

Anthony John Oestreicher

Died: May 3, 1999

Tony died at age 59 at his desk, of a massive cardiac arrest on Monday, May 3, 1999.

He lived in Bernardsville, New Jersey, at the time of his death. A New York Times notice of his death said that he had been creative director for ad agencies in Chicago and New York, and enjoyed writing for AT & T Solutions. It said he was active in his church and community theater groups, and did volunteer work for the homeless.

Tony came to Dartmouth from New Rochelle, New York, where in high school he was on the student council and newspaper, and sang in the glee club. He was captain of the school hockey team.

At Dartmouth, he majored in English and became a member of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity, leaving a mark as its social chairman, as his fraternity brother, and our classmate, Tom Conger recalls in the remembrance below.

Tony wrote of his years after Dartmouth for our 25th Reunion Yearbook in 1986. "I can sum up my last twenty-five years very simply," he wrote. "They've been terrific."

He continued, saying he'd had "a gratifying and rewarding career writing and producing campaigns at advertising agencies, first in New York, then in Chicago, and now back in New York. It's a cheap way to get published ... and a lot more fun than real work."

He said the only regret he had was in not noticing what he called "the enormity of it all," referring to the march in Selma, the dying in Vietnam, the protests in Chicago. Then one day (in about 1977) he talked with a friend who'd gone to the same high school as he had, but graduated ten years later in 1967. The friend, he said, had gone to his tenth high school reunion, and there learned that of his 35 classmates who'd died in the intervening years, 29 of them had died in Vietnam. "TWENTY-NINE!!!" wrote Tony.

"I try now to be more tuned in to what's going on around me, but I have to admit it's still hard to keep it all straight," he said, alluding to the conflicting parties and interests in Central America and the Middle East, and the debates about nuclear power, and capital punishment. "I guess it's all cyclical," he said. "Ebb and flow. Ebb and flow." Then, quoting Thornton Wilder from *Our Town*, Tony wrote, "... and the smoke goes up the chimney."

Tony's self-reflections offer us one kind of insight into the kind of person he was, and who we lost when he died.

Tom Conger offers another perspective, in a remembrance that he wrote about his friend and fraternity brother, "Porkchop." ("Such a wonderful person. Absolutely loved his family, Dartmouth, and his work. Rare breed. Sorely missed," Tom said in a September 2010 e-mail to the author.)

"Porkchop was one of my closest friends. [Tom wrote] A scholar, musician, surprising athlete (born w/a malformed foot), and seeker of the key to the mysteries of mankind, he kept me in line—and, as social chairman, really made Phi Gam rock. He drove a '55 Ford that took us everywhere in the Uppah Valley: Dirty Dick's Diner, the Four Aces, Landers', the Marconi Club, the bowling alley, Ponzi's, Wilder Grill, but I never found out until senior year that he had a New York City taxi license while attending New Rochelle High School.

Guy knew Manhattan by heart, and could he ever drive that town — especially at 2:00 a.m. after a long evening of cocktails and, uh, socializing with lovely girls from surrounding schools.

We had a small combo in the house: Chop on piano, Conger on guitar, Jake Haertl on drums, and we sounded pretty darn good — if you liked every song in the key of C.

As English majors, he and I shared many classes, compared notes on topics which interested us, and proofread each other's papers. To keep our writing skills honed, we even wrote a fellow classmate's GI Notes for him.

Tony had an older brother Jack who had graduated several years ahead of us, a writer for one of the major news magazines, whom Chop admired. I never met him, but did have a fine relationship with his mom, all 99 pounds of her, who at the time held the New York record for shock treatments at the State hospital. She was a real sweetie, and, man, could she cook!

Spent Thanksgiving in NYC our senior year, as Dartmouth was competing in the Eastern Rugby Union Seven-A-Side Tournament in Van Cortland Park. Chop drove me over the morning of the tournament and, when we arrived, several of the other lads had not shown up. As we were slated for one of the early matches, Tony suited up and, having no cleats for a half-foot, played the entire first match in stocking feet, helping us to victory — having never even seen a rugby match before! Because of that, we went on to win the tournament, which to this day is

a big feather in the Dartmouth Rugby Football Club's (DRFC's) cap. Without Porkchop, we would have had to forfeit.

Because I had to work the summer of 1960 in order to afford our senior year, I attended ROTC Summer Camp at Ft. Devens (outside Boston,) after we graduated. I hung around a deserted, anticlimactic campus for far too long, finally catching a ride to New York where I met up with Chop and we fiddled around Manhattan until time for my bus to Camp. Having some time after dropping me off, he decided to catch a movie before heading home. He had gone visiting after graduation, and had not been to New Rochelle yet. But upon returning to the trusty green Ford, he found it burglarized, cleaned out — every article of clothing, every item of memorabilia, every book of poetry, every Kingston Trio record, his diploma, even his spare pair of shoes in different sizes — never to be seen again.

Next time I saw him, he was picking me up from Ft. Dix, as Lt. Conger mustered out after two years spent in opposing comrade's cross hairs across the Czech border. I suggested we stop for a movie in the city before heading home; he merely glared at me over the tops of his horn rims and gave my duffel bag a suggestive push.

We kept in touch over the years, always “doing lunch” when I was in NYC (he loved the advertising business), and had one memorable Sunday in Honolulu when he arrived (from an ad shoot in New Zealand) at daybreak and we completed a Joycean odyssey all over the island including wine/breakfast/champagne in Kaimuki, polo at Mokuleia, Greek birthday party in Aina Haina, then back to the airport at 10:00 p.m.”

Tony spoke lovingly of his family when he wrote his 25th Reunion Reflection. “I've had one wonderful wife (Georgette and I were married in '63, and are still very much in love), and three great kids” he said. At the time, his daughter Lisa was an '86 at the College, and Cara and Jack were in high school.