



Thomas James Ball

June 2, 1928 - May 26, 2021

Having lived most of his life in Chester, Connecticut, USA, Thomas James Ball, known as “Tom,” died on May 26, 2021 in Alexandria, Virginia, USA, with his children nearby. He was born on June 2, 1928 in Hartford, CT to Everett Adelbert Ball and Katherine Blanche (Consic) Ball. His paternal grandparents were Samuel T. Ball and Edith (Ferguson) Ball of Chester, CT. His maternal grandparents were Peter A. Consic and Katherine K. (Sepega) Consic, both who immigrated from Galicia, Austria in the 1890s and ultimately settled in Moodus, CT. The oldest of two children born to Everett and Katherine, Tom spent his first few years between Hartford, where Everett worked, and Chester, where they spent weekends as Everett personally built a new home there for his young family.

Tom was a man of principles. He believed in treating people with respect and dignity, taking care of elderly and/or ill family members without expecting anything in return, doing things right or not doing them at all, and keeping your word - always. When his children were young, they used to remark that Tom seemed to know everyone in Chester because whenever they went out with him, he always seemed to run into someone he knew. Tom was the family caregiver because he wanted to be. When his grandmother Edith, Aunt Dorothy Ball (former Chester Town Clerk and Judge of Probate), father, and mother became ill he was the one who naturally became the one who gave them the help they needed and checked in on them every day after work before going to his own home. Recently, Tom played a key role in caring for

his wife as she struggled with the debilitating effects of a degenerative disease. He was determined to care for her at home. This dedication did not go unnoticed by his children who made sure that he received compassionate care at home during his final weeks.

After graduating from Chester High School in 1946, Tom joined the US Army during the WWII period. Tom received 3 months of specialized automotive mechanic training at the Army's Atlanta Ordnance Depot. Subsequently, he was assigned to Okinawa where he helped evaluate the status of tanks and jeeps, determine what to repair, sell, or junk, and repair the vehicles that could be repaired. Shortly before receiving an honorable discharge in June 1949, Tom was reassigned to Fort Knox. Upon returning to civilian life, Tom applied his knowledge to the aerospace industry. He became one of the earliest employees of Schellens-True in Ivoryton, CT (they specialized in turbine products) and stayed with the same organization even as it changed ownership over the years. Ultimately, he retired from there (then known as Turbo Products) in the early 1990s. Whenever he visited his daughter in the Washington, DC area, he liked to visit the Smithsonian Air & Space Museum. He especially enjoyed seeing the early NASA Apollo spacecraft and remembering how he had a part in making turbine components for early NASA space ventures.

Tom's parents made a couple of trips to Nova Scotia and liked it so much they convinced him to join them in the acquisition of some land and construction of a cottage on Cape Breton Island. He agreed even though he had never been there. That decision turned out to be pivotal in his life. When he did get to Cape Breton, he met a neighbor named Earl Durdle who invited Tom and his parents to meet his parents for dinner. When they arrived at Earl's parents' home, Earl's younger sister Winnie was there. She had baked fresh salmon for the dinner. She had met Tom's parents and sister on an earlier visit but never knew they had a son. Who would have guessed that this dinner would lead to a marriage that lasted nearly 60 years, ending only upon Winnie's passing in March. Tom and Winnie married in Calvin United Church, New

Waterford, in August 1961 and then moved to his hometown, Chester, Connecticut, USA. Winnie and Tom lived in Chester from 1961 until October 2004 when they moved to their daughter's home in Alexandria. Their favorite vacation place was Cape Breton, and they went there every summer until they were no longer able to travel.

Tom's hobbies included fishing, photography, playing horseshoes, and tinkering with anything mechanical. By the time he was 16 years old Tom built a large, heavy duty tractor out of scrap parts of a Model T and various other motorized vehicles. After he got married, he moved his prize tractor into the garage of his new home, where it stayed parked for over 30 years. One weekend, with 1010 WINS NY on the radio blasting news reports every 20 minutes, Tom even removed the entire engine, piece by piece, from the only family car to make sure everything was in good condition. Satisfied, he reassembled it by the end of the weekend so he could drive to work on Monday. A Depression era child, Tom had a knack for saving things which most others would have tossed but in which he saw potential repurposing. Tom is survived by his daughter Karen A. Ball (Alexandria, VA) and son George E. Ball (Cape Breton). He is survived by his brother-in-law David Fresia (Old Saybrook, CT) and sister-in-law Eileen (Gregor) Durdle of New Waterford, NS. Additionally, Tom is survived by many nieces and nephews and their partners: Diane Fresia Nolin and Darleen Fresia, both of CT; and Dr. Brenda Mary Durdle (Jim MacDonald), William "Billy" Durdle (Donna Webb), Joann Murray (Curtis), Linda Durdle, Norma Tower (Jim), Nancy O'Brien (Donald), Lynne Gillis (Duncan), Evelyn Nieforth (Donald), Joan Chafe (Dr. John), Donna Lee Coady (David, late), Alan Durdle (Cathy Bryan), Lorna Durdle Danchuk (Greg), Eva Doell (Brad), Rhona Reynen (Gordon), Heather Hello (John, late), and Hazel MacDonald all from Canada. Tom is also survived by longtime friends John and Kelly Magee of Chester, CT and their three children: Cole, Grant, and Corinne Magee who as young children showed genuine interest in his treasured garage collections, even the vacuums.

