

Archibald Roger Montgomery III ("Tad")

MS. FORD: Archibald Roger Montgomery III, better known to you as Tad, was born on August 23, 1924, and died on October 22, 2009. He earned his BA in 1949, and his MA in 1956, at the University of Pennsylvania. He began his career at his alma mater, the Westminster School, in Simsbury, Connecticut, alongside his wife, Anita.

Tad and Anita were truly a team. Their greatest joys came through their friendships with their faculties and their love for their students. At Westminster School, where they served as dorm supervisors and teacher/coaches, they meshed with other talented young masters to have a simply wonderful start to their careers. Tad started both a boxing and a dance club that combined his love for soft shoe and tap with the "sweet science." After Westminster came the headmastership of Garrison Forest School, where Tad and Anita integrated the school racially, hired the first male faculty members, and began a Head Start program on campus. The two of them played in field hockey games, sang and danced in the school musicals, and had endless gatherings of students in their house. After Garrison Forest came the Hill School, where Tad confronted the tumultuous late '60s and '70s with a combination of humor and grace. He remembered a visit to Hill by Yale's famous William Sloan Coffin, who urged the students to sit in at the school to protest some unidentified policies. Coffin then left by train to return to Yale; it was a dicey time.

St. Stephen's Episcopal School in Austin, Texas, was Tad's and Anita's last stop at a boarding school. They loved Austin and the school, and worked together as a team to help stabilize a school struggling with financial challenges. Heart issues drove Tad out of boarding school and into day school with a physician's well-meaning but misplaced notion that day school would somehow be less stressful. Ha! Tad and Anita did have a great run during the '80s at Kent Place School in Summit, New Jersey. They loved being back in a girls' school and brought with them their usual warmth and grace. When the heart problems returned, Tad retired from Kent Place and ended his career over the next few years by working as a consultant for a variety of schools. Tad and Anita moved to the Waverly retirement community in Gladwyne, Pennsylvania, in the late '90s and continued to stay in touch with a huge number of former students and colleagues who had meant so much to them for so many years of their service in independent schools.

Charlie Saltzman, former headmaster of Metairie Park Country Day School and the Madeira School, and currently on the faculty of Gettysburg College, wrote, "Cornelia and I came to know Tad and Anita on a walk on the beach near Galveston a good many years ago. They were then at St. Stephen's in Austin, and we were at Country Day School in New Orleans. The occasion was a meeting of ISAS. I can't remember what we talked about on that walk, but I remember that Cornelia and I thought, on acquaintance, that the Montgomerys were remarkable. We could see that they were wonderful school people and that they had a rare and fine marriage. Not all early meetings make such strong impressions. We consider it a stroke of luck that we became friends after that, and we have admired Tad and Anita for their grace and wit over the years, from getting together in the Southwest, to New Jersey, to our most recent reunion at Gettysburg College, where their grandson, Greg, was playing lacrosse as team captain. Over a friendship of 35 years, we valued Tad as the kind of school head and friend who is a model for us all."

At the Celebration and Thanksgiving Service for Tad, his love of fun and music shone through. Before the service officially started, a piano player offered a medley of show tunes, and at the end, my sisters and my sister-in-law sang "On A Clear Day." What truly made the congregation sit up and take notice occurred when my two nephews and I who read or spoke got up to do so, turned slowly to the congregation, lifted a trouser leg to reveal wild and brightly colored socks, as was Tad's wont, and then bowed again to the group before speaking. It created a wonderful memory of this strong, one-of-a-kind, fun-loving man, my Dad, who will be very much missed. Tad is survived by Anita, four children, having been predeceased by a daughter, and seven grandchildren.

This was written by Arch Montgomery, Tad's son, with help from Charles Saltzman and Blair Stambaugh.

