



Thomas A. Christopher

April 6, 1946 - October 1, 2021

Thomas "Tom" Allen Christopher passed away with peace at the age of 75 on the evening of October 1, 2021, surrounded by the love of his family. Fitting to him, he had his humor until the end and there was laughter between tears.

Tom was an engaging, thoughtful, and caring husband, father, grandfather, brother, and friend. He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Colleen; his daughters, Holly (Gary), Tara, and Kirsten (Dan); his grandchildren, Justin, Grace, Kyla, Claire, and Jack. Recently, Tom had the good fortune of connecting with his birth family and was warmly welcomed into a large and loving family by his brother, Jim (Sue), sisters, Caroyl and Pat (deceased), and many nieces and nephews.

Tom was born in Royal Oak on April 6, 1946, and adopted at birth by his parents, William and Elsie Christopher. He attended the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor before transferring to Wayne State University, where he graduated with a degree in English and Humanities. Tom would later go on to work at his family's business in Detroit and in the years following would become the proprietor of his own company. For several years, Tom served on the Board of the Easter Island Foundation.

Both friends and family alike will perhaps remember Tom best as someone who proudly shared the achievements of his wife, children and grandchildren.

He was also a man with an impressive array of cultural, artistic and mechanical interests. In speaking with Tom, one couldn't help but notice the near contagious excitement with which he discussed matters spanning the latest marvels in mechanical engineering or the worldview-shattering asymmetry of modernist literature to personal theories on the archaeological enigmas of Easter Island.

But those keen enough to engage with Tom's seemingly endless mental catalogue of trivia, quotes, and stories were also quick to find a man who had successfully blended his spirited inquiry with a real earnestness, and to remark that these interests were esoteric was only part of the story. His was a genuine conviction that truth, meaning, and purpose aren't so much to be developed over the course of one's life as they are to be discovered throughout it - often waiting in obscurity for those of us bold enough to admit we could, and should, always know more.

The void of Tom's absence is huge, but he has filled the hearts of all who loved him with countless, wonderful memories.

A private graveside service will be held in his honor. Due to Covid, a memorial for friends and family will take place at a later date. Memorial donations may be made in honor of Tom to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Tribute Wall

DA

“ *Dan Arnsan purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Thomas A. Christopher.*



Dan Arnsan - April 09, 2022 at 01:52 PM

JM

“ *I met Tom when we were teenagers at Bruce Beach. He was an amazing guy - pretty cute, quick to smile and lots of fun. We have not seen each other very much but I was able to meet his family a couple of times and his love was so evident. Reading about his life meant a lot to me. I am so sad that his incredible light has gone out. My condolences to all his loved ones.*

Janet (Orange Davidson) McKelvey - Cottage 49

Janet McKelvey - October 21, 2021 at 02:07 PM

JG

“ *I didn't know Tom well but would like to extend our sympathies to our Gordon Street neighbour at Bruce Beach. The last time I saw him, we were both down at the water watching a spectacular sunset, with a big rainbow appearing to the east. A lovely memory*

Janice Gibson - October 14, 2021 at 09:37 AM

“ Last month, on September 11th, I was in the middle of a now-forgotten dream when it was abruptly interrupted by Tom Christopher, my childhood friend, who suddenly appeared before me and, with the biggest smile on his face, gave me a great, warm hug. I woke up briefly - just enough to still feel his warmth. In the morning I began searching for him on Facebook, and I finally found his page with no photo. The last entry was about prostate cancer. I left a note there about the dream along with a request for him to call me. Today I saw his photo had suddenly appeared his FB listing.

Tom and I met in the second grade. We became good friends. I remember when he invited me to his house one Saturday and I met his parents and his dog whose name I think was Bogee (or something like that). The dog attached himself to my leg in a way that I found funny. Tom and his father found it hysterical. It was a few years after that that I realized that Bogee had “ humped” my leg. I was 7 years old at the time. Tom never let me forget it.

At Kimball High there was a “ bridge” that connected two separate parts of the building. It was a place where one was apt to feel self-conscious walking alone. One day I found Tom standing at one end of it, and he said “ I bet you would walk with me even though I am wearing these shoes. I can’t remember for sure, but I think they were high top red sneakers- very uncool. Brand new of course, and deliberately worn for just such a moment. We both enjoyed the walk.

