterson - November 03, 2023 at 02:39 AM

MO

“ Gonna miss Lar Lar a whole lot. I will always cherish the memories sitting around telling stories, playing “bid whist”, the songs he sang, his way of ordering food for the table, his little chuckle and giddy smile, his hand claps and pats, all his little sounds and sayings, his hats, and so much more. I will forever be grateful of the light-heartedness, fun-loving, easy going joy he passed on down to Mark. I attribute how mark treats me, our kids, and really just anyone a lot to Larry. I’m sorry he won’t be able to be with us as we carry on, but I know his energy will live on in us all. So much love.



Molly - November 01, 2023 at 03:34 PM

DO

“ 13 files added to the album Tribute wall



Donna - October 31, 2023 at 06:59 PM

GT

“ *The Barbano Affect*

My first meeting with Larry was when we were thrown together into the same infantry company and platoon in Vietnam. This Big Guy, with the Big Voice, Big Laugh, and Big Sense of Humor was so likable and always entertaining. We shared our experiences of fear, misery, and discomfort and the mental and physical wounds of fellow infantrymen. The seriousness of all this future PTSD stuff was somehow made a bit easier by “The Barbano Affect” or Larry’s presence, humorous observations, and a we’ll get through this attitude.

We both returned home and didn’t stay in touch for a number of years. Our paths crossed again when attending a company reunion of Vietnam brothers that had served together. And, I should not have been surprised to learn that Larry was working with veterans at the VA to better their lives. His willingness to draw from his own memories and experiences most likely put his fellow veterans and clients at ease....Once again, “The Barbano Affect”.

Larry persevered through lingering health issues with his diabetes and finally with his extended hospital stay after tumor removal surgery. The very fact that there was a huge attendance at the honor walk as his body was wheeled from the Intensive Care Unit tells me Larry’s influences were far reaching. In conclusion, the memories we all share of Larry’s life are proof that “The Barbano Affect” lives on.

*love you, brother
Gary Trusty*



Gary Trusty - October 31, 2023 at 04:43 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Lawrence Vincent Barbano.



October 30, 2023 at 03:49 PM

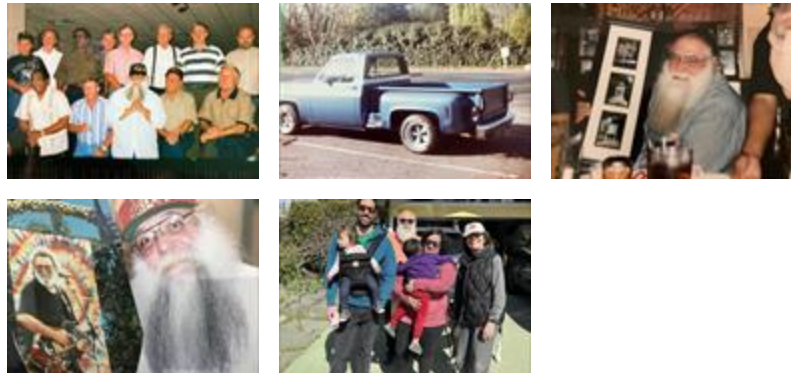


“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Lawrence Vincent Barbano.

October 30, 2023 at 03:49 PM



“ 18 files added to the album Tribute wall



Johanna Mayer - October 30, 2023 at 03:06 PM



Whether opera or baseball, there was fabulous food, good fun and lots of stories.

Johanna Mayer - October 30, 2023 at 03:08 PM

JM

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Johanna Mayer - October 30, 2023 at 02:54 PM

“ Holding Larry in my heart:

I will always have an image of Larry getting a quite young Mark settled into the Big blue truck in the driveway. This was before I came to know our new neighbors, Larry, Donna, and Mark some 30+ years ago.

The warmth and kindness of regular invites to Cory, when he was a little kid, to renowned Barbano bbq dinners, always an open heart and an open hot tub invitation for Mark and Cory. The Barbano's home, was for Cory a kind of second home. Thank you Larry (and Donna) for the open door and open hearts you gave to Cory as he was growing up. I know Cory holds Larry in a special place in his heart.

We had a shared enjoyment of Sci-fi fantasy works;

Dancing Girls (don't ask);

An entire vocabulary, uniquely Larry, Sacratomato, being one of his oft used words; and many others that Donna shared with me over the years. These became a part of my many adventures with Donna, and made me wonder anew at, and treasure, Larry's unique view of the world.

Stories of Larry's trips to Berkeley Bowl. I wish that I could slow down and give the respect to the food I plan to cook that Larry did as he made his way through the produce section of Berkeley Bowl.

For a time I called him Lar Lar (don't know if he liked that or not, he never said);

Larry helped me to begin to understand the importance of being mindful.

