

The

For family, friends, and alumni of Cistercian Preparatory School

CISTERCIAN CONTINUUM

September 2000

Tom Hillary
1942-2000

The **HILLARY LEGACY**

*In 16 years at Cistercian,
Tom Hillary's life lessons
helped shape hundreds
of boys into men.*



Dear Cistercian Families, Friends, and Alumni,

When a friend passes away, we are at first overcome with grief and often a sense of injustice. We grieve over the loss, anticipating the hole in our own lives created by our friend's absence. Familiar places and things and events all remind us that



Photo by Jim Reisch

we can no longer look to our friend and share old routines. And then we begin questioning God, the way of things: Why has this person died without living out his "fair share" of life? Why has this person died when so many other "less deserving" people are left in the world? When **Coach Hillary** passed away last spring, the sense of loss was palpable among the 400 students and faculty going through their routines in the subdued hallways of the school. With the passing of only a few months, we are now more able to remember Coach and to give thanks for the ways he has influenced so many of us here at Cistercian.

David Stewart '74 first heard of Coach when his son applied to Cistercian last January. David has generously taken time from his own publishing business to research and write the lead article on Coach and design this issue of *The Continuum*. All those who were able to attend the Memorial Mass for Coach appreciated the way Bill Dawson was able to express what Coach had meant to all those parents whose sons had played for him. Although the printed word cannot be as effective as the spoken word, we wanted to share with you Mr. Dawson's remarks, perfect as they were. The Class Notes in this issue, understandably, are filled with student remembrances of Coach. They are a testimony to Coach's ability to challenge and support and affirm all the students he worked with, not just the athletes. Finally, we are announcing in this issue the completion of a project that was dear to Coach's heart, the expansion and renovation of the athletic fields.

We hope this issue of *The Continuum* will bring each of its readers both joy and a challenge — joy in the recollection of a dear friend; a challenge in the call to imitate in our own ways that which was best in Coach.

Fr. Peter Verhalen '73
Headmaster

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PREPARATORY
SCHOOL



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*The Continuum is published
by Cistercian Preparatory School.*

P.O. Box 140699
Irving, TX 75014-0699
972-273-2022

His legacy is one of Victory

The many stories that follow in this special issue of *The Continuum* certainly capture what a wonderful coach, co-worker and husband Coach Hillary was. But Coach would not have enjoyed being “captured” in this manner; he would not have liked all this attention. He preferred the attention go to his boys, to his Hawks. He taught us how to play hard on Friday nights and then helped us soar to new heights in the years that followed. And he always hoped that as we soared, we would find a closer relationship with God just as he did. When we celebrate our next victory on earth — perhaps by singing, “We are the Hawks, the mighty, mighty Hawks” — let’s remember Coach and strive for the greater Victory we pray he now enjoys.

Matt Walter '86
Editor

Pillar

Leaning slightly backward, legs spread shoulder width,
His arms folded across his chest, he stands stock-still,
Looking out across a field of boys engaged in play.
Ambiguous gaze, as if the budding strength and speed,
The half-realized agility and poise, the exuberant surface
Which delights the eye but does not hold the mind,
Were not his focus. He witnesses beneath the maneuver
Of muscle and nerve, the jostle of bodies in motion,
The more perilous play of virtue and vice, of character
And the heart’s urgent struggle to make life worth living.

He stands, and looks, and in a little while will move,
Stepping onto the field, leaning down into their lives;
Placing the strength of his big-hearted hand on their shoulders,
He gently then begins his lessons, teaching them to be more agile,
More skillful, more mindful of playing the game. But mostly,
By voice, eye, and touch he opens their hearts to goodness,
Helping them discover, in mud and sweat, victory and defeat,
That within themselves there is room enough to stretch,
To stand unafraid, and with dignity to play the only game that counts.

The Ancients saw in myth so much we need to see:
The celestial firmament, the panoply of heaven,
Rests on pillars rooted at the edge of the world,
And in them heaven and earth forever join,
Giving us air and light and room to breathe.

—Thomas B. Pruitt
Beginning his 24th year of teaching English at Cistercian



Photo by Mark Cochran '97

The Cistercian Preparatory School was founded with the aim of preparing talented boys for the colleges of their choice by challenging their minds with excellent academic programs, molding their character through the values of Catholic education, and offering them guidance with both understanding and discipline. Cistercian Preparatory School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational practices, admissions, scholarship programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.



The **HILLARY LEGACY**

His lessons of caring, loyalty, and humility turned Cistercian athletes into winners on and off the gridiron • By David Stewart '74

“OVERHEARD SOME OF you talking outside my office,” Coach Tom Hillary said as he eyed his first team of Cistercian players in August of 1984. At 6'6" and 240 pounds, this monument of a man commanded their attention effortlessly. More than a very fit-looking coach, he stood with the presence of a player, a *real* player.

“You were saying, ‘We’ll lose to



Photo by Mark Cochran '97

"We knew he was the real deal from our first meeting," said Kevin Spencer '85, a team captain during the 1984 season.

"He made a point of meeting with the seniors prior to summer practices," said Spencer, now a Dallas attorney and president of the Cistercian Alumni Association. "He wanted to know how we felt about the upcoming year, what our goals were. He asked us what we wanted out of our last season of football." The message: This is *your* team, seniors; I expect *you* to lead it. The louder, though unspoken message: I believe in you.

Members from fifteen more senior classes would be given the same charge. These messages formed the essence of Coach Hillary's coaching philosophy. He strived to shape boys into men by trusting them and giving them a chance to lead. Coach Hillary's goals transcended football seasons and reached into boys' lives. The field served as the classroom for these life lessons; Coach Hillary served as both teacher and textbook.

"I think the most important leadership trait that Coach taught and that made him so special was how much he cared for each and everyone of us," said Chris Carlson '85, a captain of the 1984 team and a graduate of the United States Naval Academy.

"Coach Hillary cared so much for his players that you did not want to make a mistake, not because he would yell or scream, but because he was giving his best and you wanted to do the same," he added.

Robert Schoenvogel '96, a captain during the '95 season, said, "His consistently outstanding example as a coach gave us a model to follow. Whether at the beginning of two-a-days or during the last minute of the big game, Coach Hillary was the same coach, and this was what made him so special. He towered above everything and never wavered. I was an Eagle Scout," added this 1996 Davey O'Brien Award recipient and recent graduate from the University of Virginia, "but Coach Hillary probably taught me more about leadership than my six years in the Boy Scouts."

