



## Garland, "Butch" F. Smith Jr

May 10, 1963 - January 1, 2017

\*\*\* FINAL ALARM \*\*\*

Butch Smith - "The Duke", Retired Fire Captain

\* Palm Beach County Fire Rescue

There simply does not exist anyone more resilient, steadfast and determined than this man, Butch Smith. He served as a great inspiration to those that knew him, during an incredible 53 year display of LIFE. He left a legacy of changed lives and an impact on the fire service that will continue for years to come.

Garland Butch Smith was born May 10, 1963 in Daytona, Florida. The family moved south to Delray Beach Florida, where Butch graduated from Atlantic High School. He and his father slept, ate and drank football and to them The University of Miami (UM) logo was synonymous with Greatness. Canes fans for life, neither of them ever lost their love for "The U".

At 6'5", a towering, tough, athletic Butch found his calling in the fire service in 1981 when he was hired by The Town of Palm Beach Fire Department, where he worked for 3 years. When Palm Beach County formed their own consolidated fire department, Butch was hired and graduated in the first recruit class, named "Genesis", on February 18, 1985.

His abilities, training and leadership led him to a full and impactful career of achievements and accolades that placed him among the best of the best. He was a skilled firefighter and paramedic, and excelled in the Special Operations disciplines of technical rescue, extrication, hazardous materials, water rescue, confined space and high angle rescue. He was also a skilled instructor in many of those disciplines and rose in the ranks to Station Officer and Captain.

At the age of 45 on July 8, 2008, Butch was diagnosed with Stage 4 Multiple Myeloma, a cancer of the plasma cells and initially was given only 2 years to live. The devastating

news sent shock waves through the fire service community and connections he had made over the course of his career. In the spirit of the brotherhood, support for Butch and his family during this time of challenge culminated in the support organization “All In For Firefighters” and event “The Butch Smith Poker Classic.” This event became an annual opportunity to create Awareness and Support for Firefighters battling Cancer. In true “Butch Smith” spirit, he insisted the proceeds from the annual Butch Smith Poker Classic (held each year and supported by The Palm Beach Kennel Club) be given to charities. For nearly 9 years as Butch fought through Stem Cell therapy, hospital admissions and releases, 100’s of rounds of chemotherapy and other procedures his annual fundraiser continued and to date, has provided over \$250,000 to local charities such as: Quantum House, the Rooney’s Golf Foundation, Honor Flight Southeast Florida, the Professional Firefighters and Paramedics Benevolent Fund, and the Firefighter Cancer Support Network, Florida Chapter.

Butch was determined to make the issue of firefighter cancer a prominent fight worth winning for every firefighter. He has championed two videos about firefighter cancer through his story and those videos have been viewed by firefighters nationally. His public fight with cancer was inspirational to thousands of firefighters at a local, state, and national level. Butch helped to build a coalition with The Firefighter Cancer Support Network, Florida Chapter. This in turn led to a cancer prevention and research team called F.A.C.E., “Firefighters Attacking the Cancer Epidemic”, being formed in Palm Beach County Fire Rescue.

In less than a year from organizing, F.A.C.E. and the F.C.S.N formed an amazing partnership with Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Miami. Departments in Broward and Miami-Dade soon came on board and the first of its kind Florida firefighter cancer study was launched, known as the Firefighter Cancer Initiative (F.C.I). The amount of positive changes already occurring for the fire service in the fight against cancer because of F.A.C.E. and the F.C.I. is impressive and many more can be expected as the initiative moves forward. It was truly poetic, viewed as fate to many, for Butch to see his favorite team logo of the “U” behind a cancer research project that he helped initiate. He couldn’t have been more proud of the collaboration and was honored in June of 2016 to present a highly customized fire helmet directly to Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center’s FCI Team.

Through his mounting struggles from the advancing and relentless cancer side effects, Butch - known to many as "The Duke", never complained, never pitied himself and never wavered in his belief in what the power of determination could accomplish. From the beginning, the fight has never been about Butch, that's not what he wanted; it's been

about every other firefighter's health and their quality of life, either actively working or well into retirement. He drew great pride in all that was accomplished and knew that he held at least a small part of the equation, and THAT, as he would say; "does the heart good."

He passed as valiantly as he lived. Despite his initial 2-year life expectancy, Butch lived to see many things accomplished and goals achieved that no one thought were possible. He has provided us all with a legacy of change, firefighter initiatives, and fulfilled challenges.

His life was most assuredly about family and fun too. Throughout his life he had a love of spending time with close friends hunting, fishing, scuba diving and more recently playing video games with his grandchildren. Despite his condition, he made plans and fulfilled promises to take friends and family hunting, to Disney World, and of course to UM games.

He passed from this life with a knowledge that things are moving at a pace that will continue accomplishing even more to prevent other firefighters from having to deal with the tragedy and challenges he faced.

Butch is survived by his loving wife, Andrea; Mother, Ruth Smith; Sister, Susan Bolduc Daughters, Whitney Chapman, Tiffany McManus; and 5 beautiful grandchildren; Zachary, Jordyn, Emmerson, Gianna, and Reagan.

Services are to be held at 12 noon on January 9th:

Christ Fellowship, Royal Palm Campus  
9905 Southern Blvd.  
Royal Palm Beach, FL 33411

Fire Department personnel attending the service are encouraged to wear Class A Uniform. Fire Departments wishing to send an apparatus should contact Driver Operator Jeff Rudd: [jrudd@pbcgov.org](mailto:jrudd@pbcgov.org) to coordinate time and location / directions. A fire service hosted family and friends' reception on site to follow at 1:30 p.m. in the same location.

