

## WES SMITH STORY

Here is my Wes story--jumbled, as are my memories of this very, very, special young man. Use the facts in any fashion you choose. Feel free to reword in any direction that seems good.

Wes Smith--Pineville High School Library Club--1966. Wes appeared, no one noticed. Wes was a normal forgettable 9th grader, slim, small, large ears, large glasses, large feet. He stayed. We let him.

Same deal--1967. Larger feet, ears, and teeth. However, the boy began to bloom. Wes became our wheeler--dealer extra ordinaire! Need funds raised? Get Wes. Need a truck for a float? Get Wes. Need books shelved? Don't get Wes; he is too busy wheeling and dealing. That was the year Wes began to be known to LTLA circles. He went to his first convention...and loved it! He soon knew everybody and, better still, they all knew him. He began to work on committee assignments and was excited by the political processes that he saw at work there. PHS club prospered--Because WE GOT WES!!!

1968--Wes dealt with all matters large and small at PHS Library. I never will forget the day he appeared wearing his tiger-stripe socks (he wore his tiger stripe socks most of the time) and demanding an office and a secretary of his own. Those were banner years for our club. We won all the parades at school. WE HAD WES!!! We were the most popular club there--with about 75 members. WE HAD WES!!! We raised untold amounts of money for hospitals. After all, WE HAD WES!!! Soon LTLA also had Wes. He campaigned avidly and won the state presidency...and was inducted into office with much pomp--and wearing his tiger stripe socks, which by then had become his good luck charm. He was fun to be around, he was clever, and he loved people.

1969--Wes was President!!! Library work was probably second on our local agenda. Laura Harris acted as secretary and general manager. I think I was largely ousted from my office that year. They schemed, planned and produced another great convention. At convention Wes nearly danced his legs off--he sweated, grinned, finished dancing with three girls (the ratio was bad then, too) and said, "It's a tough job, by someone's gotta do it."

I loved Wes. He was student, club member, baby-sitter, and later, my friend. My daughter thought he was perfect. At two she told him, "Play horsey!" He replied, "Poor old Wes is tired." She responded, "Getty-up, poor old Wes!" He did.

By the time Wes was college age, he had earned enough part-time job wise to buy a duplex which he fixed up to rent. He went to college, graduated, and took a job with the railroad to earn money for graduate school. He was on the job when the engine he was in attempted to cross a railroad bridge which had not been properly closed. The train went into the river and he was killed. I was away at school, so this must have been in 1975--spring, I think. I remembered he told me once that

he would not live to be old. I tried to quell such thoughts. He said, "It's ok. I've always known that."

I think, sometimes, that perhaps things needed doing in Heaven with lots of verve, lots of laughter, lots of sparkle, and probably a pair of tiger-stripe socks--and Somebody said, "Get Wes!"--and they did.

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