"The lessons he taught, the character he instilled, the leadership he portrayed were far more important than the fact that we went 6-4 and won a playoff game," echoed Army

Major Tim Bock '85, another one of the captains during Coach Hillary's first year at CPS. "He helped me develop into what I am today."

The implications of Coach's trust in his seniors did not escape them. "He taught me the ability to have faith in myself, while having the strength to rely on others," Spencer said.

Coach Hillary's commitment to shaping leaders and his unconditional trust in them spawned strong relationships throughout his teams. Respect spread from the coach to the seniors, and from the seniors to underclassmen. What Cistercian teams lacked in size, speed, and talent, they made up for in confidence, leadership, and team chemistry. Hillary's Hawks entered every game believing they could win.

FOR TOM HILLARY, there just wasn't enough time in the day to satisfy his hunger for athletic competition. He loved the thrill of competing, and he loved to win. But at SMU in the early sixties, Hillary learned about winning the hard way.

Recruited out of Houston's Bellaire High School by SMU Head Coach Bill Meek, Hillary received a scholarship to play quarterback in 1961. Hillary joined a talented class of players that included another quarterback named Jerry Rhome and a lineman named Mike Bulger.

On the heels of an 0-9-1 record in 1961 and a 2-7-1 finish in 1962, Coach Meek lost his job. Most members of Hillary's recruiting class were encouraged to move on before the '63 season to free up scholarships for the new coach, Hayden Fry. (Jerry Rhome moved on to Tulsa where he set NCAA passing records and was drafted in 1965 by the Dallas Cowboys.)

Hillary decided to stay at SMU but expected to concentrate primarily on baseball, his first love, and basketball, under legendary coach E.O. "Doc" Hayes. But Coach Fry needed Hillary's athleticism and he turned him into a tight end and defensive end. Hillary started at both positions during his junior and senior seasons. The demands of football under Fry forced him to give up basketball.

Hillary became fast friends with fellow recruit Mike Bulger, who also

Dallas Christian, Trinity Valley will be tough, we'll beat Fort Worth Christian, Greenhill is too strong ..."

David Patrick '86, a junior that year, remembered embarrassed looks all around. "He didn't name any names," Patrick recalled. "He didn't have to. We all had expressed those same feelings at one time or another."

"The Cistercian Hawks," Coach Hillary said forcefully, as if his words could turn back a tide of doubts, "do not go into *any* football game thinking they can't win."

As the weeks wore on, these words would be reinforced with deeds. Consistently. Coach Hillary, the boys began to believe, was incapable of uttering a hollow word.

stayed on under Fry. During the early sixties, Bulger's father was an officer for the Immigration and Naturalization Service. He was working with a number of Hungarian émigrés including Fr. Denis Farkasfalvy (Fr. Abbot) and Fr. Bernard Marton. This Cistercian connection would influence Bulger years later to enroll his son Brent at Cistercian (he graduated in 1983). Bulger also would go on to coach football part-time at Cistercian for many years under Coaches Cahill, Haaser, and Hillary.

In baseball, Hillary initially played first base and then shortstop. It is rare for a man of Hillary's stature to play the shortstop position, which requires the utmost in agility and quickness. He might well have been the tallest shortstop in the history of the Southwest Conference. After college, Hillary would spend a couple of years in the Chicago Cubs organization.

In football, Hillary learned a lot about playing the game and coaching the game. Despite being undermanned, Hayden Fry's Mustangs competed against nationally ranked non-conference teams, including

USC, Michigan, and Navy. The Southwest Conference was, in those days, one of the toughest in the country. Nearly every game was close, but SMU finished 2-9 and 3-8 in 1963 and 1964, respectively.

Matched against formidable opponents week after week, Fry relied on a variety of motivational tactics to boost his team's confidence. Coach Hillary particularly liked a poem that Coach Fry used on occasions when his team was facing a bigger, faster, more talented team (see box). After college, Hillary would continue to absorb Fry's wisdom for a couple of years as an assistant.

SMU gave Tom Hillary a chance to compete in the three sports he loved and provided him a feel for how Division I sports programs operate. Perhaps most importantly, he learned to live by a Henry Ward Beecher quote that was featured in the sports section of the 1963 SMU yearbook, *Rotunda*: "Victories that are easy are cheap. Those only are worth having come as the result of hard fighting."

DURING THE SUMMER of 1989, Coach Hillary met with his seniors to discuss the coming season. Nearly 70 percent of the starters from the previous year had been lost to graduation or injury. Although he always preached confidence, here before practices began, he was honest with the team's leaders.

According to John DiPasquale '90, one of the '89 captains, Hillary expressed to them "a slight hint of reservation" about the team's prospects. But this did not alter his expectations for his seniors. "Lead the team to perform its best," he said.

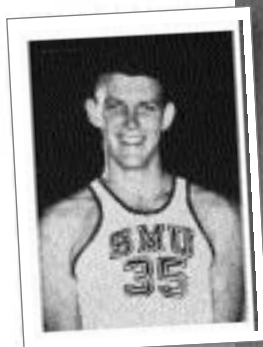
"He also expressed his commitment not to use the season as simply a rebuilding year but to go all out to beat the odds that were stacked against us," DiPasquale recalled.

"After those conversations in the summer, I never heard him talk about our weaknesses again, only our strengths. It was his belief in us that kept us together as a team during one of the toughest seasons that Cistercian has ever had."

"We wanted to play for him,"

SMU's last three-sport letterman

Coach Hillary is pictured here as a sophomore basketball player, a freshman quarterback, and a senior shortstop. Hillary started at tight end and defensive end for the Mustangs during his junior and senior years.



Photos courtesy of Mike Bulger



It's all in the state of mind

The following poem has been a staple for Cistercian football players since Mike Bulger, as an assistant under Coach Cahill, introduced it to the team in the seventies. Under Coach Hillary, each freshman recited the lines during the annual pool party marking the end of two-a-days. Hayden Fry introduced Bulger and Hillary to the lines when they were teammates at SMU.

IF YOU THINK you are beaten ... you are.
If you think that you dare not ... you don't
If you think that you'd like to win but feel that you can't
It's almost a cinch that you won't
For out in this world you will find that success begins
with a fellow's will.
It's all in the state of mind.

YES, MANY A RACE IS LOST before ever a step is run,
And many a coward falls before his work is begun
Think big and your deeds will rise
Think small and you will fall behind
Think that you can, and you will
For it is all in the state of mind.