The twinkle in his eye and a certain irreverence that came with

telling it like it is.

I think his long white beard, unique Larry wisdom, his wit, and both his sense of humor and of the absurd put me in the mind of Mr. Natural. I never mentioned this to him and I hope he would have known it as a compliment.

When you are here, you are here. When you are gone, you are gone. It isn't a problem to be gone, as long as you are really here when you're here.

—Kent Nerburn, Neither Wolf Nor Dog

Larry was really here when he was here, and for this I am grateful.

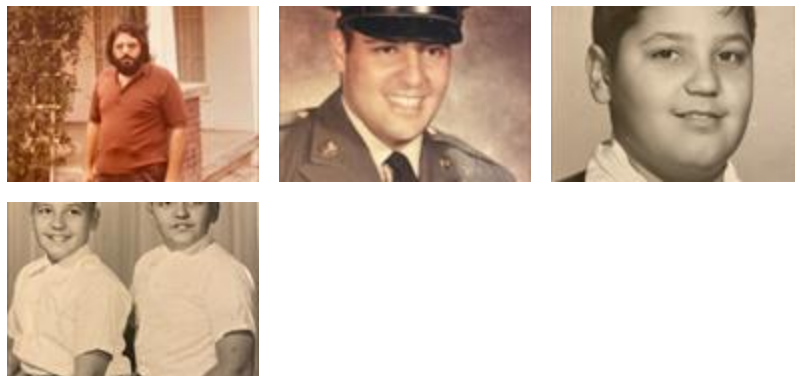
*Love,
Kitty*



Kitty - October 29, 2023 at 11:01 PM

DO

“ 4 files added to the album Tribute wall



Donna - October 29, 2023 at 10:46 PM

BW

“ Oh Larry – for the last several days, even before knowing about you dancing with the stars, I have been listening to this song over and over again. It’s one of our songs we use in Biodanza, and it is taking on an even deeper meaning now.

The Prayer (w/Lyrics) - Celine Dion and Andrea Bocelli
https://youtu.be/IDsyvKJZz7g?si=_IxnCH0EhZonygQF

Thank you for your kindness, your humor, your laughter, your undying compassion, your generous heart, your wit, and your concern for all our wellbeing. Thank you for dancing Life so courageously and wholeheartedly.

Larry was a dear friend and mentor, through our shared Biodanza practice and many beautiful conversations. He was an amazing listener and witness, encouraging me through some very heartbreaking times in my life. He never stopped seeing the light and strength in me and so many others in our circle. He had an amazing memory, recalling things I had shared years prior, which helped me appreciate a deeper meaning in life’s unexpected turns.

I miss you, Larry, and your loving, guiding presence is very palpable for me right now.

My heartfelt and sincere condolences to Larry’s family and all who cherished him in their lives.

In gratitude and humility,

Barbara Widhalm (Babsi)



Barbara Widhalm - October 29, 2023 at 10:11 PM

BW

“ Barbara W. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Lawrence Vincent Barbano.

Barbara W. - October 29, 2023 at 10:06 PM

DO

“ 1 file added to the album Tribute wall



Donna - October 29, 2023 at 04:58 PM

LF

“ Larry's Qigong Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Lawrence Vincent Barbano.

Larry's Qigong Family - October 29, 2023 at 01:40 PM

LF

“ Larry's Qigong Family purchased the Sweet Solace Spray for the family of Lawrence Vincent Barbano.



Larry's Qigong Family - October 29, 2023 at 01:40 PM

DO

“ 2 files added to the album Tribute wall



Donna - October 28, 2023 at 07:37 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Tribute wall



Debby Abee-Gentry - October 27, 2023 at 04:02 PM

ET

“ I have known Larry since our teen years. I married one of his life long friends and when we had our first daughter Kimberly we asked Larry to be her Godfather. He was in Vietnam at the time and he wanted us to baptize her by proxy but we knew he would be back home. So we waited for him and it was such a joyous time for our family and Larry. He was always the life of the party and will be greatly missed by all.

Elizabeth Renna Tidwell - October 27, 2023 at 11:55 AM

LF

“ Love, The Jenkins Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Lawrence Vincent Barbano.

Love, The Jenkins Family - October 26, 2023 at 11:08 PM

LF

“ Love, The Jenkins Family purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Lawrence Vincent Barbano.



Love, The Jenkins Family - October 26, 2023 at 11:08 PM

TI

“ The crew at Engelman Electric Inc planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Lawrence Vincent Barbano.

The crew at Engelman Electric Inc - October 26, 2023 at 02:29 PM

TI

“ The crew at Engelman Electric Inc purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Lawrence Vincent Barbano.



The crew at Engelman Electric Inc - October 26, 2023 at 02:29 PM

GF

“ Gentry family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Lawrence Vincent Barbano.



