



## Ethelbert Courtland Barksdale

July 11, 2012

E.C. BARKSDALE 'LAND' entered into larger life on 26th May, aged 68. He died at home of a heart attack after multiple and escalating health problems. Deeply deeply cherished by his wife, Sheila, who was with him at the time.

Beloved son of Ethelbert Courtland Barksdale ('Bert') and Marjorie M. Miller. Family mourners are his brother, Stephen W. Barksdale (always a true, constant and loving guide in his life), wife, Marilyn Moody, nieces Elizabeth and Julie.

A special thank you is due to Dr K.P. Reddy of Williston who, with his staff, Patti and Diana, gave a calm and reassuring presence and thoughtful care to Land's final months of illness. Despite the excellent and very competent care Land received from many people at Shands and N. Florida Regional Hospital, he was bewildered by the vexations of his body and was happiest at home, spending many peaceful hours teaching himself Ancient Greek and gazing at a garden of sunflowers set in a grove of sacred trees and bamboo. He loved trees ("The People with the Green Heads") and as an intellectually gifted child, was allowed to sit in the shade reading 'Alice in Wonderland' on his grandparents' farm and uncle's ranch in rural Texas. At the tender age of 12, on seeing in a book Gainesville described as 'Tree City of the South' he determined to make this town his home and work at U.F. Also at the age of 12 he won a national high school debate contest. He came to teach Russian

Literature at U.F. in 1972 after obtaining his Ph.D from Ohio State University in 1971 and a year spent teaching at the University of California at Irvine. Gaining full Professorship at U.F. was a happy day for him and he rewarded the university with great loyalty and conscientious labor. What a stimulating lecturer he was! He never balked at giving individual students extra attention and spent considerable time and energy supporting younger co-workers. He very much enriched the vitality of the then German and Slavic Department. Much gratitude is due to Dr Mary Watt, Chair of the new department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures for her sensitive and timely easing of his burdens at work in the final months of his illness.

Deeply patriotic, Land's gentle soul had a horror of war, grieving for the loss of young lives in the Armed Forces but he fully appreciated their sterling contribution to guarding the Tree of Liberty. His courage took the form of not being afraid to 'speak out' and to unravel the complexities of Truth and Social Justice. This he did with great insightfulness and original thinking. It would honor his memory if readers would fully relish the 'Jewel in the crown' of free speech that his native country strives to preserve and spread across the globe. A lifelong Anglophile and well-steeped in history due to his father's being a Professor of History at the University of Texas at Arlington, Land sought out the nobler aspects of British History and culture, visiting England every summer for many years with Sheila.

A deeply religious person, Land thoroughly enjoyed attending Father Jeremy Hole's Sunday School classes at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church (where he and Sheila were married in 1990). With his astonishingly wide-ranging intellect, buttressed by a healthy dollop of humor, Land there sought - as he sought all his life - to connect the supposed divergencies of religion, philosophy, science and literature. His published works reflected this avenue of approach to understanding the wonders of the cosmos, but it was the sparkling vivacity and clarity of his mind that left an immediate impression on all those lucky

enough to wrestle with one of those magical, spellbindingly - convoluted - yet-grammatically tidy discussions which he relished. Even brief conversations with Land were marvelous - by turns erudite, eloquent, apt or outrageously quirky. He was a joy to live with on a daily basis. What will be most missed is Land's unfailing courtesy, his total acceptance of other people's human lapses, his tenacity, his generous and kind nature and zest for life, the astonishing range of his intellect and love of all the Arts, his joyful spirit and the resonance of his beautiful speaking voice whose strength sprang from all these God-given qualities.

#### 'HIS THE HEAVENLY KINGDOM'

In Land's memory, please think about: buying yourself a book! Leaving a splendid tip in a local restaurant; driving carefully and courteously;; waving to a tree, a flower or the dolphins in the ocean; becoming an engaged citizen; being kind to your cat... Above all, say a prayer for the peaceful repose of his soul.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, June 2, 2012 at 2:00 P.M. at Forest Meadows Funeral Home, 725 NW 23rd Avenue, Gainesville. A guestbook is available at [www.forestmeadowsfh.com](http://www.forestmeadowsfh.com)