

Anthony Read Wight

Died: July 3, 2009

Tony died of prostate cancer on Friday, July 3, 2009, at his home in Croton-on-Hudson, New York. He was 69 years old.

He was raised in Rye, New York, 25 miles away, and went to the The Taft School in Watertown, Connecticut before coming to Dartmouth. At Taft he was in the orchestra, the band, and on the debate team. His sports were basketball and tennis.

At Dartmouth he majored in sociology and was a member of Gamma Delta Chi fraternity. He played drums with the Sultans and the Barbary Coast his last two years. As a freshman he played tennis and squash. He was in the outing club his first two years at the college.

After Dartmouth, Tony enlisted in the U.S. Army and was sent to the language school in Monterey, California where he became fluent in Serbo-Croatian. After service in Europe, he began a long career in advertising.

He was an account executive with a succession of firms in the years that followed. In 1986, Tony wrote for our 25th Reunion Yearbook that “the last twenty years in advertising and international marketing have been enormously interesting, challenging, rewarding, and great fun. We’ve lived in Japan and my work has taken me all over the world to fascinating places and wonderful people.”

For six years preceding that happy note, Tony specialized in advertising for hotels, resorts, and travel accounts. It was work that was so demanding and enjoyable, as he recounted in 1986, that his wife then of 18 years, Cathie, was moved to tell him, “If this is your version of a mid-life crisis, keep it up.”

In an unusual segue, Tony picked up the narrative of his 1986 entry when he wrote his Reflection 15 years later in 2001 for our 40th Reunion Yearbook. With an unspoken nod to John Lennon, he began his later entry with the phrase, “life is what happens when you’re making other plans.”

“At that time,” he wrote, referring back to the days in 1986 when he last wrote for our benefit, “Everything was going well for us, and continued to do so when I became President and CEO of Publicitas, Inc. in 1989. My wife Cathie was happy and healthy and doing lots of interesting things; and our daughter Alison, was doing well in everything. Then in 1993 Cathie was found to have cancer, which metastasized in 1995. From that point on, everything changed completely as we concentrated on one thing only.

Three years later [1998], after a battle that she fought with wonderful grace, courage, and dignity, Cathie passed away; and Ali and I have had to go through what so many others have had to do.... Cathie loved Hanover and we visited often ... breakfast at Lou's was one of her favorites."

Tony closed his 2001 Reflection, saying, "Growing older is neither a curse nor a right. It is a privilege."

Tony continued on after Cathie passed away. Our fellow '61, Jim Watson, who roomed with Tony their senior year at college, said Tony found a soul mate in Susie Salzberg, with whom he lived for ten years and who survived him at his death. Jim knew them both very well.

Tony returned to the business world, and Ali graduated from the Tisch School of the Arts at NYU, later becoming an artist, Tony recounted, in New York in 2001.

The class, family and friends seem to have closed ranks around Tony after he died in 2009.

An obituary written by Tony's older sister, Judy Werben, and published on the class website, says: "During his later years Tony became very active in the Teatown Nature Center to which he was dedicated and where he devoted many hours as a volunteer. At Dartmouth Tony was a member of Gamma Delta Chi. His passion was music, especially jazz, and he was an active member of the Sultans and the Barbary Coast, for which he played the drums."

[Perhaps of interest, Teatown Lake Reservation is a nonprofit, environmental organization, with an 834-acre nature preserve and education center, located in the Lower Hudson Valley in the Towns of Yorktown, Cortlandt, and New Castle, New York.]

On learning of Tony's passing, Jim Watson wrote: "Tony and I had been in touch regularly since we roomed together in our last year at Dartmouth. My last conversation with him was the Tuesday before he died, and his voice was still strong. We talked about the great times we had at Dartmouth and playing in the Sultans and the Barbary Coast together. Tony's private burial was in Croton-on-Hudson — he did not want a funeral. I was told there would be a memorial service at a later time at the Teatown Lake Reservation nature center, to which he was dedicated and contributed many hours of volunteer work."

Gim Burton from our class also wrote in: "Tony and I reconnected about three years ago when he and Susie attended a concert where my band was playing. Since then, we have played golf frequently and had a good time yakking about the old days. Just like Welchie, another one gone too soon. However, here's a touch of irony, an issue of the Alumni Magazine not long ago has a picture of the Barbary Coast playing at College Hall for a

dance just prior to our graduation. And there's Tony behind the drums — skinny tie, narrow lapels, and all."

And finally, our classmate Tom Conger said, "Tony and I had lost touch over the decades, but in the last year or so he reconnected admirably with his volunteer work at Teatown. In so doing, he and his good works were introduced to other '61s who would otherwise never have known what heroics can be performed on so humble a stage."

Tony had one daughter, Alison.