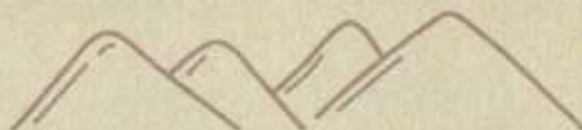


Celebrating the Life of

Thomas K. Dalglish

April 29, 1939 - June 14, 2023



First Unitarian Church of Providence

Saturday, June 24th, 10:30 am

Thomas Killin Dalglish, 84, passed away peacefully on June 14, 2023 at the HopeHealth Hular Hospice Center in Providence. Tom was born on April 29, 1939 in New York, NY to Esther Jane Parsons and James Garven Killin Dalglish. He is survived by his wife of 31 years, Ellen J. Taylor, two sons, Pablo and Gabriel, his daughter, Hannah, four grandchildren (Ítalo, Apolo, Tainá, and Uma Yara), and many nieces and nephews. Tom is also survived by three brothers, Jamie, Campbell, and Malcolm Dalglish, and a sister, Meredith Dalglish.

Tom grew up in Haverford, Pennsylvania and Carmel, Indiana, the eldest of five. A graduate of Dartmouth College, he was poet laureate of his class and spent a day walking in the woods with poet Robert Frost. He received a law degree from the University of Michigan, and a Ph.D. in Higher Education from the University of California at Berkeley, where his focus was the ethics of research involving human subjects. Passionate about civil rights, he traveled to Mississippi in 1965 at the height of the movement to register voters, and was involved in school desegregation litigation with the NAACP Seattle chapter.

He lived for many years in Washington state, working as a university administrator and practicing law, before moving to Louisville, KY to act as director of the Office of Research Integrity at the University of Louisville.

He later moved with his wife and daughter to Rhode Island and worked as a journalist for 15 years at East Bay Newspapers, writing for the Sakonnet Times. He was proud of the fact that he worked until the age of eighty. Tom was a connoisseur of words, a talented chef, a prolific writer and a devoted dog-owner. He loved music, food and art from different cultures, and was endlessly curious. He forever carried a love of Brazilian culture and music from his time there on a fellowship in 1976. An avid outdoorsman in younger years, his greatest adventure was leading canoe trips through Ontario to the Hudson Bay.

To honor Tom's commitment to the environment and to social justice, memorial donations may be made in his name to Save the Bay, 100 Save the Bay Drive, Providence, RI 02905, <http://www.savebay.org> or to Southern Poverty Law Center, 400 Washington Ave., Montgomery, AL 36104, <https://www.splcenter.org>.



Who was Thomas Killin Dalglish? The oldest of five, a solitary soul, an adventurer who led canoe trips in Canada and climbed snowy peaks, played rugby in college and hitchhiked across all fifty states. I've seen photos of him doing these things, in his 20's and 30's. I didn't know that Tom, but even in older age he still embodied that adventurous spirit.

I met Tom in 1989. He was fifty, older than I – not by a generation, but enough of a gap that we grew up in different eras. When I was eight, he was already in law school. When I was a young adult in the 1970s and '80s, he was in his forties, married with two young sons, practicing law.

We hit it off immediately, in the way that two people who share a love of words and silliness recognize that in each other. We'd both been married before; he was going through a difficult divorce. He worked in a small law firm in Ballard, the Scandinavian district of Seattle. I had just moved there from San Francisco and was looking for a job as a paralegal. I interviewed with him for a position. I was lost and friendless in this new town and he offered me guidance and advice. And he hired me.

You can probably guess what happened next. We became involved and working together no longer felt right, so I moved to a big firm downtown. I was daunted by our age difference, the divorce, the kids. I tried to break up with him, but he was persistent. After I'd called it off for the second time, he showed up at my door with a couple of skinny candles sticking out of his coat pocket. The Gulf War was in full swing; protests were sprouting up in Seattle. "Let's go to the march," Tom said. "There's a candlelight vigil in Gas Works Park." I looked at him, in his green Brazil baseball cap, at the candles sticking out of his pocket, the hopeful look on his face. He stood patiently waiting for an answer. I said yes, and off we went.