In college at U of M we lived far across campus from each other, but he found me somehow and he insisted I listen to Bob Dylan’s music with him. Even though Freshmen were supposed to live in the dorms, somehow Tom had managed to have a one room apartment instead. He seemed very lonely then. It wasn’t too long before he left Ann Arbor and enrolled closer to home at Wayne State. But he did make a point of inviting me to a Bob Dylan concert (at Cobo Arena I think - just can’t remember for sure). It was right after Dylan had started playing with a band in tow. The first set he did was all

guitar- his old works and Tom's favorite. But when the band turned up for the second set, Tom stood up and began screaming that Dylan had "sold out". It was a loud and rapid departure from the theatre.

I share these stories because they span the years when we were close, and no matter the time or distance between us, we were always very uniquely special friends. Unfortunately, much later in our lives politics became an issue - at least for me. But the hug that woke me from my sleep was not a surprise. He's a very permanent and beautiful part of my life, and I have never stopped missing him.

I am glad he had such a wonderful family, and I know how happy and proud he was of them.

Kathy (McDonnell) Reed

Kathy (McDonnell Reed) - October 11, 2021 at 03:09 PM

JU

“ We have the fondest memories of Tom. I so appreciated his steady and thoughtful friendship with my dad over 60+ years. Tom and I shared a birthday and, after my dad passed, Tom made a point of connecting with me every year on April 6th. I enjoyed those conversations and will miss them.

Justin, Rachel and Bobby Boelio

Justin - October 11, 2021 at 01:26 PM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Thomas A. Christopher.



October 11, 2021 at 01:03 PM



“ *Blue Caribbean Bouquet was purchased for the family of Thomas A. Christopher.*



October 10, 2021 at 04:14 PM



“ *My wife and I lived in Royal Oak next to the Christophers. Our family had some great times on Glenview Drive with Tom, Colleen and Holly.. Our son John played with Holly and had fun together. I always remember that Holly was fearful of the garbage men as they did their rounds on trash day. Holly would say, "Me Fraid of Gargybuc with Tom, ks" as the trucks rolled down the street. Since I was a teacher, Tom arranged summer work for several summers at the drum companies either in Detroit or Pontiac. Tom and I rode motorcycles together and loved playing handball. As my family grew, we moved into the Sterling Heights area. Tom and Colleen follwed as they chose the Troy region. I often think that Tom was one of my closest friends during this time of our lives. We both loved woodworking. I always envied Tom as his basement wood shop made mine a sorry sight. Often I think of Tom as I am laying out the design for a project or welding a steel fabrication for include in my shop. I still have a steel drum from Christopher Industries that I will always treasure. Tom's Dad gave me a small tape measure that remains in my shop even today. I will miss you Tom. As they often say, thanks for the great memories and friendship..*

John Gatz

John F Gatz - October 10, 2021 at 07:03 AM



“ Tommy and I were friends, neighbors and schoolmates from kindergarten until high school graduation. When we reconnected in our 40s I appreciated what an interesting and fun person he had become. Our reunions will not be the same without Tom.

Patricia Burns - October 09, 2021 at 01:01 PM



“ Condolences from Larry and Ron Polsky (Windsor Barrel & Drum). Tommy was a good man and a great friend. Whenever we needed expert information on how to fix any of our machines we would call Tommy. His wealth of knowledge about machinery, Easter Island, Bob Dylan and a host of other subjects always amazed us. And his sense of humor always made us laugh. We are so sorry for your loss.

Larry Polsky - October 08, 2021 at 02:49 PM

MY

“ It is nearly impossible to think of Tom without a smile coming to your face,

As you remember the many, many manifestations of his warmth and humor ...

and how he delighted in the joy of life. Easily sharing his enthusiasm and curiosity

gave those fortunate enough to be nearby

essentially a lifetime of memory of

a dear and wonderful man.

He embraced his life, and thus shared with us his secrets of a life well lived. My heartfelt sympathy to his family who will miss him most,

and a heartfelt gratitude for having known him; a treasure .

and a heartfelt gratitude for having known him; a treasure .