Tom was predeceased by his loving wife, Winnifred Pearl (Durdle) Ball, known as Winnie, who passed away March 5, 2021. He was also predeceased by his parents, grandparents, and only sibling Patricia Ann (Ball) Fresia. Tom was predeceased by his father-in-law and mother-in-law, George and Melina (Thorne) Durdle of New Waterford, Nova Scotia. He was predeceased by all of Winnie's siblings and all but one of their spouses: Earl Robert "Diddy" Durdle (Josephine "Jo" Johnstone), William Chesley "Ches" or "Dit" Durdle (Effie MacKay), Florence Belle Pyke (John Pyke), Allister "Diddle" Durdle (Edith "Tootsie" Meyer), Norman George Durdle (Elfrieda Helene "Fiddy" Althoff), Edward Lawrence Durdle, Leonard Durdle (Gladys Murrant), Ruby Myrtle MacDonald (Roderick MacDonald), Ronald Bernard "Moe" Durdle (Brenda MacLeod), and Hazel Neville Durdle. In addition Tom was predeceased by nephews Allister "Butch" Durdle, Jr. (Marilyn Frances Dares, late), Edward Gregor Durdle, and George Archibald Durdle all of Canada. Tom embraced the large family he married into and thought of everyone as his family, not "in-laws."

The Jefferson Funeral Chapel in Alexandria, VA is handling final arrangements including cremation. Due to the pandemic, there are no calling hours. Private services will be held at the convenience of the family at a future date.

Donations may be made online to the Animal Welfare League of Arlington VA at www.awla.org/donate/donate-online/ in Tom's memory. Online expressions of sympathy may be sent to the family at www.jeffersonfuneralchapel.com.

Tribute Wall



“ *Thomas James Ball*

October 27, 2022 at 09:45 PM



“ *What a lovely tribute to your Dad, Karen! You and George meant the world to your mom and dad and they loved you very much. Such a sad time to have lost both of them. They are at peace. Take care of yourselves.*

Brenda and Jim

Brenda - May 27, 2021 at 05:55 PM



“ *Tom and Winnie had a way of making every person who visited feel like family. He and my late husband had a 'few' conversations about fixing motors and Winnie and I exchanged some recipes that i will always cherish. Condolences to George and Karen on the loss of there father. from Linda Landry*

linda landry - May 27, 2021 at 04:40 PM



“ *1 file added to the album Memories Album*



Jefferson Funeral Chapel - May 26, 2021 at 05:06 PM

KA

This photo was taken on their wedding day. They are in the "getaway" car.

Karen - May 26, 2021 at 08:02 PM

SB

I'm so glad you shared this beautiful photo! Having only known Winnie and Tom in their later years, it's wonderful to see them when they were young. Same happy loving smiles, though. :)

Sarah Blake - May 26, 2021 at 10:34 PM

KB

Fun to see them so young and happy on their wedding day. They definitely had a lasting love! I'll always remember the two of them walking out to the mailbox together and the way they took care of each other. It was a privilege to know them.

KC Blake - May 27, 2021 at 12:42 PM

DP

Linda and I are truly saddened. Our lives have been dimmed by the passing of a good friend.

No matter how old we are, it's never easy losing a parent. Words are insufficient to ease the sorrow at a time like this; we hope you can find comfort in the cherished memories you have of your father.

Don Patierno - May 27, 2021 at 01:42 PM

BR

What a wonderful photograph

Brenda - May 27, 2021 at 05:56 PM

SH

Karen and George... So sorry to read of the recent passings of your Mom and Dad... they were wonderful neighbors here in Chester.

Skip and Karen Hubbard - May 28, 2021 at 06:14 PM