



Richard H. McLeod

March 20, 2013

Richard H. McLeod, 92, of Bloomfield CT and Weekapaug RI, died peacefully after a short illness at Hartford Hospital on March 20, 2013.

Dick, formerly a resident of West Hartford for 40 years, lived at the Caleb Hitchcock Health Center at the Duncaster Retirement Community. He leaves his children Suzanne, Doug and Andy. His beloved wife Barbara, to whom he was married in 1954, was missed deeply by Dick and her children since her death in 2011.

A wonderful husband, father, teacher and neighbor, Dick was long known for his wisdom, humor, gentle manner, warmth, and humility. He will be affectionately remembered by his family and many friends.

Richard Harvey McLeod was born in Albany, NY, on July 8, 1920, to Augusta Eleanor McMurray and Anderson McLeod, the second of four children (Charles Anderson, Eleanor "Sue" McLeod Adriance, and David Beattie). Dick's great-great-grandfather, Murdock McLeod, came from Scotland to America in 1778 to fight on behalf of King George III and remained here.

Dick thrived with his siblings at the Albany Academy, serving as president of the Joseph Henry Society for Science, playing varsity tennis, managing the hockey team, marching and drilling, and graduating in 1939. During his

boyhood summers Dick attended Camp LaJeunesse near Saranac Lake NY, as did his two brothers, and enjoyed with his family the Weekapaug Inn in Westerly RI.

Dick graduated from the University of Virginia in 1943 with a B.A. in Government. He was a member of the Sigma Nu fraternity and played on the tennis team. The quality, beauty and charm of “Mr. Jefferson’s University” set a high standard for the educational institutions that Dick would serve throughout his career.

Enlisting in the US Army immediately upon graduation from Virginia, Dick trained at bases in Florida, Virginia, South Carolina, Missouri, Oklahoma and New Jersey, but his most formative training occurred at Clark University in Worcester MA where he studied German language and geography. He shipped out to England in early 1944, crossed into Normandy days after D-Day, and spent most of the next two years in Europe with the 129th Signal, Radio, and Intelligence Company, attached to General George Patton’s 7th Army. Dick’s work entailed listening to German radio transmissions and forwarding possible intelligence to commanders. His final posting, in Heidelberg, Germany, saw the end of his brief but promising piano career: Dick’s German instructor was apprehended and held by the Military Police for his support of the enemy.

Dick returned to New York and began teaching at the Trinity School in Manhattan while studying in the evenings at the Columbia Teachers College, receiving a MA in Education in 1948. His love of teaching English was rivaled before long by his affection for a fellow colleague, Barbara Price Birmingham, whom he met at the first faculty meeting in the fall of 1950. She taught third grade, Mr. McLeod taught fifth grade, and they met at the first faculty meeting in the fall of 1950. As the romance flourished, Dick took a new position at Buckley School, across town on the East Side.

Dick proposed to Barbara while sitting with her overlooking the East River. He remembered feeling “so happy that he could have jumped over the car.” They married on September 11, 1954 in her hometown of Greensburg PA and celebrated with a six-week honeymoon to Scotland (and several lesser European countries) in the summer of 1955.

Dick had first travelled to the Isle of Skye, the ancestral home of the McLeods, while stationed in England during the war. In 1954 he was present when the Chief of the Clan, Dame Flora, MacLeod of MacLeod, visited the US for the first time and, at a dinner at the Waldorf Astoria, witnessed the creation of the Clan MacLeod Society of America. Dick and his brother Andy would both later serve as President of the American Clan. Dick and Barbara and their children attended several worldwide Clan MacLeod Parliaments in Scotland, the last in 1994. He honored his Scottish heritage by serving over 20 years as “Chief of the Clan” at the annual Boar’s Head Festival at Asylum Hill Congregational Church

Suzanne, Doug and Andy were each born in New York City. After two years in Providence RI, where Dick taught at Moses Brown School, the family settled in West Hartford in 1963 when Dick was appointed an English Teacher at Renbrook School.

For the next 29 years Dick’s name was synonymous with Renbrook. He took on responsibilities ranging from homeroom teacher, Middle School Head, Director of Admissions, and Assistant Headmaster. He is also remembered fondly by the Renbrook community for his numerous other roles, including tennis coach, bus-route planner, van driver, carpool drop-off disciplinarian, and kilt-clad convener of assemblies. He loved the children, the teachers, and the staff, and the feelings were mutual. Dick felt lucky every day he drove up

the mountain, and every day he plowed into the mountain of work that his love and enthusiasm for Renbrook created.

Upon retirement, his family established the Richard H. McLeod Scholarship. Funded generously by alumni and friends of Renbrook and inspired by his commitment to education for all, the scholarship has provided tuition for a deserving Hartford child annually since 1993.

Dick spent part of every summer since 1954 in Weekapaug, at Skye Cottage, a house that was designed by his brother Dave on land purchased by his mother. He co-founded the Weekapaug Tennis Club and had perhaps no greater joy than befuddling and overpowering his opponents and friends on those courts for over 40 years. Dick won the Men's Doubles Championships twice, once with his brother Andy. Barbara and Dick were happiest together in the yard and on the porch at Skye Cottage, at the beach, and together with their family and many friends in Weekapaug.

Dick led a busy retirement, serving and participating in Asylum Hill Congregational (as Moderator), West Middle School, American Red Cross, Meals on Wheels, the Old Guard, "Renbrook Readers" book club, and other groups.

Barbara and Dick moved to Duncaster in 2003. They and their family were embraced and touched by the care and support at Duncaster and Caleb Hitchcock. Their Duncaster friends, and the superbly compassionate and capable caregivers there, helped form a wonderful final phase of their marriage and lives.

Dick will be missed by daughter Suzanne Warren McLeod of Arlington MA; sons Douglas Birmingham McLeod of London, England, and Andrew Harvey McLeod of Tallahassee FL; daughters-in-law Bette Anne Berg and Kathy

Baughman McLeod; granddaughters Eleanor McLeod Maybury, Jillian Augusta Jayne McLeod; Fionna Nilsson and Fiona Hester Cronin; his brother and sister-in-law, David B. & Betty McLeod, of Appleton, Wisconsin; sisters-in-law Mrs. C. Anderson (Jean) McLeod of Essex CT, Mrs. Frank (Helen) Keenan of Vero Beach FL, Mrs. Henry (Nancy) Jamison of Greensburg, and Suzanne Birmingham of Greensburg, and sister- and brother-in-law Mr. & Mrs. H. Ross (Margot) Perot, of Dallas, Texas. He will also be missed by his 20 nieces and nephews. Dick left the world a better place.

In lieu of flowers, the McLeod family asks that contributions be made to the McLeod Scholarship at Renbrook School, 2865 Albany Avenue, West Hartford CT, 06117, or to Asylum Hill Congregational Church, 814 Asylum Avenue, Hartford CT, 06105.

A service of remembrance will take place at 2 PM, Saturday, March 30, at Asylum Hill Congregational Church.

Please join the family for a reception immediately after the service.

Previous Events

Service

MAR 30. 2:00 PM (ET)

Asylum Hill Congregational Church
814 Asylum Ave
Hartford, CT