

Anthony Steele Wattleworth

Died: December 12, 2002

Tony died of pneumonia on Thursday, December 12, 2002, in Nashville, Tennessee, at the age of 63.

He grew up in Galena, Illinois, a small town of about 3,300 residents (today) in northwestern Illinois, 16 miles or so from the Mississippi River and Dubuque, Iowa. He went to high school there, was class vice-president his junior year, and played football, basketball and baseball.

A high school classmate and friend of Tony's during their years growing up together in small-town Galena was James Wright, who later became President of Dartmouth.

At Dartmouth, Tony excelled. He majored in zoology and joined Delta Tau Delta fraternity, and was a member of the sophomore orientation committee. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa.

Our classmate, and Tony's roommate and friend Fritz Kern, in a remembrance written in May 2010, said:

“Tony was a very special person to anyone who knew him. What a combination of intellect and wit he had. I got acquainted with the ‘Bino’ (the nickname derived from Tony's white blond hair and very fair complexion) during our freshman year. He, Tom McLaughlin and I were roommates in Gile Hall our sophomore year. What brought us together was not only the chemistry among us but Tony's incredible work ethic. He convinced us to devote more time to studying, and to that end he discovered the peace and quiet of the after-hours classrooms down in Thayer Engineering where we could escape the distractions of the dorm and the fraternity. The three of us pledged Delta Tau Delta (DTD) and this further strengthened our bonds. Tony was intent on a career in medicine, and despite his social and athletic interests at DTD (he excelled in touch football, eight ball, and beer pong), he attacked his pre-med curriculum with incredible verve, and finished among the class's very top academic grade-point performers.”

After Dartmouth, Tony went on to Harvard Medical School, where he received his M.D. degree. He served a five-year stint in the Air Force, and then set up an orthopedic surgery practice in Bend, Oregon.

Tragedy struck in 1978. While attending a medical convention in Boston, Tony was involved in an automobile accident, and suffered a spinal cord-injury that left him paralyzed, and wheelchair bound, for the rest of his life.

Fritz said Tony “had to make a gutsy decision.” He had to find a field that did not require precision handwork. Explaining what happened next, Tony said in his 1986 Reflection for our 25th Reunion that after the accident, “I was not very optimistic about my future. Fortunately for me, however, our family stayed together; and my life has continued in a positive direction. I gave up my career as an orthopedic surgeon and returned to school; and after three years of residency, I was certified as a radiologist.”

Tony became a member of the teaching faculty at Vanderbilt University Medical School, and maintained a radiology practice at the Nashville Veterans Administration Medical Center. At the time of our 40th reunion in 2001, Tony was still working at the VA, as assistant chief of radiology, in a job that he said was “stimulating, fairly easy (after 20 years experience), and apparently of value to the rest of the hospital.”

Tony was survived at his death by his wife Carol, a son, Charles, and a daughter, Susan.