

Forget-Me-Not Spotlight

Before I Forget:

Love, Hope, Help and Acceptance in Our Fight Against Alzheimer's

B. Smith & Dan Gasby

A review by Shannon Nosbisch, co-founder of Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness

B. (Barbara) Smith was a model, magazine publisher, owned 3 restaurants in Manhattan, Washington, D.C., and Sag Harbor, NY, an author of lifestyle and entertaining books, and had a line of home products in the Bed, Bath & Beyond chain. In 2013, at the age of 65, she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. This book is written by Ms. Smith and her husband, Dan Gasby. Part memoir and part caregiver's guide, *Before I Forget* has short chapters that intertwine narratives by both of them with practical and helpful advice. Readers learn about dealing with the day-to-day challenges of Alzheimer's, family realities and tensions, ways of coping and coming research, and lessons learned along the way.

B. writes a couple of paragraphs at the beginning of each part about how she is feeling and her challenges with Alzheimer's disease. Dan talks about his life taking supporting and helping B. He discusses how their lives have changed. They discuss the mistakes that were made due to the unpredictability of Alzheimer's, including a traumatic experience that involved B. wandering around New York City for 17 hours. Also discussed are the changes that have been made in their lives and how difficult most of them have been, especially having a part-time caregiver that B. liked.

The book is divided into ten parts with thirty-two chapters divided between them. At the end of each part, there is a section on "Lessons Learned" – take-aways from each part the reader needs to know.

Dan also relates his conversations with well-known doctors working in the Alzheimer's field, voicing their frustrations and hopes for new drugs to treat or prevent Alzheimer's disease.

At the end of *Before I Forget*, there is a section on resources – Associations and Organizations, Books, Aids and Tools, and On the Horizon (helpful aids that are being developed).

Before I Forget gives a real and poignant portrayal of life with Alzheimer's disease, but also gives hope that research will find a cure or treatment.

This resource is available at the Effingham Public Library, Flora Public Library, Evans Public Library, Newton Public Library, Greenup Township Public Library, Shelbyville Public Library and

the Mattoon Public Library in the Forget-Me-Not Resource Center. If you do not have a library card, ask at the main desk how you can check it out.