

## **My Big Brother Jimmy**

I had several older brothers growing up. That will happen in a family of 10 children. But there was really only one “Big Brother”. Jimmy was the oldest, the first, the fixture. He bore all the pressure and demands of being the oldest. He felt and embraced a responsibility that the rest of us didn’t bear. Jimmy was a caring, considerate, selfless, giving person. He was a gentleman.... and a gentle man.

What kind of brother always remember your birthday?...and not just yours! But all the siblings, cousins, nephews, nieces, friends, and God knows who else!

What kind of brother sends you a card on Veteran’s Day every Veteran’s Day since 1969 (that’s 50 years!) thanking you for your service in Vietnam?.....”We were so proud of you...”

What kind of brother befriends some Staten Island Gold Star Mothers of Vietnam and becomes the driving force behind the Staten Island Vietnam Memorial? He persevered in that endeavor at a time of much apathy and indifference, but he got it done.

You may have your own fond memory of a thoughtful gesture by Jimmy. Embrace it. Cherish that memory. For in that memory is the essence of Jim Smith. That is how you should remember him.

I always thought of my brother Jimmy as the unofficial Ambassador of Staten Island. He never left the Staten Island community. He was so active in the Staten Island community: the Miss Staten Island Pageant, the Pride Center, the afore mentioned Vietnam Memorial, to name but a few. Life took me away from S.I. but Jimmy was my constant connection with the community. Articles from the Advance, as well as life updates on childhood friends or former neighbors from Jimmy were not an uncommon occurrence. Nothing slipped by Jimmy! God decided He needed an Ambassador, and Jimmy had been through enough.

I will miss him greatly. “Death leaves a heartache no one can heal, love leaves a memory no one can steal.”