

# **Don Belmont**

## **Where did you grow up and go to school?**

I was born and grew up in a Philadelphia suburb. I went on to Trinity College and then to the University of Pennsylvania medical school, and after internship, residency and fellowship, I became a cardiologist and moved to Allentown, PA for my career.

## **Tell me about your family.**

I have been married to Judy for 46 years. We have 3 sons and five grandchildren.

We are a close-knit family and even though our children are in Seattle, Dallas and New York/Miami, we manage to see them quite often. Our sons have a close relationship to each other and we are fortunate to have one of them and his family stay with us throughout the summer.

## **I first saw you playing in a band. I loved the oldies you were playing.**

I do enjoy picking up my guitar and playing it whenever I get a chance. I love getting together with a few of the MCA guys and just playing for the fun of it.

## **Do you have any other hobbies or interests?**

Well, I do have a potter's wheel and kiln in my northern home and enjoy working with clay. I've done that since my med school days. My true love is sailing. I have a small sailboat that I sail as often as I can. Prior to Hurricane Ian I also sailed as crew on a racing boat but unfortunately that boat sank during Hurricane Ian.

## **Speaking of Ian, I understand that your residence was impacted by the storm.**

My condo is on the water and sustained major damage from the water surge. Judy and I are currently living in a rented space while our condo is undergoing major construction.

## **Not long ago I heard that you volunteered for an organization that repairs bikes. What is that all about?**

The name of the organization is Bikes for Tykes. We basically fix up donated bikes and give them away to those who need and cannot afford them. It sounds unbelievable, but last year we gave away 2400 bikes to our Collier County neighbors who would otherwise not have transportation.

I am also involved with the Tikkun Olam Volunteers (TOV), which is the social action and social justice arm of Temple Shalom. Many people do not realize that in Naples, a city that is quite affluent, there are a significant number of people who are disadvantaged and in need of food and shelter. The TOV does what it can to help.

**It seems that much of your time is devoted to volunteering and charities. Why so much?**

Like many of our peers, I was born in an age of social turmoil and civil rights activism and protests against war and the growing recognition of the importance of the environment. While our idealistic dreams of that time are largely unfulfilled, I continue to hold the strong values I grew up with, such as service to others and treating all with respect. I believe we all have a responsibility to leave the world a better place for having lived our lives. For some, that means financially supporting or becoming involved with their favorite non-profit organizations. For me, it was the decisions to become a physician in order to help others, and to become involved in a variety of social action and social justice projects over the years.

**When did you retire?**

I retired at the age of 59. In my medical practice, I noted that more and more of my patients were younger than I was and had serious medical issues. I felt that you don't get to live life twice. I wanted to live life to its fullest. Also, cardiology work often required working around the clock and that became more challenging physically and emotionally as I got older. I am very happy with my decision and never looked back with regret.