



## Michael Tormey

July 6, 1933 - May 11, 2017

Michael Shane Tormey

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Thursday evening, May 11, 2017 Michael Tormey died gently at home in his bed, in the company of Carol, his wife of nearly 62 years. All who knew him are grateful that he was spared further decline into Alzheimer's Dementia, though he retained his courtesy, easy smile and interest in people right to the end.

In addition to his wife, Carol Mixter Tormey and daughter Kathleen Rochester (Chris) of Corvallis, OR, he leaves daughters Sharon Schwartz (Alan) of Chattanooga, TN, Ellen Smith (Chuck) of Englewood, NJ and son Grant Tormey (Beth Cheney) soon to be in the San Francisco area.

He was always interested in hearing about his grandchildren and step-grandchildren, across the globe from Berlin to Oregon: Katherine, Christopher (Katie Sheridan) and Eleanor Rochester, Kirsten Culbertson, Jason Montana, Ari and Jared Schwartz, Brianne, Casey and Dion Smith and Kate and Claire Tormey. He was able to understand, and very pleased to know Casey had produced a first great grandchild, Cameron James Gibson, in July 2015. He was sad that he never got to meet Cam, or the seven step-great and three great, great grandkids Sharon and Alan recently reconnected with in Minnesota.

Thinking of Dad, the word "enthusiast" comes to mind. He gave his whole heart and mind to his interests: his family, other people he worked and played with, advancing in his 35-year marketing career with IBM, his serial passions for diving, boxing, dancing, skiing, golf, poker, sailing, college basketball, woodworking, photography and planning his travels.

He was born in Oxnard, California and grew up in Menlo Park, graduating from Sequoia Union HS. He chose his father's alma mater, Stanford University (class of '54, Economics) where he enjoyed his fraternity, Alpha Tau chapter of Phi Sigma Kappa. Two summers spent on a surveying crew in Alaska were highlights. Air Force Service in 1954-55 was disappointing because he was not allowed to learn to fly but did perfect his typing! He relished his brief membership in the Bohemian Club in San Francisco, when he was a young IBM salesman in the late 1950s.

He and Carol met as young teens in a church youth group, but only started dating after they were on separate sides of San Francisco Bay, while Carol Mixer was enjoying college life at Berkeley (class of '55). When they married, June 21, 1955, Carol had rarely been out of California but that was about to change! A baby on the way precipitated a change of plans and rather than go to Harvard for an MBA, Dad went out and found a job with IBM. His mother-in-law said she never saw anyone so focused on finding the right situation.

Giving new meaning to the idea of the “traveling salesman,” Dad was able to pursue his enthusiasm for other places and cultures thanks to “Big Blue.” New York in 1962 was almost as exotic as later IBM assignments in Geneva, Switzerland, Sydney, Australia and Bangkok, Thailand from the mid '60s through early '70s. Though it wasn't always easy, IBM (I've Been Moved) gave his family an indelible, global perspective and thrilling travel opportunities. The family put down some roots in Briarcliff Manor NY from the mid '70s to mid '80s but Michael never stopped traveling for IBM – working in almost every country in Latin America and Asia in those years. His final assignment, as General Manager for IBM China ended witnessing events at Tiananmen Square in 1989 – impressions he wrote and spoke about for years.

After becoming a Rotarian during his early '70s assignment as IBM Thailand General Manager, he helped found a Rotary Club in Briarcliff Manor, NY and continued very active Rotary participation through the rest of his career. In retirement in Waynesville, NC, in 2002 he led a Rotary project producing a community-built playground, leading to a proud moment as Grand Marshal of that year's town festival parade. Over the years he also worked hard for the Campaign for Stanford, the Briarcliff NY Congregational Church, HART Theatre and Folkmoot in Waynesville, NC, Weston, Connecticut's AFS chapter and many other volunteer organizations.

He and Carol chose western North Carolina for retirement, staying on in Waynesville (1990-2014) after his two-year professional woodworking course at Haywood Community College was over. He plunged into woodworking with his usual enthusiasm, hoping for a second career as a furniture maker, even working at Lowe's to get an employee discount on equipment! Although this ambition was cut short by an eye problem, he was able to make over the hillside home in Waynesville where they enjoyed over 20 years surrounded by his craft. There was still lots of traveling, including his bucket-list trips to Alaska and Ireland (to find the Tormey roots in County Galway) and many trips to see kids and grandkids from Massachusetts to Brussels.

