

Thomas Carter Halliday

Died: September 21, 2008

Tom died at age 69 on Sunday, September 21, 2008, in Amarillo, Texas, where he had lived for about 15 years with his wife, Debra. They had been married for 27 years and had four children, two boys (Tim and Trevor), and two girls (Jennifer and Alison).

Tom was class valedictorian at his high school in Cleveland where he grew up. He was also a member of the National Honor Society, and on the newspaper, yearbook, and track team. He played in the band and orchestra. Our classmate Dave Birney went to the same high school, graduating six months later than Tom, and remembers him as “a very gentle guy.” The two of them roomed together their sophomore year at Dartmouth, in one of the new dorms out near Occom Pond, occupying a double room “with a view of the pond,” says Dave.

Tom left Dartmouth at the end of the first semester their sophomore year, says Dave. An obituary after Tom’s death, evidently written with the family’s cooperation, records that Tom later graduated from Baldwin-Wallace College, a private liberal arts college near Cleveland, with a degree in chemistry. He worked first for Battelle Memorial Institute in Columbus, then for Pantex Plant in Amarillo. Battelle is active internationally in science and technology, and runs laboratories in scattered locations around the country. Pantex Plant is involved with maintaining the safety and security of the country’s nuclear weapons stockpile.

Tom retired after 37 years with these two enterprises, and then began what may have been his most professionally satisfying career. He became Executive Director of the Don Harrington Discovery Center and Space Theater in Amarillo, a 25,000-plus square foot science museum with 179 interactive exhibits (e.g. regarding the solar system, space travel, the culture and natural history of birds of prey, physics, etc.), that draws an average of over 400 visitors daily, primarily children and adolescents and their families.

Dave Birney writes that after Tom’s death he talked with Debra, “about Tom and their life together, the children, etc. We talked of him taking on that last project, the museum, which he loved and ran very successfully. She said he was very happy during the last year of his life, and their life together. It’s good to know that his life was so full and so successfully taken up with this last position, at a museum, where as Tom might have said, ‘young students could get an education’.”

Over the years Tom was a leader and very active in civic and community affairs. He was in a Masonic Lodge in Columbus. In Amarillo he served on

the Chamber of Commerce board, chaired United Way, and was involved with programs for advanced learning and that enhanced opportunities for minorities in engineering.

Pursuing an interest in acting, he took roles in Amarillo Little Theater productions. He studied the trumpet and became a member of the Amarillo Community College band. He was a lifelong learner, and had assembled a library of books in science, history, current affairs and religion.

For a while Tom had had some medical struggles that were resolved through surgery. He is unmentioned in The Aegis, and no information about Tom, other than his addresses, is available in our 25th, 35th, and 40th reunion publications.