IF YOU THINK you are outclassed ... you are.
You've got to think high to rise.
You've got to know that you can before you'll ever win a prize.
Life's battles don't always go to the bigger or stronger man
But sooner or later the man who wins is the man who thinks he can.

remembered Chris Stewart '91, a junior during the 1989 season who would serve as a captain the following year. "Why? Because he invested so much in us. I remember wondering why he did that. I mean, he could see in the off-season, when we would go in there to lift weights, that none of us were football players."

"During that 2-8 season I think we were upset more for him than for ourselves when we lost. It was simple: We did not want to let him down because he was so dedicated to us."

"I remember every Monday Coach Hillary would give us the synopsis on the upcoming team," Stewart recalled. "Always the upcoming opponent was — in coach's words — bigger, stronger, faster and more talented. He would state, 'We play these guys 10 times, we win two... let's make it one of those two.' Not great odds, but I remember always feeling as if we had a chance."

Only rarely did Coach Hillary lose his temper during that trying season. DiPasquale recalls one instance in

particular, during a game against a much larger and more talented Houston Episcopal team.

"They were running all over us and beating us by over 30 points at the half. During halftime, Coach laid into us as I had never seen before because he knew we could do better. We played them close to even in the second half. It was the best half of football we played that year."

"After the game, Coach came up to me in the trainer's room as I was lying there in complete exhaustion," DiPasquale said. "He told me how proud he was of how we played."

Although the losses began to stack up that season, "we never once got down on ourselves," said DiPasquale, now a Captain in the U.S. Air Force, controlling Global Positioning System (GPS) navigation satellites in Colorado Springs. "Coach taught me how to lead in difficult circumstances, and those lessons have served me well ever since."

Coming into the final game of the season, the Hawks had earned just one victory in nine games. "There

was no way he was going to let us lose that last game against T.M.I.," Stewart said. "It was Homecoming." For the occasion, Coach Hillary altered his normal Monday synopsis.

"We play these guys *once*," he told the team. "We win *once*."

"He made it clear that there was no other option," said Stewart. "When we came in the locker room on Friday before the game, there were flyers on everyone's locker that read in big letters, 'WE WILL WIN.' There was absolutely no question in our minds that we were going to win that game, even if we were overmatched on paper. And we did. Coach instilled that confidence in us and it carried over to the next year." The Hawks would suffer through just one other losing season during Coach Hillary's tenure.

"We played for *him*," emphasized Stewart, "and he coached for *us*."

“I WOULD NEVER leave Cistercian because I am a Hawk," Wyatt Maxwell '00 remembered Coach telling some of the seniors this year. "I am one of you. I wear that ring with the hawk on it everyday. I wear it because it is part of me."

But, with a reputation as one of the finest coaches in the Metroplex, Coach Hillary had been wooed with lucrative offers. According to area coaches, Coach Hillary could have coached just about anywhere he wanted, public or private.

Two of Hillary's longtime assistants ended up in head coaching positions. (Mike Washburn was hired as head coach at Jesuit. Steve McCarthy took the head coaching job at Oakridge in 1998.) But Coach Hillary stayed at Cistercian. The circumstances under which he came to Cistercian may shed some light on the subject.

When Hillary took over as athletic director in 1984, it was his second coming. He first came to Cistercian when SMU teammate Mike Bulger suggested his name to Athletic Director Bob Cahill in the late seventies. Hillary coached varsity basketball for the 1979-80 school year. It was enough for Hillary to understand the dynamics of the school — academics reign supreme. This understanding may

Boys flocked to Hillary's programs

Participation increases by sport, 1984 vs. 1998

Middle School	Percent Increase	Upper School	Percent Increase
Football*	112	Football*	107
Cross Country*	133	Cross Country	150
Basketball*	113	Basketball*	112
Soccer*	67	Soccer	75
Track	80	Track*	167
Tennis	25	Tennis	71
Baseball**	Two teams 50 players	Baseball**	Two teams 28 players

* Required adding an additional team due to increased participation.

** Baseball was not offered until 1987.

Note: enrollment at Cistercian increased from under 200 students to around 345 (approximately 73 percent) between 1984 and 1998.

have discouraged him from returning, despite repeated requests from then Headmaster Fr. Bernard.

"I was unsuccessful for three years, so I gave up on him," recalled Fr. Bernard. "Then, at his own initiative, he called me in 1984 and told me that he was ready, but wanted to join us full time, and asked if I had a job for him."

This time Hillary had come to terms with Cistercian's emphasis on academics. He also was prepared personally, professionally and spiritually to commit himself fully to the boys.

"He told us in the Spring of 1984 that his decision to come to Cistercian was based on a good deal of prayer," said Matt Walter '86, Cistercian's director of development and head JV football coach. "Coach was a man of faith and it guided him throughout. It was steadfast, but not flamboyant."

Instead of resuming his previous duties as varsity basketball coach, Hillary opted instead to take on the duties of athletic director and varsity football coach. He dove into the business of shaping young men and never looked back. His level of commitment to the boys and to the school exceeded all expectations.

TAKING A BREAK Fly fishing in New Mexico was Coach Hillary's way of recharging his battery. He shared this love with his brother and his wife Sheila.

"I had no set time-table for him, but, as with all my hirings, I expected for him to 'last forever.'" said Fr. Bernard. "He showed me proof of such intentions by always being the very first to return the signed contract for the following year. He would not even look at the page where the salary was indicated; he just grabbed a pen, signed the docu-

ment, gave it back to me and said that it was not the money he was working for."

Fr. Abbot appreciated Coach Hillary's sense of the role of athletics at the school. "He knew how important academics are at Cistercian and he could not imagine his goals without those. He appreciated the support he received, the kind of boys we have, and the peacefully established place football has among the school's programs."

"Cistercian was his family," insisted Sheila Hillary. "He loved the boys, the parents, the faculty, and especially Fr. Bernard and Fr. Peter."

David Patrick said, "I know he received offers that on paper were better — bigger programs, more money — but he loved being a part of the Cistercian family, and I don't think he would have left it. He was like the priests and so many of the lay faculty that stay for so long who make Cistercian such an amazing place and make it difficult for people outside to really understand just how special Cistercian is."

"He wasn't about playing checkers with jobs," added Jay McAuley, head football coach at St. Mark's. "He was about building something he could be



Photo courtesy of Sheila Hillary

proud of down the road.”

