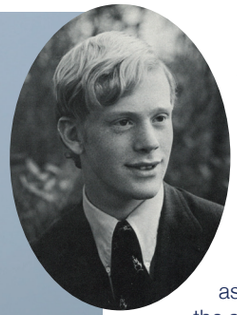
Tom Read ’75

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Growing up, Tom Read ’75 loved adventure and had a silly sense of humor, never taking himself too seriously—traits he carried throughout his life. He grew up with a pet duck in the house and even raised a raccoon with his cousin, Sarah Chester ’75. He joined USM in 1st grade, and stayed for the duration. “He was the kindest and most even-keeled man. It’s a rare trait when you’re in high school,” said Chester.

Friend and classmate Bill Fajen ’75 recalls, “Our senior year French class went to a French restaurant, and we could not breathe for five minutes at a time because we’d be laughing so hard.”

As a young man, Tom discovered a love for diving and became a championship diver while a student at Gettysburg College. In his professional life, he was an American Airlines pilot and captain for 32 years, flying DC-10s to Europe and the Caribbean, and DC9s and MD80s domestically. He was a dedicated volunteer, and shared his love of flying with the Young Eagles Organization, Angel Flight, and the Make-A-Wish foundation.

Tom also had a passion for USM, as so much of his family attended the school, including his children Andrew ’09, Alexander ’11, and Merrill ’15, and his mother, Marion Read MDS’37, who attended Milwaukee Downer Seminary. The Marion and Verne Read Gymnasium in the Lower School is also named after his parents.

“Tom and his family were always at USM,” said Fajen. “His parents attended every sporting event, and Tom and his wife, Lisa, did the same thing for their kids. Tom was at every class reunion because he had friends in every class. The Reads are all like that. He was an ambassador for USM,” said Fajen.

“All of the Read children were skiers,” added Kip Jacobs ’74, friend, former Middle School science teacher, and current outdoor education teacher at USM. “I was always impressed with Tom and Lisa’s generosity and kindness. They would usually bring their motor home to the state ski tournaments and camp right on the hill. It became the place where racers would warm up when they weren’t competing. Merrill also played field hockey and participated at the college level at Colby College in Maine. I found out later that Tom and Lisa also drove to Merrill’s field hockey games at Colby in their motor home, too. Now that is dedication!”

Additionally, Tom was a longtime donor to USM Fund and served as a class agent, director of the USM Alumni Board, phonathon volunteer and USM Fund cabinet member.

Inspired by his parents, Tom was also a lifelong bat lover and he served for years on the board of Bat Conservation International, which was co-founded by his father, Verne, in 1982. He was the secretary/treasurer of the Chapman Foundation (established by the Chester family in 1944) and vice president of the Read Foundation (established as the Merrill Foundation in 1997).

Tom passed away suddenly on October 15, 2022 of an undetected congenital heart defect. He’s remembered for his caring, compassionate, and curious nature and missed by everyone who had the privilege of knowing him.

“It was hard to miss Tom. He was so friendly, fun to be around, and easy to talk to whenever you had the opportunity. He always wanted to find out how you were doing; the conversation was always about you and not about him. It shows his selfless nature.”

– Kip Jacobs ’74, friend, former science teacher, and current USM outdoor education teacher









BACK: Mr. Ruesch, David Erlacher, Curt Wuesthoff, Kevin Dellmat, Tom Read, Jack Jung, Joe Froelich, Tom Schieffer, Jon Bratt, MIDDLE: Mr. Kerr, Ed Richardson, Rob Balge, Peter Stanford, Nevin Van Antwerpen, Steve Sorden, Joe Pembroke, Cal Malone, Dan McLaughlin, FRONT: Tod Tanner, Neil Yashiro, Rick Morris, Russ Spitz, Pieter Godfrey, Scott Motsumoto, Mike Davidson, Tony Finlayson, John Barnes.