Thanking you Tom,

and echo ~ ing

Danny....

"Yes,we WILL love You forever "

Melody Haskin Youk

melody haskin youk - October 08, 2021 at 11:01 AM

PT

“ Tom Christopher was a charming loveable “character” I was friends with way back in my teenage years. He was close friends with our neighbors. He was a tease, a flirt and just a great guy. I lost touch over the years with so many childhood friends but I’ll always remember Tom along with those I’ve have great memories with. May his family know he was a wonderful man. You all have my deepest sympathy. Love and blessings.

Paula (Janness) Tassen

Paula (Janness) Tassen - October 08, 2021 at 08:26 AM

DA

“Tom was my best friend, but he was best friend to more than me. He treasured his friends, checked on them regularly, wherever they were, and found ways to make them smile with unique gifts that would suddenly appear in the mail like all of the Lone Ranger memorabilia he collected after we discovered my dad had written the episode where the the Lone Ranger captured his horse, Silver. As I stumbled in writing my children’s book, “Trevor’s Tank,” Tom sent me a Dinky Toy tank he’d kept from childhood to inspire me to finish and it worked! He wrote to me regularly when I was in Vietnam and kept all of the letters I sent him. He remembered more about my terrible year there than I did. I have so many stories to tell about this wonderful, thoughtful human being. I will share just two at this time.

Tom and I met in 7th grade. Our friendship was forged in wood shop. The class project was a pine lamp that resembled an old fashioned pump and trough. The light was activated by a brass chain as you pushed down on the pump. I was struggling with the project. As the other guys were installing the electrical parts, I was still at stage one working on my third base because I kept sanding it too thin and crooked. There were no tools in my house and no dad to guide me. Tom saw my frustration and embarrassment and took me home after school. With his help, we built that damned pump lamp in his dad’s shop that afternoon and evening. Years later, he built a replica and delivered it to me during one of his frequent trips to our home in Montana. I will always treasure it.

The other story bonded our friendship forever. My mother died suddenly at the young age of 46. She had been healthy all of her life, but died almost instantly from a genetic condition - Marfan’s Syndrome. I had recently been discharged from the Marines and was in California. The family was devastated and almost in a catatonic state. Mom’s husband, the love of her life after two bad marriages, was almost suicidal. Tom took over, stabilized the family, got us to do what needed to be done, and even had us smiling after the funeral. I will never forget his strength, love and compassion.

As Tom was dealing with cancer, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer as well. Tom seemed more concerned about me than himself. He would call me on significant dates from the earliest stages of treatment to the beginning of radiation treatments. He told me and my wife, Barbara, what to expect and shared important information my urologist didn't initially give us until we asked, thanks to Tom. I'm going to be fine, by the way. The cancer was confined to the prostate, unlike Tom's.

I will miss this brilliant, thoughtful man's phone calls which always began with, "what are you doing?" and ended with, "I love you!" I will love you, Tom, forever.

Dan Arnsan

Dan Arnsan - October 07, 2021 at 11:27 PM

KM

*We are so sorry to hear of Tom's passing. We had no idea he was ill because we hadn't seen him or Coleen since the last reunion. Please accept our sincere condolences.
Sonny and Kathy McDonald*

Kathleen McDonald - October 10, 2021 at 01:10 PM

KM

*We are both so sorry to hear of Tom's passing. We haven't seen him or Coleen since the last reunion and weren't aware he was ill. Please accept our sincere condolences!
Sonny and Kathy McDonald*

Kathleen McDonald - October 10, 2021 at 01:13 PM

BO

*Add my deepest thoughts to Toms family , I've got to know Dan and his awesome Wife Barbara, so if you don't me adding my own with my wife's tribute to a great man, sadly it seems only the best get taken. 🇬🇧
Barry Jenny and Winston his PTSD assistance dog ex Royal Navy
Royal Marine 🚢🐾🐾🐾*

Barry O'Connell - October 31, 2021 at 04:38 PM

DB

“ *Dan & Barbara purchased the Medium Dish Garden for the family of Thomas A. Christopher.*



Dan & Barbara - October 07, 2021 at 04:59 PM