In early 2014, when his needs made it impossible to continue independently, they moved to Corvallis, to be near Kathleen's family.

Michael was preceded in death by his parents, Donald James and Rosemary Samuels Tormey, and his older brother Peter Inman Tormey.

Travel on in peace, Dad.

Memories of Michael may be shared with Carol and family on line at <http://www.mchenryfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Michael-Tormey> or by writing to her at Regency Park Place, her assisted living residence: 2595 NE Jack London St., Apt. A10, Corvallis, OR 97330. The family suggests memorial contributions to one of Rotary International's projects: <https://www.rotary.org/en/donate>

There will be a family and friends lunch party to share memories of Michael Tormey on Saturday, August 5, in Atherton, California. Kathleen Rochester and Carol Tormey will be travelling from Oregon to the Bay Area and Pacific Grove from August 3-9. If you would like to attend the gathering on August 5 or see Carol in California, please contact Kathleen: 541 231 5303 or [kathleen.rochester@gmail.com](mailto:kathleen.rochester@gmail.com) for details.

# Comments

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**KATHLEEN ROCHESTER** - July 28, 2017 at 12:12 PM

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“ Peter Harrison sends heartfelt condolences to Michael's family and especially Carol. Though we have not seen each other in many years, we do share some wonderful memories of golf, trips and parties together and will miss Michael hugely. Also, do hope the rest of the family is doing well health-wise and I will keep you all in my thoughts and prayers!

**Peter Harrison** - June 19, 2017 at 06:20 PM



“ Hello Peter! Thanks so much for your thoughts. I'll be sure to share them with my mom. We are headed to California next week with Dad's ashes for a family gathering. Afterwards I'll post about the gathering here. I miss having annual news of all Mom and Dad's old friends since they became unable to keep up their Christmas list. How is Michelle? Kathleen (Tormey Rochester) (aka, 30 years ago, Kathy)

**KATHLEEN ROCHESTER** - July 28, 2017 at 12:02 PM

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“ Yesterday, I spent 8.5 hours on a train watching the world go by from Zermatt to St. Moritz and reflecting on the life of a man I've known for all of mine, my father, Mike Tormey. He passed away in his sleep Thursday evening, as gentle in death as he was in life. He hadn't suffered much physically, but Alzheimer's was robbing him of one of his greatest joys, lively conversations with the people around him. He really loved traveling and meeting new people and connecting them to his life and him to theirs. He lived or travelled on all the continents of this great planet except for Antarctica. He truly made the world a much smaller place for me and my family. As I looked out this morning across the lake from our hotel and saw the reflection of a mountain, but the mountain itself was obscured by fog, I saw it as a metaphor for mourning. The life of a person becomes obscured, but the reflections (memories) become so much clearer. In the coming weeks, months and years, I hope that my father's life will be remembered in both big ways and small, and that those reflections will become the clear memories of Mike Tormey. I love you Dad and I'll miss you, and I'll try hard to continue your legacy of travel and meeting people, may you Rest In Peace.



**Grant Tormey** - May 18, 2017 at 04:04 PM



“ Shirley and I send our condolences to Carol and Mike's entire family. He was a good friend fellow IBMer and golfing buddy. And a greag guy.

**George Binder** - June 19, 2017 at 01:37 PM



“ Thank you very much, George and Shirley -- on behalf of my mom and myself. I'll be sure to pass on your condolences. Those golfing gatherings of the "PGA" were among his most cherished memories and lasted a long time! Kathleen Tormey Rochester

**KATHLEEN ROCHESTER** - July 28, 2017 at 11:58 AM

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“ We are so sorry to hear of your Dad's passing. Our condolences to all of you, especially your mother. Keep the memories alive.  
Love, Nancy and Greg

**Nancy Hathaway** - May 18, 2017 at 02:59 PM

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“ Patti Cheney lit a candle in memory of Michael Tormey



**Patti Cheney** - May 16, 2017 at 06:15 PM

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“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



**Kathleen Tormey Rochester** - May 16, 2017 at 08:53 AM