“He loved the kind of kids that come through Cistercian,” said McAuley, “more than anyone could ever know. He would talk about guys he coached ten years ago, about how they turned out to be great people.”

While remarkably humble when it came to his and his team’s athletic achievements, Coach once allowed himself to brag a little on the academic accomplishments of the seniors from the 1985 team. In August 1986, Harless Wade wrote in *The Dallas Morning News*: “Tom Hillary of Cistercian doubts any coach in America can match the marks of nine seniors who started for the Irving prep school last fall. They have been accepted to: Princeton, Yale, Stanford, Holy Cross, U.S. Military Academy, U.S. Naval Academy, Boston College, Amherst and Austin College.”

*“His presence alone
in the halls at
school made a
difference in the
way people acted
and carried
themselves.”*

— Jack Pritchett ’93

He enjoyed relationships with all Cistercian students, not just the athletes. He was the antithesis of the archetypal football coach who has time only for those who can help him win football games on Friday nights. Though not gregarious, he befriended all students at the school, whether in

the classroom, in PE, or in the lunchroom where he welcomed students who arrived early.

“His presence alone in the halls at school made a difference in the way people acted and carried themselves,” said Jack Pritchett ’93.

The art of recruiting athletes — a necessity for most coaches — never entered into Coach’s routine. Tim Rogers ’88, recalled in his Mr. Funny Guy column in the *Dallas Observer*, “He put serious pressure on me to play football. Like, he would pass me in the halls at school and say things such as, ‘Hi.’ I remember one time he said, ‘How are you doing, Tim?’”

Coach Hillary’s loyalty was not reserved only for the boys, the school, and football. Participation in all sports ballooned during his tenure (see box on page 8), and he sought to accommodate everyone.

“The class of our fraternity”

Area football men call Hillary a model for coaches everywhere

Coaching in football crazy North Texas is a tough business. A coach’s pay and prestige depend largely on the size and reputation of his school’s football program. If he’s not protecting his turf, he’s probably eyeing a more lucrative opportunity somewhere.

That’s why area coaches remember Tom Hillary so fondly. He demonstrated that there is another way.

“He was the perfect coach, commanding respect but in a quiet way,” said Bob Wunderlick, head coach at Dallas Jesuit. “He never said a bad thing about another coach. That is unusual in this business.”

“He always reacted the same way after a game,” said Steve McCarthy, Cistercian’s new head football coach. “It was hard to tell from him whether the team had won or lost. That’s the reason Cistercian kids act the way they do. You always hear from other coaches that Cistercian plays with a lot of heart and a lot of class. That came from him.”

“He could have been coaching at Plano,” Wunderlick added. “It shows what kind of guy he was to stay at Cistercian.”

Hillary’s football savvy and ability to assess talent impressed his colleagues. He tailored his offensive and defensive schemes to suit the skills of his players. He did whatever it took to give his team their best chance to succeed.

“His teams were so sound fundamentally,” said Jay McAuley, head coach at St. Mark’s. “He knew their abilities and their limits as well. I’ve never been around

or seen a coach do any better with what he had than Tom Hillary.”

In his very first action as a head coach, McAuley was preparing to scrimmage CPS. “I checked out my handbook to see how many boys attended CPS. Well, on that basis, I figured we’d have a chance to flex our muscles a little bit. Instead, we came out with a fairly good sized knot on our head.”

In 1995, McAuley’s Lions faced off with Hillary’s Hawks for the SPC Division II title. “It was typical of any team that Tom coached. Absolutely nothing left to chance. He knew what we were going to do as well as we did,” McAuley said of the 10-8 Cistercian victory. “It was a dogfight.”

At the end of the 1999 season, McAuley and Wunderlick organized the area’s first private school all-star game. Players from 41 schools from as far away as El Pasocompeted against each other.

“We chose two head coaches who would be the most deserving,” Wunderlick said. “Tom was an easy choice. We felt he had to be one of them. He was the class of the private school coaching fraternity.”

“In the short time that I came to know him, he had a great impact. He’s everything I would like to be remembered for someday,” said Wunderlick.

“I don’t think you can find a better example of what a coach is supposed to be about than Tom Hillary,” added McAuley.

— David Stewart

He upgraded other sports that traditionally ran a distant second to football. In 1987, he established Cistercian's first ever varsity baseball team and coached it for several years. Then he handed over these duties to his assistant coaches to give them a chance to shine (and to earn a little extra income). His loyalty to the school — from its boys to its principles — lifted everyone.

“TOM IS MY guardian angel put here to enrich my life and make my life better,” Sheila Hillary was telling Fr. Peter when Coach passed away from adult acute myeloid leukemia (AML) on Monday, April 10. He had been

diagnosed just over two weeks earlier, as spring break began. Now, on the first day back from break, word was spreading around the school that Fr. Peter had left campus. Everyone seemed to understand what that meant.

“It was strange, so sudden, so unexpected,” said Wyatt Maxwell. “I suppose we dealt with it pretty badly. Apparently the little guys — his PE class — were hit very hard, and I would bet the rising seniors were too. I can't imagine knowing you're not going to be coached by Coach Hillary. It was the ultimate in reaching the top, being a senior under Coach. It's what seventh graders dream about.”

“We were already thinking about coming back the next year and shooting the bull with Coach after practice when the team runs, the traditional

thing that the graduated class does. We wouldn't get to do that. We were sad, we had classes, but nothing was accomplished. We learned that the best way to deal with it was to talk about him, all the stories.”

Coach would never have expected the scene at the Cistercian Gymnasium on April 13, 2000. Over 1,200 crowded into the gym to pay their respects to a man who never appeared particularly impressed with his own value.

For this, the largest Mass ever at Cistercian, the community of Cistercian Fathers concelebrated the service, with Fr. Abbot the main celebrant. “The gym beautifully transformed into a sanctuary,” Fr. Bernard recalled. A six-foot-tall crucifix was hung in place of the image of the Hawk. The altar was set on a raised platform directly in front of the cru-

A Cistercian parent's perspective on the legacy of Tom Hillary

By Bill Dawson

These remarks were delivered at Coach Hillary's funeral.

Tom Hillary was God's gift to Cistercian parents. Of course, our boys thought he was their special gift, and theirs only. They looked up to him with respect and awe. But they probably never realized that we as parents looked up to him with that same awe and respect. As parents we felt that way for two basic reasons.

