

In Memoriam—Thomas Edwards Kirkbride '53

He was dedicated to his family, loved to travel, and had a lifelong bond with UNH

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After graduating with an ROTC commission as a second lieutenant, Thomas Kirkbride was posted in Germany with the U.S. Air Force. The experience sparked his interest in international travel and introduced him to

the love of his life. It was there that he met his wife, Anne, a teacher in the schools for U.S. dependents. Over the years they traveled extensively as a couple and with their three children, Ellen Kaidanow, Peter and Christopher. Kirkbride also struck out on his own to places as diverse as Singapore, Cuba, North Korea and Dubai.

He enjoyed exploring other cultures and observing different ways of life, says Anne. "He was always interested in people." For more than 50 years, Kirkbride was an active volunteer with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, an organization of men and women who offer practical, person-to-person assistance to those in need. Wherever he traveled, he made a point of finding out who was in charge of the local branch of the organization, says Anne. "He would arrange to visit them, see the work being done and exchange ideas."

Kirkbride's commitment to service was influenced by his parents' work with the Red Cross during World War II. He was an only child, and while his parents were busy with the war effort, he lived with his great-uncle Tom Phillips, a professor at UNH. He attended the Durham Center School through eighth grade, where he became close friends with Jere Lundholm '53. UNH was much smaller then, recalls Lundholm, and in many ways the town and the university seemed one and the same. "We played sports in the Field House and on Lewis Field like they were our own. We had manual training in the university carpentry shop. There was a special room in the library for us. I am sure that this early exposure also helped establish Tom's lifelong bond to UNH."

After the war, Kirkbride returned to his parents' home in Quincy, Mass. where he attended high school before enrolling at the university. At UNH he managed the basketball and baseball teams, served as statistician for the football team and was sports editor for *The New Hampshire*. Lundholm, then a university classmate, remembers Kirkbride as "a friendly guy and fun to be with." After graduation the two men worked as lifeguards at the outdoor pool.

The Kirkbrides eventually settled in Anne's home state of California. "He was happy to leave the cold of New England behind," she says. Kirkbride worked for the California CPA Society for more than 20 years and later for Sletten Construction Company. He remained in the Air Force Reserve for 14 years, reaching the rank of lieutenant colonel.

Although he lived on the other side of the country, Kirkbride was one of UNH's most loyal graduates and was active in the Northern California alumni chapter for decades, often serving as its president. His organizational talents were legendary as he almost single-handedly expanded the Nor-Cal alumni network. "He would get on the phone and call 95 people to arrange events," says his wife, joking that "Tom's job was to organize huge get-togethers, and my job was to carry things." He also ensured a warm welcome for UNH sports teams by arranging luncheons and receptions when they came to California to compete. In 2011, Kirkbride's dedication to the university was recognized with his selection for the UNH Volunteer of the Year Award.

He kept a close eye on university happenings to the end of his life. In a letter published in the Fall 2014 UNH Magazine, Kirkbride wrote that he "was delighted to read of the outdoor pool renovations in the Spring/Summer issue" and reminisced about being the

first person to swim in the pool when it opened in 1937. He died on October 18, 2014, following a year-long battle with leukemia.

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