

ALLEN, RAYMOND (Charlotte "Chy" Smith)

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Children – 2 Grandchildren – 2

Best Gables Memory

Driving our group to school in my '50 Mercury which my Dad had bought for me from Rusty Woods for \$300. It was beat up, so I bought new seat covers and a very cheap paint job at, where else? Johnny & Mack (by the Railroad Track). Color: Blinding Turquoise. Everybody said it looked like a giant Easter egg, but I pronounced it cool. Each morning I picked up Ginger Rambo, Worth Crow, Lucky Kyle, and anyone else who would get into it, and roared on up Old Cutler and LeJeune Rd to school. It roared a lot since Rusty had installed dual "carbs" and loud pipes (to which I added chrome extensions,) so every Coral Gables cop was attracted every time I'd accelerate. It had a really menacing sound, but I think the paint job was so geeky...they never stopped us. The freedom that old car gave us was great, and every day was fun.

What I'm Doing Now.

We live at a place called Tequesta Point on Brickell Key in downtown Miami, and run our business in Vermont over the internet. (We go up to Vermont 3 or 4 times a year.) In the booming downtown area, everything around me has changed...every building, the people, everything. But my wife, Chy, and I love Miami more than ever. We raised our kids in South Miami and the Gables, but are now enjoying living in a 30-story building downtown. No, we don't speak Spanish, but our city is now a very exciting place compared to the nice but sleepy hometown we all remember. Our condo overlooks the bay and the mouth of the river. I recently watched the DuPont Plaza come tumbling down, and right now, I can see 12 new hi-rise projects going up just from our balconies. We watch the cruise ships and all the tour boats out of bayside, and it's a beautiful exciting scene. Only one thing is the same. If you lean out from our bedroom balcony, you can look up the river under the Brickell Bridge. And it's exactly the same as when my grandfather, a retired sea captain, used to live on the river up by the 12th Avenue bridge. The curves of the river, Merrill-Stevens, the fish markets...they're all still there, while the flashy riverfront condos go up around them. Our business is AmericanMeadows.com which is the outgrowth of The Vermont Wildflower Farm, the tourist attraction we started after moving our family (two sons) to Vermont in the 1980's. I worked in NY first, then started my own ad agency in Miami (Caravetta Allen Kimbrought, Inc.), and then sold that to BBDO Worldwide in 1981 which allowed us to move to Vermont, which we had always loved since honeymooning there. Our business there grew, but in recent years, we have sold off the retail attraction and the national catalog we started, and now our wildflower seed & bulb business is 100% internet based, which allows us to live in Miami most of the year. We both still work more than full time, and my time is spent monitoring our ads on Google, holding phone meetings with our employees

in Vermont, and writing new website stuff for our seed and bulb business. Chy takes the photos and handles the finances. I've always been a plant person, so I love it. If I had more time, I'd be writing about Miami history.

Special Events In My Life

1. Found the right girl to marry: My family: I have the best wife in the world: Chy (for Charlotte), married in 1962 in her hometown of Ashland, MA. And two great sons: Eric (Grad in English, No. Texas U), who spent time in Hollywood in the movie business, helped as our webmaster in Vermont, and is now a teacher with his great teacher wife, Donna, in San Diego, and Terry (Grad in History, ASU), who also has an internet business and lives in South Miami with his wonderful French wife, Sabine and 2 year old Lucas...our first grandchild. In January, 2007, we had our second. Eric and Donna had a beautiful baby girl named Laura Grace.
2. Our trip to Europe in 1965. When we were first married, Chy and I decided we wanted to go to Europe before we had jobs we wanted to keep, kids, or a house. So we lived in Miami (I wrote ads for Burdine's and Chy taught school.) for two years and saved up \$6000 for our trip. Then in '65, we flew to Europe, picked up our new Karmann Ghia convertible and drove through 18 countries for 5 1/2 months. We visited the usual places plus Morocco and Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia during the Soviet days. Those were the "Europe on \$10 a day" days, and we did it all on a tight budget. We spent every cent of our \$6,000 but that even included the new car. When it was over, we sailed home on the SS France in the cheapest stateroom...a ticket we had bought months before. We landed in NYC which is where we then wanted to live. That was always the plan, and that's when I began working in ad agencies in New York. It was a great adventure, and we were right...it's the kind of thing you have to do when you're young and don't have heavy responsibilities.
- 3 .Our move from Miami to Vermont and back again. After going there on our honeymoon, we always wanted to live in Vermont. We were there for 18 years year round, and loved it. We turned our hobby (wildflowers) into a business, and restored a big old house that was built in 1790. We and our boys now have friends both places, and know all about both urban (Miami) and rural (Vermont) living. Of course, the two places are really opposites,
4. Business. I love business, especially the creative end of it. Working in ad agencies in New York (and Miami) was a great experience. It's one of the last bastions of pure competition, and is great fun. And now I love our current business with wildflower seeds and flower bulbs. And I love the magic of the internet! I've always been able to work at things I really enjoy. 2008

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