First, Coach Hillary got more out of our boys than any of us ever thought possible. An example of that was winning football. Although his record is impressive, the championship banners on the walls, here, do not even begin to tell the story.

Coach Hillary gave us exciting teams and incredible games. My favorite was the 1988 Greenhill game at Cistercian. Trailing with merely seconds left in the game, Drew Whaley caught a pass from Cistercian's freshman quarterback. It was not unusual for Coach Hillary's teams to have freshmen playing key roles. A block from John Michael Stewart sprung Drew loose, and he scored the winning touchdown with no time left on the clock. To this day, that is the most exciting game I have ever seen.

I have heard from some of you who attended the Greenhill game at Cistercian this year that it was equally exciting. John Dayton described it as the best football game he had ever seen — not just the best *high school* football game, the best football game. Those types of victories and fourth quarter heroics were not unusual occurrences. They were common. We came to believe that, despite incredible

obstacles, we were always in the game.

I am glad Coach Phillips (from Houston Episcopal) is here with us today to reminisce about the 1994 Episcopal game at Cistercian. Mike Stewart tells me it is his personal favorite. When the Episcopal players took the field, they were so big we parents were afraid for our sons and merely wanted them off the field unhurt. We groused among ourselves why our kids would even be playing a team so big and burly. The boys, however, did not share our doubts. We won that game, and not in typical Cistercian fashion with long passes and the trick plays Coach Hillary was known for. We lined up and ran right over them. Bubba Futerfas gained more than 300 yards. The Episcopal team could not believe it. We could not believe it.

That game illustrates what was remarkable about Coach Hillary. He won with the talent we parents gave him. He never complained about our kids being too scrawny or awkward or nonathletic.

I recall my son going out for football as a freshman. I fully expected Coach Hillary to call me and say “Hey, I've seen more meat than this on a deer's antler.” But he never complained. He took our kids on as his special challenge. And boy did he love a challenge. I asked one of the boys one year what kind of team we would have. He thought about it a minute, and then said “Well, we are small, but we make up for it by being slow.”

That is not to say we parents didn't provide material to work with. One year, I think it was the one when the team claimed their average SAT score was 1300, I asked one of the players what the team would be like. He said he could not promise much except that they would not forget the plays.

Father Peter, you said you had received an e-mail from a former student saying he did not play sports under Coach Hillary because he was “not really an athlete.” Fact is, most of the boys who played for Cistercian were “not



Photo courtesy of Gail Reinemund

GUARDIAN ANGEL Tom and Sheila Hillary at the coaches' party last fall.

cifix. Pictures of Coach Hillary were displayed, including one beside the lectern. "It was absolutely fitting that

many, yet never acknowledged his own significance.

In August of 1985, each Hawk was

he should be commemorated 'in his house,'" Fr. Bernard commented.

Players, parents, faculty, old teammates, fellow coaches, family, and friends came to celebrate the stories of leadership, love, caring, humility, inspiration, and sportsmanship. They remained for hours at the reception. They wanted to share stories about this man who had impacted so

sitting glumly in the locker room preparing to take the field for a scrimmage against a much stronger 3-A Coppell team. When a football player contemplates his manhood in moments like these, nothing else seems to matter. Coach Hillary understood the depth of the doubts this day. He broke the silence with a tale from his playing days. This was a rare occasion.

He recalled sitting in the locker room before a night game at the Cotton Bowl his senior year. The Mustangs were preparing to face the number-one ranked team in the nation, Roger Staubach's Navy squad. Across the country, fans and journalists snickered, "SM Who?" Coach Hillary recalled how the players didn't care what anyone else thought, they felt they could win the ballgame. They believed in them-

really athletes," at least not until they met Coach Hillary.

Of course, we were not without skilled athletes. One, John Michael Stewart, made All-American at Coach Hillary's alma mater, SMU. And, of course, there were others. I see Jeff Lockhart and Matthew Nevitt in the audience. They were certainly fine athletes. If Coach Hillary had but two or three talented players, particularly at skill positions, he produced exciting football teams and unbelievable wins. Bigger, faster teams would fall victim to Cistercian. He did that with the bulk of the team being an unlikely bunch of football heroes.

How did he do it? The answer is he got more out of our boys than any of us could have ever expected by giving to them more than anyone else ever could. That is the other reason we, as parents, loved and respected him so.

When we had our kids, no one gave us instruction booklets. Intuitively, however, we knew that all kids suffer from feelings of insecurity, and we were careful to tell our children just how special they were. But our kids were smart. They knew their parents were not objective. We lacked credibility.

Coach Hillary was different. He was objective. He did not just tell our boys they were special, he convinced them of it. He instilled in them confidence and a can-do optimism. He taught them to be courageous and showed them how to be. He ingrained in them a never give up attitude. In the fourth quarter, when things were tough and the other team was bigger, faster, intimidating, trash talking, and bullying, our kids dug in. They never quit and they always believed they could do it. Even now when they are tired and overworked, overwhelmed by deadlines and challenges they are not sure they can meet, the training Coach Hillary gave our sons holds them in good stead.

Coach Hillary started day one instilling confidence in our kids. How many of you out there were "puppies" on Coach Hillary's football team? That is the name given to freshman who are just starting out. Raise your hands high

so that we can see them.

Now how many of you former puppies recall having to memorize a poem, a poem Coach Hillary selected? Raise your hands. (The poem appears on page 7.)

Coach Hillary taught our kids much more. For example, he taught them the subtle yet important distinction between pride and arrogance. He taught them the difference in being humble and being timid or tentative. He was humble, but no one ever accused Coach Hillary of being timid or tentative. He taught our boys respect and discipline. They both looked and acted the part. How many of you recall his rule for road trips — "school attire or better." [Hands raised]. Our boys never talked back to umpires or referees. Now, I know of one boy who did, but my wife won't let me mention his name. I can tell you it never happened again.

Coach Hillary taught our boys not to gloat in victory or sulk in defeat. They were winners every time they came off the field. He taught our sons to be joyful in victory and to take defeat with dignity and to learn from it without giving in to it.

Coach Hillary was the antidote for evil and destructive influences our kids were bombarded with every day — on TV, from professional sports, from other students and other parents, and maybe even sometimes from us as parents.

Coach Hillary taught our boys that sports were games to be played for fun. He loved pitching batting practice. How many of you have ever stood in the batter's box and attempted to hit one of Coach Hillary's curve balls? [Hands raised]. Now tell the truth, how many of you ever hit one of those curve balls? [No hands raised],

Coach Hillary is here with us. He lives through his boys. His boys just happen to be our sons. And for that, as parents, we will be eternally grateful.

