

A.J. Smith 54-631 Avenida Alvaado La Quinta , CA 92253

760 564-3254

2valjeff@gmail.com

After graduation from Helix attended San Diego State College 1964-1968 along with many Helix classmates. Graduated with a BA in History in 1968. Joined the Navy, and went to Officer Candidate School. Spent 3 years on sea duty

Joined the Navy, and went to Officer Candidate School. Spent 3 years on sea duty including 22 months sailing up and down the Western Pacific aboard an LST home ported in Yokosuka, Japan. My naval career peaked as a LtJG Chief Engineer. Returned to San Diego in late 1971 and started graduate work at San Diego State on the G.I. Bill. Took a lot of classes I'd always wanted to take, lived at the beach, lived the good life, and in 1974 ended up with a secondary teaching credential in History. Found employment by leaving town. I began teaching at Indio High School in the Coachella Valley, the heart of California's desert, and found an ideal little desert community to live, La Quinta. 40 years later we're still here. Who knew that those funky little desert communities would become well known for music festivals, golf, tennis, and tourism in general? It used to be known for growing dates.

My wife Val was an English teacher at Indio High. We were married in 1976 and have 2 kids of whom we are extremely proud. Our daughter Laurel graduated from UC Davis, did a tour with the Peace Corps in Nepal, and is a social worker in Baltimore. Our son Andrew graduated from UC Santa Barbara, and is a middle school history teacher in Indio. We have 4 unspeakably cute grandchildren that Val and I love to spoil. We've got a regular babysitting gig with the local grand kids.

I worked for 32 years at Indio and Palm Desert High Schools, teaching Honors World History to sophomores, and AP Government and Economics to seniors. Over the years I taught most all of the social sciences, and for several years was the Activities Director at Indio High. I loved teaching, still value the years a spent with kids, but after 32 years retirement is sweet.

We're active in La Quinta as Cove Neighborhood Association steering committee members, stewards of the local nature preserve, and archivists of the La Quinta Historical Society. I have been focusing on backcountry hiking. My goals are to stay fit and learn as much as I can about the desert we love. We are fortunate to live in a place where I can be walking in a wilderness area less than an hour from my front door. I spend a lot of time in the local desert, Joshua Tree, and Mt. San Jacinto. We're living proof that the retirement cliché is true. We're as busy as when we were working, but it's stuff we love to do!



