



Tom Walmsley

December 26, 1927 - September 8, 2012

Tom Walmsley, 84, died September 8 in Corvallis, Oregon, where he had resided for more than 20 years.

Tom came to Corvallis to marry Ilene Kleinsorge, and shortly after arriving there, he took a job teaching religion, philosophy, and ethics courses at Linn Benton Community College. After teaching nearly 7500 students over 23 years, his last course in spring term 2012, Tom resigned his position three weeks ago.

Born December 26, 1927 in Lovington, IL to Herbert Minnick Walmsley and Thelma Newport Pargeon, Tom had an older sister, Jean, and lived much of his life in the Midwest. With degrees from Duke University and the University of Chicago, as well as a doctorate from the University of Missouri-Columbia, he worked in a variety of jobs over his long life, including as a parish minister in many churches, as a golf coach, as a professor in the original Teacher Corps Program at Emporia State University, as Alcohol Safety Action Program Director, and as a personnel manager at Iowa Beef Packers. Prior to coming to Corvallis, Tom spent 8 years as Director of the Ecumenical Christian Ministries at Emporia State University.

Friends and family agree that Tom was known as an athlete and for his skill in tennis and golf; as a lover of performance arts who was a regular in local theater and music productions and choirs; and as a master of dialogue with a curiosity unmatched by most. He had a passion for discourse and the Socratic method and wanted to interact and challenge anyone and everyone just for

the sake of the interaction. But he found his greatest joy in the classroom, and he was fond of saying he was looking for diamonds in the rough and helping them to shine. He was an optimist whose curiosity about the interface between science and religion drove a passion for inquiry and constant search for solutions.

His volunteer efforts included current board membership with the Timberhill Tennis Club and past board membership at the Majestic Theatre and Willamette STAGE Company.

Tom is survived by his wife Ilene Kleinsorge; children Pam King, Jeannie Johnson, Joy Ruff (and Derrick), Tommy Walmsley, Amy Thompson (and Ryan), Matt Gonzales (and Marleah); 9 grandchildren; sister Jean Bergstrom; three nieces and one dog, Birdie. A Celebration of a Well Lived Life will be at 2:00 pm, Saturday September 15th followed by a reception, both at the Corvallis Country Club. In lieu of flowers, please make contributions to the Tom Walmsley Endowment for the Performing Arts at the Oregon State University Foundation.

Tribute Wall

PS

“ We will miss our good friend Tom. I sang with him in choirs, and he was my colleague as a LBCC instructor. He kindly wrote a letter of recommendation for me when I applied for the position I now hold there. We also shared experience as UCC ministers. His passing leaves a gap in our community, and he will live always in our memories.

Parker Swanson - September 15, 2012 at 05:12 PM

PK

“ Dad, You are still here with me not only in my heart, but all around me and my family. I feel your presence surrounding me continually day and nite and know you will always be here. You will never go away because you haven't gone anywhere. We talk to you every nite when we say our prayers for Ilene and you are there to listen. Our love is a never ending love. Love you dad Pammie, Brandon and Mark

Pammie King - September 13, 2012 at 11:14 PM

MR

“ Rest in Peace, “Fagin”

I will remember Tom for his untiring zest for fun on and off the stage during the Corvallis Community Theatre production of Oliver! in 1997. He told me that the role of Fagin was made for him, he wanted it, he worked for it and he was right. He was perfect in every way. The little “pick-pocket” kids adored him and their performances all reflected his leadership in the “den of thieves.” He was like a kid when he watched the show unfold over the several months of pre-production. How can this happen with an all-volunteer company, he asked me. His glee so evident on his smiling face when the set was revealed, his awe at the voices of the cast and the music from the orchestra pit, including the amazing 15 year old violin prodigy who would help Tom milk the audiences with every show as he sang, “What happens when I’m seventy? Must come a time...seventy. When you’re old, and it’s cold And who cares if you live or you die, Your one consolation’s the money You may have put by...”

He was 69 when he performed those 6 shows a week to sell-out Corvallis crowds—when he arranged huge support from the Corvallis Country Club with a sneak preview during their social night—and he even helped to sweep the stage! I am grateful to him for his personal encouragement and praise.

*My condolences to Ilene and all the family for the giant loss of Tom,
Mary Jeanne Reynales Corvallis, OR*

Mary Jeanne Reynales - September 12, 2012 at 11:56 AM

TJ

“ I love you Pop. You will live forever in my heart.

Tom Walmsley Jr. - September 12, 2012 at 11:20 AM

EB

“ Our hearts go out to Ilene and her family at this time. We were so shocked and saddened by the news. We are sure you are surrounded by the love of family and friends and hope we can be a support to you in the weeks and months ahead. Much love.

Elizabeth and Chris Bell - September 11, 2012 at 03:15 PM

KH

“ Dr Walmsley, you opened my eyes in more ways that I can express in words. I will never forget the days of the Walmsley disciples and spending many hours talking philosophically about various subjects. We took every one of your courses because we couldn't get enough. I am so happy that I was able to see you a few weeks ago in the Safeway store on 53rd. I regret that I didn't skip school to meet with you sooner than this coming week, as we had talked about doing. You will surely be missed but forever live with the stories that all of your students will carry and share along their journey. I know that I am a better person to have met you.

Kyle Hatch - September 11, 2012 at 03:18 AM