

Alden Haskell Clark Jr.

Died: March 25, 2011

Jerry died at age 71 on Friday, March 25, 2011, after a protracted illness and several hospitalizations, in Fletcher Allen Health Care, the University of Vermont's medical center in Burlington, Vermont.

He grew up in Wilton, Connecticut, and attended St. Luke's School in New Canaan, Connecticut, where he served on the school newspaper and sang in the Glee Club, before heading off to Hanover in the fall of 1957.

He was "fifth generation Dartmouth," said his sister, Martha, two months after Jerry's death. Their father was a member of the class of 1934, and their grandfather was class of 1900, Martha said in May 2011, but she could not recall the Dartmouth classes of the two generations proceeding. Younger by two years than Jerry, Martha now lives in Hanover.

At Dartmouth, Jerry majored in English and was a member of Alpha Theta.

His sister and his classmate friends all say that Jerry's life after Dartmouth was a struggle. He inspired loyalty from all who knew him. "My brother had many problems and a tough life," Martha wrote a week after his death, "but he touched a lot of lives and I certainly have been reminded of that this past week."

Jerry was always supported in Burlington by a close circle of friends, Martha said. "He never lost his good humor and his kindness."

Jerry suffered for many years from bipolar disorder, Martha said, and received treatment for it at points along the way. He lived for a while in upper New York State, then moved to Burlington, where he lived until he died, she said. In his later years, her brother was disabled by a bad back, and suffered from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), she said.

Two days after the Friday that Jerry passed away, Martha wrote an e-mail to Maynard Wheeler, then in the midst of preparations for our 50th Reunion, "I asked the doctor Friday evening," Martha wrote, "if they saw his death coming that day, and he said no. Respiratory services saw Jerry Friday morning and everything was OK. He was still talking Friday afternoon. But then he suddenly spiked a high fever and he died within a few hours. He is now at peace."

Then Martha said, "I am truly overwhelmed by some responses I have heard from people in these short hours since he left. He was not dealt an easy life, but people have remarked on what an inspiration he was in carrying his disabilities with grace and a positive attitude. For many people, they were fortunate he passed their way."

Martha said Jerry would not have been able to attend the 50th, but “I know he would have been there in spirit and I hope he still will be.” Only addresses, all in Burlington, are indicated for Jerry in past reunion publications over the years.

Our classmate, Bob Fuller, said in a letter in May 2011 that, “I probably knew Jerry longer than anyone in the class because we were both from Wilton, Connecticut, and I don’t think anyone else in the class was from that relatively small town. For a few years we were in the same grade in the town school system, where he was one of my friends and we got together occasionally outside of school. He was always a nice, kind person and easy to get along with.”

Bob and Jerry went away to different private schools, both arriving at Dartmouth together years later. Their contacts at Dartmouth were infrequent, Bob writes, and non-existent thereafter for most of their adult lives.

But then, Bob writes, “I was fortunate to have a private conversation with him several months before he passed away. I have nothing but good memories of him during the early years in Wilton and afterwards.”

Within the month after Jerry died, our classmate Dick Noel (and Jerry’s fraternity brother), wrote Martha to say, “I remember Jerry as a truly great guy and well-loved fraternity brother at Alpha Theta. We all always looked forward to hearing him sing in our ‘family room’ in the basement of the house at every big weekend. Those were wonderful times and memorable ones due a good deal to Jerry’s entertaining us all (and our dates). He will be in my prayers and I’m sure in those of all his fellow ‘61 Alpha Theta brothers.”

Jerry’s love for making music was also recalled by Dan Berry, who wrote, “I remember Jerry as a quiet, studious guy who could play acoustic guitar like no one else I knew at the time.”

Our classmate Ford Daley, however, seems to have maintained the closest contact over the years with Jerry. In a remembrance two months after Jerry passed away, Ford wrote, “Jerry was one of the few lifelong friends for me from the class of 1961 at Dartmouth. He was my next-door neighbor for two years in Ripley Hall, and we both lived in Ripley in singles our junior year.”

“Throughout our lives,” Ford remembers, “we found ourselves reconnecting at various times and even our families did as well. My first wife, Glo, and my oldest daughter, Kris, were friends of his in his final years in Burlington, Vermont. And when I had to flee to reassemble my life in the early seventies, it was to the Clark family’s sugar shack in the hills of Vermont.”

Ford continues: “Life as an adult was a struggle for Jerry. But through it all, he was valiant and cheerful. His big voice was often turned to laughter, and his intense gaze was

often used in the service of real listening. He was a creature of imagination and of humor.”

“But what I remember most about Jerry — and will always be grateful to him for — was music,” Ford said in his remembrance. “He first got me interested in playing the guitar and in folk music our freshman year. His singing was marvelous, and his performing with Kaare Terland at Dartmouth somehow served as an inspiration to me that has continued as a lifelong love of music - both studying and performing. I always try to credit Jerry for my music and hope that the Class of 1961 Legacy project can in some small way do the same. He was a real Pied Piper - and even now, stands in my memory as an outstanding performer.”

Ford closed his comments by writing, “Jerry was a modest and self-effacing guy. I am sure that he would be surprised — as most of us would be — to find out what he contributed to my life - and probably to others' as well. Perhaps he didn't rule or change the world, but he certainly made a large and continually meaningful impact on me and my conception of what music can be for us. Thanks, Jerry, for the gift that you have given.”