I moved into his small bungalow-style house in Fremont, the cool neighborhood of Seattle. On the last day of 1991, we got married by his friend, a judge, on the walkway alongside the Fremont Ship Canal, with ducks and kayakers gliding by in the late-morning sun. Our only guests were my parents and two close friends, the married couple who ran the firm where Tom and I worked.

A couple of years later, Hannah was born.

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Tom had a razor-sharp intellect, his mind thirsty for knowledge, always wanting to know the why and the how. He loved food, especially the tastes of different cultures. If he liked a dressing or a sauce or a dish at a restaurant he wouldn't hesitate

to ask the chef for the recipe. Up until a few years ago, he did most of the grocery shopping and cooking. He was a really good cook. That was his happy place.

He had silly down cold. I'd never known anyone who "channeled" their pets, but Tom showed me how and we've done it ever since. The dog voice was goofy, joyful, kind of dumb. The cat sounded haughty, a touch impatient, imperious. He had perfect pitch with things like that. Recently, he found humor in his own impairment. In the last year when his walking became labored, he'd lurch sometimes, making me fear he was going to fall. One night, in our narrow, galley-style kitchen, he wryly observed how convenient the small space was: he was only one lurch away from anything he needed to reach.

We shared a love of words, of language, of writing. He was one of the few people, apart from writing teachers, with whom I could discuss the craft of writing. Countless times at the kitchen table, when we were eating and reading, he would look up from his kindle or magazine and say, "Can I read you something?" He'd read a passage of an article or a few pages from a novel, and we'd talk about voice, point of view, the author's word choices. Sometimes he'd recite, from memory, a poem by T.S. Elliot or W.B. Yeats. I felt the closest to him at those times, the way you feel when something important to you is important to your partner too.

Tom could be difficult. He was not an easy person to live with sometimes, perhaps *because* of that sharp intellect and boundless curiosity. He could be argumentative, confrontational. He got testy on phone calls with people who were doing surveys – what organization do you work for, he would ask; what do you do with the data, he wanted to know. If the call was being recorded, he would say "I'm recording you too" (he wasn't). If told he had to do something a certain way, he'd ask why, or propose a "better" way. He pushed people for answers, challenged them on their motives, drilled down a couple of layers past most people's comfort zone – good qualities for a detective, or a lawyer, or an investigative journalist, but not easy qualities to live with day to day. He drove me crazy at times. But the next day was always a fresh start. If we argued, Tom never stayed mad for long; he didn't hold grudges. He always woke up with a smile on his face. On with life.

He taught me the meaning of politics. I had never considered myself political. But sometimes I'd get heated about something happening in the news, usually having to do with women's rights and autonomy, or the lack of women in power. "Then that's your politics," Tom would say. "Those issues you feel so strongly about? That's what politics is." The personal is political – he showed me that.

He pondered life's questions the way I do. Our core values were aligned – decency, respect, personal integrity. I could go to him with anything, literally cry on his shoulder – he was always there. If I got impatient with him – and my god I did – he always forgave. Always. Those were the things I held close, things that never altered, things I could count on.

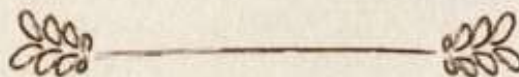
Going through photos of him this past week with Hannah, putting together the program and the obituary, designing the poster – all of it made me pine for the Tom that used to be, the rakish younger Tom whom I never knew, the early days of our marriage. The last few years were so dominated by physical decline, surgeries and rehab, legs growing weaker, hearing loss, his dependency on me, that I think I lost sight of who he was, the person he used to be but still was inside that broken body. The person I was attracted to in the first place. I lost sight of him, and I am sad about that. I wish I had shown him a little more grace, a little more love.

I talk to him every day now. I ask him what it's like on the other side. I carry with me the forgiveness he always showed when I was less than patient with him. One of the last things he said to me, a few days before he passed, in a dry muffled voice, was "I'll be okay." Always, right to the end, assuring me he'd be fine, he'd carry on. Get on with your life, Ellen, he seemed to be saying, don't worry about me, I'll be okay. And I believe he *is* okay, wherever he is.



Remembrances and comments by family members

Musical interludes composed and/or arranged by Malcolm Dalglish



Please join us for a coffee hour following the service