Bill Dawson is the father of Will '90, Drew '95, and Jeff '97.

Sportsmanship and more of Hillary's life lessons

"This is about the boys"

Most every coach is committed. The question is to whom they are committed. In Coach Hillary's case, the answer leaps out at you.

Sheila Hillary remembered members of the Booster Club displayed an enlarged picture of Coach from his SMU playing days at an athletic banquet. He was angry



COACHES OF SPORTSMANSHIP Although Coach Hillary loved the game of football, he was far more interested in the development of young men. He is shown here with the 1999 coaching staff, (l-r) Matt Walter '86, Jim Taylor, Tom Hillary, Karl Pointer, and Mark Gray.

and ordered it taken down. "This is not about me," he said. "This is about the boys."

Winning and losing was important but it wasn't paramount. Shaping boys into men stood out as his primary mission.

"Coach emphasized playing with class and dignity," said Matt Hawkins. "As pumped up as he got us for the games against Greenhill, he always emphasized that it was a 'friendly rivalry' and that we would win by playing clean, fair and by the rules. Winning was important, but

playing our best and playing clean football was more important. There is not enough of that in coaching today, even on the high school level, but that is always how he coached. He would not tolerate cheating or even dirty play ever, and he always made that clear. He was very proud of us, and he always made sure that our priorities were straight."

Occasionally through the years, Coach Hillary had to remind parents that he expected sportsmanlike behavior from them as well. He even asked some parents to write letters of apology to umpires, referees, and opposing coaches. The parents did not have to be reminded twice.

Chris Carlson '85 said, "Coach taught us to challenge ourselves, to make the most of our abilities and to try our hardest. But there were far greater lessons that he taught

through his example that only now, 15 years after graduating, I am beginning to fully understand. Lessons on the importance of faith, self-sacrifice, personal control and balance. And I think the ultimate lesson we can learn from him, is that we all have a responsibility, in one way or another, to positively influence others."

"Coach Hillary's lessons have touched me almost daily in my life after CPS," said John DiPasquale '90. "Coach directly contributed to my discipline, work ethic, leadership, and positive spirit. I know that he is watching over me now with the same love and caring that he did back then as I was transitioning from a boy to a young man."

Wyatt Maxwell '00 echoed those sentiments. "He loved his players like a father, and he was almost as close as a father to many of us." But if you play dirty, watch out.

"I took a cheap shot on a quarterback as a junior, and drew a personal flag. He pulled me. You broke that rule and you rode the bench," Maxwell remembered. "He was not a win-at-all-costs type of guy. It was win with class, and be fair to your players,

and make sure they all get to play, and make sure they're O.K. "

and make sure they all get to play, and make sure they're O.K. "

"Coach represents for me how I want to affect people when I'm his age," Maxwell added. "His ability to inspire greatness, and bring out the best in us was awesome. Coach taught me how to be humble too. He never talked of himself. He never liked the attention; he wanted the attention on us."

"This is about the boys," he would say.

— David Stewart

selves and although Navy was bigger, faster, stronger, and more talented, SMU went out and won the game that evening, 32-28.

Coach Hillary's tale gave the Hawks the courage to give everything they had in their contest against Coppell. But it was a week

later at the annual pool party, that the full impact of this Hillary moment emerged. David Patrick recalled some of the boys were paging through Coach Bulger's SMU yearbooks. There in the 1964 edition, they found an account of that game against Navy. Sure enough,

just like Coach said, SMU had defeated the Naval Academy at the Cotton Bowl that year. He had, however, failed to mention that a tight end named Tom Hillary scored a crucial touchdown with just five seconds left in the first half.

Frequently, Tom Hillary's most powerful lessons came in the words he left unspoken. His players have learned this lesson well. In recounting the many great moments under Coach Hillary, they rarely focused on their play or the work of a specific player. Instead, they emphasized the players' desire, the feelings before and after, their love for making their coach proud.

"This may sound strange but I recall very little of what actually occurred on the field during our greatest victories," said Captain Jeremy Gregg '97, a captain of the '96 team. "For me, those memories are based much more on what was going on inside me than on what was around me. I relive the feeling of having something great drawn out of me, of being part of something much larger than a simple high school football game. Coach Hillary elevated the game from a simple athletic contest to a struggle for greatness."

Coach Hillary's own struggle for greatness took a surprising turn in the spring of 1998. At Mass one morning, the lifelong Methodist joined the communion line. Everyone was startled. Had he forgotten that only Catholics may receive Holy Communion? Hardly.

Coach and his wife Sheila, who was raised a Catholic in England, had been attending Methodist services in downtown Dallas. They had begun searching for something different and found it in St. Ann's Catholic Church in Coppell. They enrolled in catechism classes together and became very happy in their new faith.

Cistercian may have played a role in easing Coach's transition to Catholicism. Although Coach did not discuss personal matters, it was apparent that he enjoyed becoming more involved in the school's religious activities. He had always been quietly spiritual. Now he could enjoy sharing with the boys another aspect of their lives.



Photo by Peter Graham '01

NOSE-BLEED SECTION Improvements to the athletic complex include new bleachers that tower over the new track and field.

Athletic facilities upgraded according to Hillary's vision

As enrollment at the school grew, academic facilities were built accordingly. Coach Hillary understood that the athletic facilities would have to wait. During those many years, it was the Booster Club parents who used their own money and labor to help out. Martin Kahn, Booster Club president between '92-'95, said, "We always felt like we owed Coach Hillary so much, we wanted to help." This summer, just months after his death, the athletic facilities have been vastly improved as Coach Hillary envisioned and planned.

Improvements to the track and fields

- A new six-lane polyurethane track has been installed. It will be one of the fastest among area private schools.
- The varsity field has been recrowned, resodded, and re-irrigated.
- The baseball field has been brought up to par with other schools through improved drainage, irrigation, and cemented dug outs.
- A practice field has been added behind the baseball field.

Improvements to the bleachers, press box, and entry area

- Seating at the football field has been nearly tripled and dramatically improved. The new bleachers conform to ADA standards, offering ramps and aisles to make seats user-friendly.
- The entry to the field has been upgraded. The bridge over the creek has been rebuilt, a concrete entry way has been extended all the way to the bleachers, and landscaping has been installed.
- A new 24-foot-wide press box provides ample room for coaches from both teams as well as the P.A. announcers. It also offers easy access to the roof for filming.
- The concession stand has been refurbished, A/C has been installed, and the restrooms improved.

