

# **David W. Overton**

## **August 16, 1939 – January 13, 2022**

*David Overton died on January 13, 2022 in Texas after a long period of medical problems and no formal obituary is planned. I thought that his entry in our 25th anniversary book was so interesting, however, that I have copied it below. Harris*

"The exciting part of leaving Dartmouth after four years is the challenge of going out to conquer an altogether different world. The rewarding part of returning is knowing how well the methods and values we were taught there have stood up outside the "laboratory."

After 23 years as an economic forecaster for the federal government, the constant in my job has been the recurrent need to learn new skills and expand my horizons to new disciplines. At the outset, my colleagues worried for me that I brought only a BA to the job, while they were at last a tad anxious that PhDs might not do it. The great gifts of the years in Hanover were the willingness to try new things and the recognition that innate brilliance is sometimes not as important as persistence or the ability to communicate.

Values. Picking the most important is hard. One is tempted to say "commitment" in light of the nationally famous loyalty of Dartmouth's alumni. I guess I vote for a willingness to be square (if that's a value). Somewhere between freshman bull sessions and the months of grumbling about Great Issues journals, I think most of us found ways to stand up for views and not spend a lot of time worrying about how popular they were.

But this should have been a book of recipes: "The How to Stay Young Cookbook." Some of us would have protested and spoken of the dignity of accepting life's passages. Well, maybe life's travails, but not its passages. I never lost track of Bob Huke, my mentor and several times head of the Dartmouth Geography Department. I saw Bob again last summer. He was stripped to the waist splitting wood. I try hard, but I don't see much change in him besides the gray hair. His wife Elie does his field maps for him in places like Bangladesh and Bhutan. Thirty-five years of marriage don't seem to have dulled their enthusiasm.

I don't know Bob's and Elie's recipes, and I'm not sure it would help me if I did, I do know I feel good when I am interviewing applicants to Dartmouth or "youngsters" looking for jobs with the government. The best of them don't know how to spell the word "tired" and aren't put off by being called "naive." Rightly or wrongly, I sense Dartmouth brushed off some of that freshness that lasts for life on all of us - even if we are too damned sophisticated now to admit it.

Biggest pleasure so far? Marriage (and silver anniversary that follows our reunion by one month). Family. A job that constantly challenges, pays amply and - wonder of wonders - gives me a chance to serve this great nation. And a long line of fabulous academic courses right up to the present day."