In lieu of flowers, the family has kindly requested that donations be made to support Butch's Annual Event by visiting: [www.allinforfirefighters.com](http://www.allinforfirefighters.com)

Other Inquiries or questions regarding the service, should be directed to the Memorial Liaison: Battalion Chief Tozzi: [atozzi@pbcgov.org](mailto:atozzi@pbcgov.org)

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# Events

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**JAN**   **Memorial Service**

12:00PM

**9**

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Christ Fellowship - Royal Palm Beach Campus

9905 Southern Boulevard, Royal Palm Beach, FL, US, 33411

# Comments

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“ Butch smith took the time to teach me the skills needed for my fire academy training at South Tech, I met Butch at intercity ambulance as we were partners for a couple of years . I was able to really get to know him and his wife Andrea and he was always very helpful and would go out of his way to help me. Great guy gunna miss ya my man Love ya  
Juan Lopez

Juan Lopez - January 20, 2017 at 08:21 PM

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“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



Charmane - January 09, 2017 at 11:53 AM



“ From Football games to family gatherings. Forever in our hearts

Charmane - January 09, 2017 at 11:55 AM

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“ There is just enough space to write or enough words to say how much I loved and admired Butch. He is my single source for strength in the fight against firefighter cancers. He was my friend, mentor, and leader. He showed the fire service community "one person can make an incredible difference". His legacy will continue in our hearts and we will keep the fight for Butch.  
Rest in Peace, Love Always - Vicki Sheppard



vicki - January 08, 2017 at 06:19 PM

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“ Our hearts break for the loss of our friend, so brave and courageous. We will always cherish the memories of the times we spent together.

**SAFELY HOME:**

He is home in heaven, dear ones

Oh, so happy and so bright.

There is perfect joy and  
beauty in the everlasting light.

All the pain and grief is over.

He is at peace forever.

(Excerpt from the Scared Heart prayer book)

On behalf of the Beebee family we would like to express Condolences to Andrea & Family

Bob, Kathy and Ryan Beebee

**Bob Beebee** - January 08, 2017 at 04:44 PM

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“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



**Petra Sauickie** - January 05, 2017 at 10:19 AM



“ Always in our hearts!

**Petra Sauickie** - January 05, 2017 at 10:20 AM



“ You will be missed Uncle Butch <3

-Tara

**Tara** - January 07, 2017 at 01:56 PM

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“ I made friends with Butch back in 1991. We rode R22 together just a handful of times. That's all it took to be friends with Butch. He never forgot people he met. Years later I called him for some advice, it was like we had only been apart for a day. He was loved by everyone that I have known that met him. He was one of a kind. He left a huge foot print on this earth.



Brian Johnson - January 04, 2017 at 10:29 PM

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“ Butch was truly an angel here on earth. He was such a fighter and an all around inspiration to everyone he met, couldn't ask for a better friend, brother, he always put others before him. I never heard Butch complain about the cards that were dealt him in 2007, only that he was " gonna beat this!" He put up one hell of a fight and now has earned his special wings in heaven...RIP my friend...we will see you again one day.

We love you!!!

Paula and Allen



paula adams - January 04, 2017 at 07:56 AM

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“ It is very difficult to write anything regarding the loss of such a great friend, who was also a great father to his children and grandchildren, great husband to his wonderful wife, great son to his parents, great brother and above all, great human being, after knowing and being friends for almost forty years.

We had great times together both in and out of high school, celebrated each others victories and suffered each others losses as we grew up together. You were the best friend anyone could ever have or ask for. We were inseparable. We were brothers. I loved you as my brother. Your wonderful family, my extended family.

I know you are with God because of who you were here. You were definitely one of the great people. The void you have left will never be filled. There will never be anyone who will be the friend to me, that you were. I will and do miss you tremendously.

I will continue to pray that someday we will meet again Smitty and we'll once again

hike the thousands of miles through the woods that we did before, go four-wheeling up and down hills and have the great times that we once had.

Be safe and comfortable in Gods embrace and now know all of the answers to all of the questions you once had. You're now in paradise and now can see how loved you were and are.

Rest in great peace my brother, Butch. Until we meet again.

My love to you and your family, always .

Ken Sarra

**Ken Sarra** - January 03, 2017 at 12:53 PM

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“ Always a gentleman, always a friend. I will miss you Butch and look forward to seeing you again. Your beautiful family will be well taken care of as you left such a legacy of friends and loved ones. You were and are an inspiration to all. Rest in peace my friend.  
Sending love and healing prayers to your wonderful family.

Love,  
Robin Sarra Andrews

**Robin Sarra Andrews** - January 03, 2017 at 11:22 AM

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“ Please accept my sincere condolences on the loss of Butch. I had the honor to be one of the instructors of Butch during recruit class and the true honor to work with him. His legacy in PBCFR will never fade. Another angle rose to heaven in Butch.

My thoughts and prayer and with both of his family's-his wife and children and PBCFR.

Gary L. Weiss  
PBCFR Retired  
Fire Chief-Germantown, WI



**Gary L. Weiss** - January 03, 2017 at 09:07 AM



“ Andrea - our condolences on the loss of Butch. He is a respected member of the fire service and will be missed by so many. His perseverance and fight will be remembered and are an inspiration to so many of us that have battled with cancer. He has a legacy that was started with the poker classic and the university of Miami that will continue to change lives. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.



**susan hall** - January 03, 2017 at 08:50 AM

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“ I love you, Dad. I am so proud to be your daughter. Emmerson and Reagan love you so much and because you fought so hard they got to know you as their Paw Paw. You are my hero. xo



**Whitney Chapman** - January 03, 2017 at 08:01 AM