A hearty thanks is due to all those who helped make these improvements possible, especially Coach Hillary.

— David Stewart

“I BELIEVE THIS YEAR was very fulfilling for Tom at work and at home,” said Sheila Hillary. “He was very content. He was comfortable with the program, his coaching staff, he felt very happy with the way his football team had performed for the past five years. And he was very happy at home.”

“He even began to understand just how much his step-children adored him,” she said. “We were very happy in our faith. His spiritual life was really wonderful.”

At Cistercian, years of hard work were paying dividends. The school’s reputation in athletics began approaching its lofty record in academics. “You hear it all the time,” said Steve

McCarthy, Cistercian’s new varsity football coach. “Cistercian teams play with class.”

That reputation was validated when Coach Hillary was named one of the two head coaches for the first annual DFW All-Star Classic (see box, page 9). “He never talked about it,” said Wyatt Maxwell, “but it must have made him happy.”

It also would have made him happy had he been able to listen in as Fr. Peter discussed the school’s athletic programs. Fr. Peter told prospective Form I parents in January, “Referees and parents from opposing teams regularly praise the sportsmanship of Cistercian athletes under Coach Hillary.” He added that Hillary’s teams play with class. “‘Class’ means playing smart, play-

ing tough, and playing with exemplary sportsmanship. Coach Hillary does not tolerate cursing or fighting from his players.”

The program had come a long way in his 16 years. That much struck David Patrick, now an actor in Los Angeles, on a visit to the school this past September.

“The weight room, locker rooms, and other facilities were amazing,” he said. “but the boys impressed me the most. They showed so much heart and class in their play and the way they carried themselves. While watching the game tapes they demonstrated more knowledge of the game than many of my teammates and I had. It was clear that what Coach Hillary had started to build while I was there had grown into

His commitment to the boys created lasting relationships

“He couldn’t pick out one special kid over the years,” said Mrs. Hillary. “He loved them all. We received so many cards at Christmas and he treasured them all.”

These cards were a testament to the years of love and caring he invested in Cistercian boys.

“After each game,” Jack Pritchett, a captain of the 1992 team recalled, “win or lose, he would walk around to every single player individually in the locker room and talk to them about the game, and it might just have been to say, ‘Hey, we’ll get ‘em next time.’”

Losses could be devastating and yet proud moments. “To the day I die, I will never forget our game against Greenhill my junior year [1986],” said Matt Hawkins. “We dominated the larger Greenhill team for the entire game. On the last play of the game as the clock ticked to 0, Greenhill completed a ‘Hail Mary’ pass and snatched the victory from us. We were really hurting. We had come so close to pulling off a monumental upset. In the gym after the game, Coach Hillary said he had never seen a game

played so well with so much heart. He said he would never forget it, and as we all held back tears, we knew he meant it. What an honor!”

“A great memory of Coach was when he took the seniors to dinner, just him and us before our last game,” remembered Wyatt Maxwell. “He talked with us and you felt like you were the coolest guy in the world, sitting there getting to talk with him. That was one of the

greatest things. He just wanted to take us out, tell us thanks for what we had given him and we thanked him for all that he gave us.”

David Patrick and Matt Walter, both Class of 1986, came back to a game in 1993. “He brought us both into the locker room and introduced us to the team,” Patrick recalled. “It was clear where his heart was when he remembered details from our playing days that many coaches would forget. He always cared.”

Each season, the number of phone calls and reunions grew. In August, Coach Hillary was inundated with calls from graduates wanting to catch up, mull over the team’s prospects, and shoot the bull. Some would take him to lunch or bring a hamburger over to the school if he was too busy. One way or another, they wanted to share some time with the man. He would greet them with huge hand-

shakes and hugs. He still loved them. That was plain.
— David Stewart



Photo by Mark Cochran '97

HELPING HAND Coach Hillary made no secret of his love for his players. Here he helps Dee Walker '97 off the field during the 1995 season.

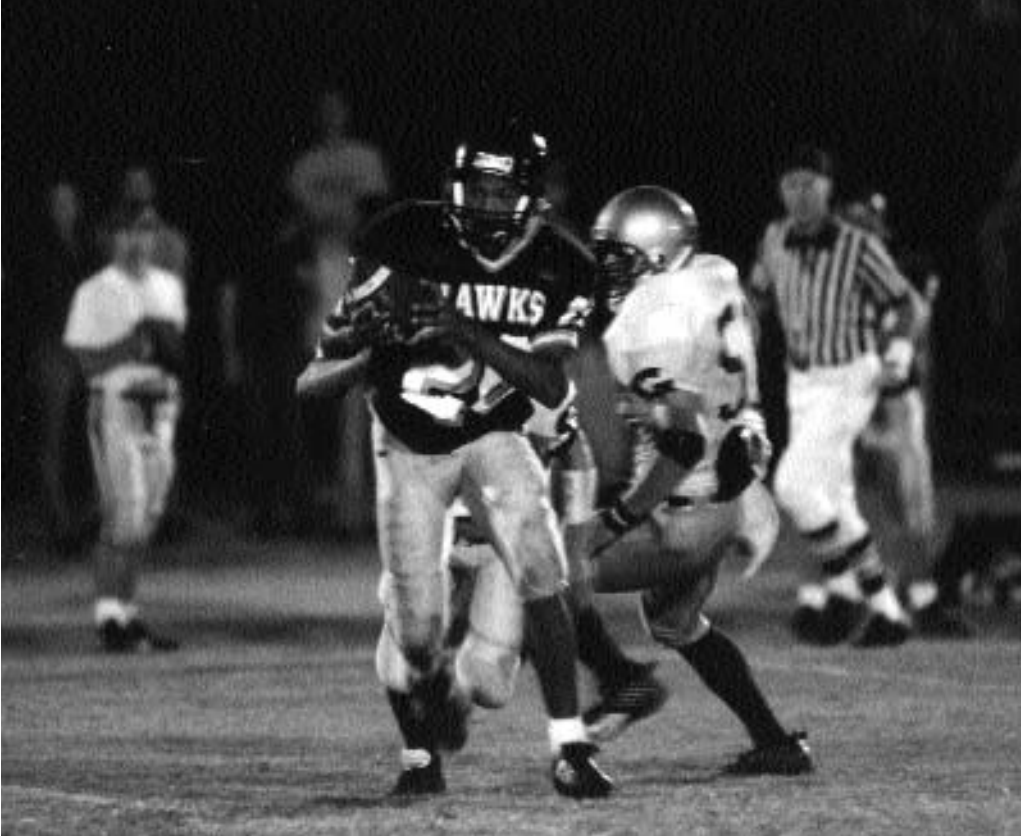


Photo courtesy of Douglas Fejer

HILLARY HIGHLIGHT David Aird took this pass and raced into the end zone with two minutes to play to seal a 20-17 win over Greenhill, October 8, 1999. Coach Hillary called it one of Cistercian’s most memorable victories.

