

Howard Tomb Memorial

Peter Strange, Andy Scott, Nick Ragland, Tom Lorman, Paul Short, Tom Murphy, Bill Sena, he was our Club sponsor; we might well have been the Tomb Literary Club. But of course, we are all large holders of Northwestern Mutual Insurance policies, so the more likely name would be Tomb Mutual Literary Club.

He was one of my best friends, one of the most unique, interesting, yet quirky guys I have ever known.

While I am privileged to call him one of my best friends, his best friend was a unique woman who loved and cared for this quirky guy from the time he woke up, through his business day and his business, and then remarkably got him home safely every night. Marty was much smarter than he, and best of all, he knew it. Prettier too!

Howard L Tomb was born in October 1936 in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, the family moved to Atlanta where he spent his high school years, then on to Northwestern University where he graduated with a degree in Psychology. A discipline he applied well in every respect, at least most of the time.

Deciding to go to work, not to the Army or graduate school, Howard set off into his life-long profession, the life insurance business. Not in the easy activities of that industry, like actuarial services, bond and mortgage management, or even working up to president; Howard sold the stuff! As a great many of us know through personal experience, Howard was an exceptional and uniquely expert salesman of life insurance.

We all know the life insurance business and many of you, believe me, know it better than Howard. He knew it as a passion, a very good investment, and saving plan. What he did know, however, was how to relate and communicate, it was so easy for him and he made all of us believers, for which we thank him today.

Howard applied that same passion and determination to the Arts in our Cincinnati community. Throughout his lifetime, Howard was an active, driving force in many of our treasured institutions. He served on the boards of the Mercantile Library, the Cincinnati art Museum, and the Taft Museum,

but his favorite, I have to say, was the Playhouse in the Park. In fact his 39 years on the Playhouse Board, its president for some of that time, and untiring fund raising are legendary. He actually raised about eight and a half million dollars in 1996, one of his proudest achievements.

Howard and Marty were married for twenty nine years, and, forgive our use of "unique" again, but they were quite a unique team; she knew more about the insurance business, he more about theater, she about literature, but he the arts. They travelled the globe, several times, everywhere. Once on a 44 foot a sailboat in the Anegada Passage, that channel between the BVI and the Lesser Antilles, Howard "saved us all," drinking a beer, eating a ham sandwich, and manning the wheel from 2 AM through 5 AM while the other three of us were seasick or sleeping . This was his first time at night sailing and he had little idea where we were going, but I'm here to tell the story, so I guess we made it !

Howard treasured Monday nights at The Literary Club. He entered membership on May 1, 1989 and was an active member for 25 years, over which he presented nine papers on topics ranging from the vagaries of investing in Broadway plays, to his brief, but unfortunately a dream, of a romantic encounter with Elizabeth Taylor, to the adventurous tale of, and surprise introduction to the club, of one of the Doolittle Raiders; yes, one of those heroes of that early Word War Two flight here as our guest.

Howard's final paper, "O Brother Where Art Thou" beautifully remembered his brother Geoffrey's battle with alcoholism. He concluded that paper with the lines, "Lucky to be Alive." We too were lucky to have Howard in our family of Literarians. We thank him.

Tom Murphy and Bill Sena

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