

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, February 18, 2019

Bidding Farewell to Our Founder, Mentor & Friend, Thomas C. Marshall Jr.: In lieu of a repeat *Weekly News* story, this week I share my own personal life lessons learned from this extraordinary man as well as snapshots from the preparations that went into our participation in the memorial services for Tom Marshall.

First, while Tom enjoyed several business successes during his lifetime, he was never a consummate businessman. He hated spreadsheets, budgets and strategic plans. He placed his faith instead in people, and he was a remarkably astute judge of character. He pursued his passions and never regretted the dreams that failed to reach fruition. For example, the Magic Age of Steam (a small amusement park operated at Auburn Heights, 1971-77) was, by his own accounts, a business failure; yet, it sewed seeds that decades later would help to fuel the successes of the Friends of Auburn Heights, with countless visitors returning with their children and grandchildren to share & renew memories of early train rides and family fun. And the teenagers Tom hired to work at the Magic Age became his most loyal supporters and longtime friends, volunteering their time in whatever capacity Tom needed. Just 3 weeks ago, when he donated to the Friends of Auburn Heights the iconic red-striped jacket he wore during the Magic Age, in many parades and at most Steamin' Days, he named all of the kids who worked at the Magic Age, and today, two will serve as his pallbearers. *Life lesson: Invest in people; the rewards will be greater than you can imagine.*

Second, I genuinely admired Tom's sincere excitement over innovative ideas and new technology. When the Pokemon craze descended on Auburn Heights, we became a "destination," with four "stops" that brought strangers wandering across the site at odd hours. As a result, I had to explain to Tom that he might encounter young people walking around and staring at their phones (often ignoring everything else around them). I enlisted the help of our then-Education Director Jesse Gagnon to show him what they were doing. He dutifully listened as she demonstrated the app, but then he began to shake his head. I expected him to express disapproval, but he responded instead, with genuine awe, "Isn't it amazing what they can do today." The idea of "virtual reality" fascinated him. *Life lesson: Embrace the new and unknown, therein lies the wonder that drives progress and fuels invention.*

Third, there is a great line in a very forgettable Brad Pitt movie in which he plays the angel of death. Upon meeting a woman he must escort on her final journey, he asks, "Have you made enough good memories?" We know Tom made many many good memories because he shared so many of them with us -- in his Weekly News tales, in the talks he has given, and in personal conversations. On the few occasions when I'd drop by an evening work session at Auburn Heights late in the night, I'd often find everyone gathered in the shop, listening as Tom shared stories... of tours, of auto adventures, and so much more. And I had the great fortune to have Tom stop by my office on an almost daily basis, routinely sharing a story or two before heading down to work on the cars. I never minded and will truly miss those "interruptions" (no matter how often I welcomed his "intrusions," he always apologized for disrupting my day). But Tom made good memories for countless more people because he set the stage for memories galore -- aboard the Wilmington & Western Railroad and at the Auburn Heights Egg Hunts and Steamin' Days (to name only a few). He was an advocate for "immersive" or "experiential" learning long before it had a catch phrase. *Life lesson (stolen from Henry Adams): A teacher -- that's Tom -- affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.*

Lastly, Tom always felt uncomfortable when people thanked him for his many contributions -- for launching the Wilmington & Western Railroad, for gifting the Auburn Heights property to the State of Delaware, for teaching countless avid pupils how to operate the vehicles in his personal collections or even for donating those prized autos & engines to the Friends of Auburn Heights. He said people attributed to him grand philanthropic intent... when, in fact, he had done these things for "mostly selfish reasons." He loved trains, old cars and the beautiful rolling hills and open lands of his hometown, and he wanted to share them so others would love them, too. He did just that. Not only with those attending his memorial services today but with those he will never meet but who will see, hear and feel the excitement of a ride in a steam car. Or climb aboard a full-size (or 1/8-size)

steam train. Or stand atop Gun Club Hill or stroll the scenic trails surrounding Auburn Heights and admire the amazing views. He accepted people's thanks with humility and in so doing fostered in them an appreciation for what one person can achieve if they work hard and dream bigger. *Life lesson: Make a living, but, when you can, make a difference.*

Tom never comprehended the impact he had. That's okay because we do. In the last few days, members of the Marshall Steam Team (some longtime and some who are brand new to the organization) worked tirelessly to prepare the Mountain Wagon and steam cars to venture out in winter (something we typically avoid) to escort Tom Marshall on one last "road trip." Tom never asked for it; in fact, he would have said that using the Mountain Wagon (or any steamer) for his passing was too much trouble. We rarely go against our founder's wishes... but this time, Tom, we are united in our defiance. *One last life lesson: Show up and make the most of right now.*

So today, we join together to honor and celebrate a life very well lived. You taught us to take risks, do the right thing and reach higher. Godspeed, Tom. I hope we make you proud!