Gentry family - October 26, 2023 at 12:53 PM

BG

“ 2 files added to the album Tribute wall



Bill Gentry - October 26, 2023 at 12:45 PM

TM

“ Tracy M. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Lawrence Vincent Barbano.

Tracy M. - October 26, 2023 at 12:44 PM

AB

“ Dear Friends and Gentle Hearts:
This website apparently can't handle a right-slash at the end of a URL. Here's my newspaper column about my brother without the slash. Mea culpa.
<http://nevadalabor.com/barbwire/barb23/barb10-25-2023.html>

Andrew Barbano - October 26, 2023 at 08:21 AM

AB

“ A memento for my only bro. Vade cum Deo, frater meus.

<http://nevadalabor.com/barbwire/barb23/barb10-25-2023.html/>

Andrew Louis Barbano

Andrew Barbano - October 26, 2023 at 08:15 AM

SS

“ I had the good fortune to know Larry as a colleague, supervisee, and friend. Larry was kind and cared deeply for the Veterans whom he served. He connected with them in a spiritual way which was tender and respectful, especially with those with serious mental illness. He was unapologetically genuine before it was a thing. I admired his ability to cut thru the crap and say what was on his mind even if they were unpopular or mind boggling. His statements/insights were rarely wrong. Larry embraced being a Veteran, father, husband, social worker- and most of all, being the one who got to order for everyone at the table during those belly busting meals at Beppo's. As his supervisor, Larry taught me to accept my social workers for who they are rather than the ideals in my head. As his friend, he showed me the value of loving those around me with deep gratitude, generosity and care.

Shirley Salom-Bail - October 26, 2023 at 01:47 AM

SS

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Shirley Salom-Bail - October 26, 2023 at 01:22 AM

LL

“ I met Larry back in the mid eighties when he worked in the Day Treatment Program in Menlo Park. He invited me to observe the program and I was amazing on how well he connected with Veterans and how much patience he had with them. Larry always used humor to lighten our struggles. I will miss his smiling face.

Laurie Ackerman, LCSW - October 25, 2023 at 12:40 PM

TR

“ I worked with Larry for many years at the Community Living Center at the Menlo Park Division. Larry was amazing with the veterans who lived there. We ran a resident council together where Larry was a comic relief to what could be a complaint session at times. I remember yelling "Barbano!" most days as a good morning sentiment. We had some fun times at Bucca Di Beppos as a workgroup that was like family. He definitely left a mark and will be missed by many.

Tracy - October 25, 2023 at 10:48 AM

JW

“ I worked with Larry at the VA in Menlo Park where I was the charge nurse and he was the social worker. I have fond memories of our team going out to Buca de Beppos for dinner and Larry, king of the table, ordering for everyone in his larger than life style. We stayed in touch after his retirement through more group dinners. The food may have changed to vegan Chinese but his style did not diminish. His love of his family was always his favorite topic and you have my condolences at this time of loss. He will be missed and not forgotten.

Joanne Weith - October 24, 2023 at 10:21 PM

JB

“ I worked with Larry at the Menlo Park VA and we continued our friendship after I left in 2004. Larry was an inspiration to the veterans he worked with as well as his co-workers. He provided me guidance regarding the nuances of the VA system and mentored my early years as a social worker. He will be missed by many.

Jean Bell - October 24, 2023 at 09:49 PM

VR

“ *Larry and I have known each other since grammar school. Lived in the same neighborhood . Worked together. Grew up together. He will be missed*

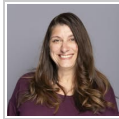
Vic Renna - October 24, 2023 at 07:50 PM

VR

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Vic Renna - October 24, 2023 at 07:21 PM



Larry, reading a scripture at his goddaughter's wedding in Washington, April 2002.

Kim Griego - October 27, 2023 at 02:57 PM

LM

One of my earliest memories of Larry is from the early 1990s, when he was at the Day Treatment program. I was a psychology postdoc working with a patient diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia and a drug use disorder. I attended periodic meetings with Day Treatment staff to discuss this patient and was told that I must stop his problematic behavior, or he would be suspended from Day Treatment. Although I agreed with their concerns and hoped to help the patient change, I did not think I could (or should) control the patient.

Had I tried, I might have taken a harsh, controlling and ultimately counterproductive approach. Larry helped to buffer the pressure I felt by taking a more measured, understanding view, and showing great compassion and empathy for both me and the patient. I (and, I believe, the patient) felt supported by Larry's warmth, humor, wisdom, and compassion. I've always believed that Larry's support helped me avoid coming on like gangbusters to work more sensitively and far more effectively with this challenged and challenging man.

Larry Malcus - October 27, 2023 at 09:19 PM