

## An Ode to the Big Tree

by Paul Peterzell, Longwood

A place where people gathered, traveled far and wide,  
witnessing a marvel. Suddenly it died.

Over 3,500 years old, towering above it all,  
one early January morning they sadly watched it fall.

Named for a senator, dedicated by a president.  
It wasn't until now that I realized what it meant.

For years the main attraction, delighted at the sight,  
walking away in amazement at its grandeur and its might.

I heard about the fire and I shed some tears.  
How could this happen after so many happy years?

Millions were in awe. Generations came to see  
how one sad day in history a fire destroyed this tree.

A park's namesake, indeed. Such beauty all around.  
"The Senator" will be missed; no replacement can be found.

As we pause and think how much this tree has meant,  
3,500 years have gone by; beautiful time spent.

Big Tree Park remains, memories will take hold.  
A cypress oh, so famous. Another story told.

*Paul Peterzell, a graduate of Lyman High School and UF, is an avid photographer whose landscape photos have appeared in the Orlando Sentinel and other publications. He has visited Big Tree Park often in the past 30 years as a source of serenity.*