In Memoriam: Thomas C. Marshall Jr.

It is with deep sadness that we share news that our founder, mentor and dear friend Thomas C. Marshall Jr. (age 94) died February 12, 2019, after a long illness. It is notable that February 12 is the birthday of Abraham Lincoln, one of his American heroes, and we cannot help but believe that Tom chose this historic date for his passing.

The son of the late T. Clarence and Esther Shallcross Marshall, he is survived by Ruth Pierson Marshall, his wife of 33½ years. In addition to being well known in Delaware as a philanthropist, historian and community leader, he was widely respected among antique car collectors all over North America as one of the world's foremost authorities on Stanley Steamers.

Tom spent his first 84 years living in Yorklyn, Delaware, at Auburn Heights, the grand Victorian-era home built by his grandparents in 1897. He moved from Auburn Heights in 2008, when he and his wife, Ruth, donated it to the state of Delaware to become the centerpiece of Auburn Valley State Park. The approximately 360-acre park consists of open space donated by Tom and the Oversee Farm property, which had belonged to Tom's cousin, Eleanor Marshall Reynolds, as well as adjacent properties of the former NVF Company purchased by the state after NVF went out of business. Although he no longer lived at Auburn Heights after 2008, Tom remained active in his role as Founding Director of the Friends of Auburn Heights Preserve, and he could be found working in the museum and workshops at Auburn Heights on a daily basis well into his 90s.

After graduating from Wilmington Friends School in 1941, Tom attended Mercersburg Academy for a year before going on to M.I.T. in 1942-43. He served in the U.S. Army from 1942-46 as a weather forecaster in New Mexico and then as an aerial weather observer on a B-24 flight crew in the Western Pacific. It was while in this capacity that he had the privilege of flying low over the USS Missouri in Tokyo Harbor on the day after the surrender ceremony on that ship brought an official end to World War II.

Tom's business career focused on tourism and travel in northern Delaware. He founded and operated a travel agency from 1949-63, Marshall & Burton Travel Associates (later to become Marshall & Greenplate). He opened the first of his two Holiday Inns in Wilmington in 1961 and operated them for 36 years. Tom's greatest impact on the Wilmington community came from his non-profit and philanthropic activities. He was long active in historic preservation and public recreation efforts in the area. Perhaps his signal achievement was the founding of the Wilmington & Western (hereafter W&W) Railroad, the historic rail line whose steam trains have carried visitors through Tom's beloved Red Clay Valley since the summer of 1966.

He served as the W&W's first President and General Manager from 1960 through 1971, and he remained active as a volunteer and Board member for many years thereafter. Whether it was negotiating with the B&O Railroad for rights to operate over their branch line, restoring and operating a 1910 steam locomotive, or cleaning the public restrooms at the Greenbank Station, Tom did it all with dedication, hard work and good cheer.

Tom and his father, Clarence, shared a lifelong interest in steam technology, whether on the rails, in the family's manufacturing plants, or on the road. Clarence served as the sales agent for the Stanley Motor Carriage Co. — "Stanley Steamers" — from 1910 to 1920, and he began collecting, restoring and operating them in 1940, a hobby that would last throughout his life and which Tom would embrace enthusiastically. The Marshalls' assemblage of Stanley steam cars would come to be recognized as the world's definitive collection. Tom worked tirelessly to restore and maintain the cars, and he loved to drive them on trips both long and short. He steamed his 1912 30-horsepower Stanley touring car on four transcontinental tours, the longest of which was an 8,328-mile trip from Yorklyn to Montreal, Canada, and Tijuana, Mexico, and return in 1972 — very likely the longest single trip ever made in a Stanley Steamer.

In the late 1990s, Tom was looking for a way to share his love of antique cars and steam trains with a new generation, so he presented a series of talks and workshops on steam car technology at Auburn Heights. The group attending these gatherings became known as the "Marshall Steam Team" and evolved into the non-profit Friends of Auburn Heights Preserve in 2004. Tom donated his collection of antique cars, trains and other collectibles to the Friends, whose 80+ volunteers still maintain and operate the cars and miniature steam railroad for the public to enjoy at Auburn Heights.

Trapshooting was also a great interest during Tom's early years. He won nine Delaware State Trapshooting championships between 1939 and 1950 and was runner-up in the Amateur Trapshooting Championship of America at the New York Athletic Club in 1948. He also served in several posts with regional and national trapshooting organizations during these years.

Tom was active with local Quaker organizations, serving in several positions with the Hockessin Friends Meeting and the Friends Home in Kennett Square for more than 50 years, 1953-2004. He also served on the boards of many other philanthropic and non-profit groups, including Mercersburg Academy, Historic Red Clay Valley, the Friends of Old Drawyers and the Red Clay Valley Association.