A record of gallant victories

Coach Hillary crafted football teams that competed with heart and class. According to *PigskinPrep*, Cistercian ranked 23rd among all 11-man football schools in Texas in winning percentage during the 1990s. CPS ranked 20th in total victories during the same period. Here’s a look at each season and some of the memorable games.

Season	Record	Memorable game
1984	6-4	First SPC playoff game, a 10-0 win over St. Stephens
1985	7-3	Come-from-behind win over Muenster, 40-21
1986	6-4	22-17 loss to Greenhill on game’s last play
1987	7-2-1	Runaway victory over T.M.I., 52-8
1988	5-5	28-7 win over Greenhill to win MISC championship
1989	2-8	Season-ending 19-6 win over T.M.I.
1990	5-5	First plane trip and a 20-14 win over Holland Hall
1991	7-3	Win over Trinity Valley for MISC championship, 24-15
1992	9-2	21-13 win over Kincaid, first over a Houston school
1993	4-6	Victory over Fort Worth Country Day, 23-20
1994	6-4	Win over heavily favored Trinity Valley, 42-26
1995	6-2-1	10-8 win over St. Mark’s for SPC Div. II Championship
1996	5-4	Beat FWCD 28-14 for MISC and SPC Championship
1997	5-4	Lopsided win over Houston Episcopal, 31-7
1998	7-3	Down 21-0 at half, Hawks beat Trinity Valley, 28-21
1999	6-4	Victory over heavily favored Greenhill, 20-17

Coach Hillary’s Cistercian varsity football teams were 93-65-2.

something very special.”

That something special was showcased on October 8, 1999, in a contest against crosstown rival Greenhill. Never had the Hornets appeared more invincible. Undefeated and ranked number three among the area’s private school teams, Greenhill ran a no-huddle offense that was thrashing opponents. The Hornet quarterback told the *Morning News*, “I really don’t think we can be stopped.” The Hawks limped into the match with just one win under their belt against three losses.

“Of the four years I played for Coach,” Wyatt Maxwell said, “that week before Greenhill was the hardest week of practice ever.”

“Coach told us it would be the toughest game we would play, and he told us the odds weren’t in our favor,” remembered Maxwell. “But he told us if we played with heart, if we played every minute, all out, leaving it all out on the field, the best game of our lives, we could win. He said they were good, but he also said they were beatable. He was right on both accounts.”

As the tide began to turn and the Hawks grounded the Hornets’ high-flying attack, frustration began to set in on the far sideline. It was a different story on the Cistercian side, even as the outcome still hung in the balance.

“You looked at our sideline,” Maxwell said, “and you saw a man who you took pride in. He was intimidating, but silently so; he kept his cool.” With just two minutes to go, the Hawks scored to pull off an unlikely 20-17 win.

“I cannot describe the incredible feeling. We cried, Coach cried, our fans and parents cried. Coach told us he doesn’t rank games but he said that this game was one of the best, if not the best. It was up in the air, literally until the last second, and everyone, me, my buds, my dad, and coaches still get goose bumps.

“And Coach told us to enjoy it. When we sang our [victory] song that night in the locker room, with Coach there, it was the pinnacle of good times. We sang so loud, so proud that we sang it twice.

“Coach was so happy.”

David Stewart can be reached at david@stewartpublications.com

CISTERCIAN CALENDAR

September

- 2 MS Black/White Scrimmage
- 4 Labor Day - No Classes
- 8 New Athletic Facilities Celebrated
- 27 MS/US Open House

October

- 9 Columbus Day - No Classes
- 20 End of Quarter - Noon Dismissal
- 27 Homecoming

November

- 4 Middle School Drama
- 5 Middle School Drama
- 6 Parent/Teacher Conferences -No School

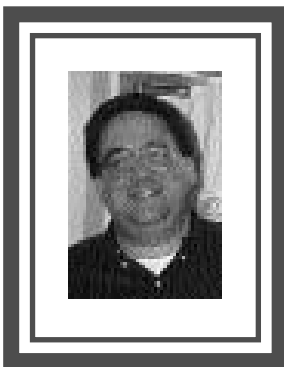
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In Memoriam



BRYAN STONE '79

Bryan Stone '79, 39, attorney, died on August 11, 2000. He was an Eagle Scout and earned his undergraduate and law degrees from Southern Methodist University. Bryan's friends and loved ones will miss his affectionate greetings and sincere smile, but they will never forget his deep voice or his boisterous laugh, which filled their homes with happiness and warmth. He was remarkably good-natured, always playing along with

razed by his companions. Gregarious, Bryan easily made new friends. Generous, he often gave unexpected gifts. Selfless, he invariably put the needs of friends and loved ones ahead of his own, lifting their spirits with his wise counsel and words of encouragement. Loving and devoted, he cherished his relationship with Kimberly, his wife and best friend. Together, Bryan and Kimberly charmed their friends with their unique and clever repartee. Bryan shared his beautiful baritone voice by singing in the church choir and, most recently, at the wedding of a close friend, where by popular demand he delighted guests with an impromptu rendition of

Frank Sinatra's "Fly Me to the Moon." He had an encyclopedic knowledge of World War II and military aircraft and enjoyed collection aviation art, books, and memorabilia. He was passionate about Shakespeare, and when the occasion called for it, could always quote the Bard. For Bryan, the perfect evening was music, movies, dinner, and conversation with his friends, who will deeply miss him. He is survived by his wife of 11 years, Kimberly Basden Stone, his parents Evelyn and Hilliard Stone; his brother Michael Stone; sister-in-law Virginia Ayoub Stone and nephew and godson Matthew; his brother Richard Stone; his mother and father-in-law Jo Ann and Ed Basden; and numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins.

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