



Mr. Thomas Albert Church

March 21, 1933 - July 22, 2019

Thomas Albert Church, an accomplished Baltimore civil engineer and businessman, avid outdoor sportsman, proud US Marine, and devoted husband and father, died peacefully July 22, 2019, surrounded by family and friends at Towson's Gilchrist Hospice Center. The long-time Anneslie resident was 86.

Thomas was born in Wisconsin to Beatrice and John Church, a descendant of one of Milwaukee's founding settlers, Benjamin Church. He enjoyed his boyhood in Green Bay, where he developed his life-long passion for fishing, woodworking and the Packers. In 1947, when he was 14, young Tommy and his family arrived in Baltimore, settling on the west side in Forest Park, where he quickly adopted his new hometown and a host of friendships that would shape his personal and professional journey.

One of Tommy's first introductions was to the West Baltimore Boy's Club, which was in need of a quarterback for its youth football team and immediately recognized Tommy's strong arm and foot-speed. Over time, the Club transitioned from the gridiron to an annual crab feast, but was always admired by Tom for the welcome it extended when he moved to town. It was also during these early years when Tommy befriended his neighbor and renowned Director of the Baltimore Zoo, Dr. Arthur Watson, who taught him how to love and "talk to" animals, a passion Tom practiced throughout his life.

For the next 70 years, one could never predict what kind of dog, bird or reptile Tom might bring into the family home.

Before long, Tom enrolled at Baltimore Polytechnic Institute, providing a foundation for his future engineering career. Also at Poly, he picked up his first lacrosse stick and learned about Baltimore's favorite sport. In the 11th grade, Tom transferred to Forest Park High School, where he played for and developed a lifelong friendship with lacrosse's iconic Coach Bob Scott. The game was now in his blood; he would eventually play for the Maryland Terrapins and the Maryland Lacrosse Club.

Upon high school graduation, Tom and three close friends promptly enlisted in the United States Marine Corps to defend their country in the Korean War. After a stop in Parris Island, Tom reached Korea as the war was concluding and spent the next three years preparing for potential future conflict elsewhere in the region. His USMC experience shaped Tom's ethos to the core, instilling deep love for his country, loyalty to his family and friends, and empathy for those less fortunate.

On his discharge, Tom attended University of Maryland where he earned his degree in Civil Engineering, preparing to design the roads, bridges and neighborhoods of American suburbanization. A summer internship led to a position at the venerable Baltimore engineering firm J. E. Greiner, where he earned his license and for 15 years learned from the region's best. In 1971 Tom joined Kidde Consultants where he led the planning and development department, first in Rockville and then closer to home in Towson. Tom's early career placed him on important projects such as the Masonville Marine Terminal and the John F. Kennedy highway.

In 1985, Tom and Kidde colleague Sam Shockley founded Development Engineering Consultants, building it over the next 28 years into one of

Baltimore's leading civil engineering and surveying firms. Tom and Sam were a regular presence in the halls of the Towson Courthouse and Zoning Departments, and DEC designed and managed the development of over 100 residential and commercial properties throughout Maryland. Tom was a Life Member of the American Society of Civil Engineers and sat on numerous State and National engineering councils during his 57 year career.

Tom loved to fly fish, as much for the thrill of a "tight line" as for his passion for the fish, entomology and the equipment it involved. He was a conservationist, a Life Member of Trout Unlimited, and participated in numerous stream restoration projects around Baltimore. He also loved to hunt waterfowl, and for 65 years traveled Maryland's eastern shore from the Transquaking River to Galena, taking more enjoyment from working the dogs and tolling the birds than anything else. Tom was an enthusiast in the truest sense, pursuing hobbies in woodworking; collecting antique decoys, toys and gum cards; coaching and supporting his children's pursuits; racing vintage motorboats; shooting skeet; tending to rose bushes, jade plants and irises; and countless other eclectic activities.

Above all else, Tom was a family man. Without question, his greatest achievement upon arriving in Baltimore was capturing the affection of young Patricia Hamersly who he met in the youth group at Starr Methodist Church. Remarkably, a relationship that started at 14 endured 72 years, including 62 years of rewarding marriage. In 1966, Tom and Pat bought their first and only house on Dunkirk Road where they raised their three children and continue to reside today. Together, they established enduring family traditions such as their raucous annual Christmas Eve carol singalong, vintage holiday train garden, and summers at Deep Creek Lake. They love each other and their family unconditionally, and have been friends, confidantes and lifelong partners in raising a happy and cohesive family comprising 20 children,

grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Tom was preceded in death by his father John Herbert Church, mother Beatrice Hopper, stepfather Addison Hopper and sister Dianne Jewell. He is survived by loving wife Patricia, daughters Kathleen Weidner (Steven) and Joyce Webster (Henry) of Baltimore, son John Church (Kimberly) of New York, 11 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild.

The family would like to extend a special gratitude to the Home Comfort Care team of Towson Gilchrist, whose loving care allowed Tom to remain in his home, an environment that he cherished.

Friends may call at the family-owned MITCHELL-WIEDEFELD FUNERAL HOME INC. 6500 York Rd. (at Overbrook) on Wednesday, July 31st from 4-7 PM. Service and interment private.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Marine Toys for Tots Foundation or Marine Corps Heritage Foundation.

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL 31. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Mitchell - Wiedefeld Funeral Home, Inc.
6500 York Road
Baltimore, MD 21212
(410) 377-8300
general@mwfuneralhome.com

Tribute Wall

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“ Tom was great guy.I had a lot of skeet shooting together from Puerto Rica to all over.
RIP old buddy

Dick Erlanger - August 26, 2019 at 04:47 PM

RM

“ Tom was a wonderful man who was kind and thoughtful over the 40 years I have known him and worked with him. Dick Matz

Richard Matz - July 29, 2019 at 03:20 PM