

Thomas Ernest Allen

Died: February 20, 2000

Tom died of an aneurysm at the age of 60 on Sunday, February 20, 2000, at St Joseph's Hospital in Kirkwood, Missouri, a suburban town near St Louis, nearly 500 miles to the south of Albert Lea, Minnesota, where he grew up.

In high school in Albert Lea, Tom was president of the student council and a member of the national honor society. He served on the newspaper and the yearbook, and was in band and dramatics. He was on the debating, basketball and tennis teams.

At Dartmouth Tom majored in government. He became a member of Phi Kappa Psi (and was elected its president), and was on the undergraduate and inter-fraternity councils. He was involved with Hums, played basketball as a freshman, and was with WDCR for four years, becoming its chief announcer. For two years he was involved with The Players and the International Relations Club. For all four years was a member of Army R.O.T.C.

Tom was a devoted Midwesterner. The author remembers once driving with him and Biff Olson and one other mindless soul — in the course of one long weekend — from Hanover to Omaha and back, just to touch bases there. No reason, just to see if it could be done.

After graduation, Tom wrote in February 1967, "I put in two years with Army Intelligence (didn't everybody?)." He left the Army as a Captain after service in Korea.

For a time it appeared as though Tom planned to return permanently to Albert Lea, his childhood home — small town boy returns home sort of thing. He wrote about that possibility during his last year at Michigan Law School in February 1967.

"I'm heading back to my home territory of Minnesota and have joined a firm in Albert Lea," he said then. "Yes, Albert Lea is the name of a town and it has a population of 20,000 people. Those of us who know call it the 'Southern Gateway to the Great Northwest.' If you still don't believe it, pick up any map of the U.S., and chances are, Albert Lea will stare back at you from the bottom, middle of Minnesota."

It's not clear from available records whether Tom ever fulfilled his hometown yearnings.

He reportedly practiced law for many years in St. Louis. However, Kirkwood, Missouri, is where he sank his roots. It's a town a little larger (27,000) than Albert Lea. Tom was on the planning and zoning board and coached girls' basketball there, for more than 15 years.

For a short time, Tom served a stint as WWW Editor, before Tom Conger took the chair.

Tom left behind two sons, Kenneth and Gregory, and a daughter Susan.