In Memoriam

ALUMNI

Esther Webster Sweet ’36N, January 2016
William H. Form ’38, ’40 (MA), October 2015
Elizabeth Wallace Rapp ’38, ’39N, April 2014
Miriam Weltman Davis ’40N, December 2015
Margaret Darcy Heyer ’40, January 2016
Thomas Pryor ’40, December 2015
Olive Fosburg Reardon ’40E, November 2015
Norma Holmes Auchter ’42E, ’44E (MM), ’77E (DMA), December 2015
Peggy Davis Gair ’43, December 2015
Shirley Shoop Fisher ’43, November 2015
Norma Holmes Auchter ’42E, ’44E (MM), ’77E (DMA), December 2015
Peggy Davis Gair ’43, December 2015
Shirley Shoop Fisher ’43, November 2015
Jessie Dyott Godsey ’43, January 2016
Louise Boswell Atwood ’44, August 2015
Robert W. Coon ’44M (MD), December 2015
John G. Hamilton ’44, ’46M (MD), ’53M (Res), December 2015
Margaret Ramsey Keck ’45, January 2016
Jeanette Eyler Scrable ’45E, December 2015
Anne Houlihan Keefe ’46, December 2015
Pearl Dunn Klionsky ’46, December 2015
Ella Vosburg Cripps ’47E, March 2015
Elaine Evans Osseck ’47E, January 2016
Edwin J. Spurgiesz ’47, December 2015
Paul L. Abel ’48E, ’50E (MM), January 2016
Helen Furr Man Hackshaw ’48, January 2016
Gertrude Melville Hart ’48, January 2016
Emma Black King ’48E (MA), January 2016
Norma A. Levin ’48, November 2015
George P. Whitfield ’48E, ’50E (MM), November 2015
Dorothy Dobmeier Berdan ’49N, December 2015
Dantant H. Clayton ’49E, January 2016
James L. Harrington ’49M (MD), ’50M (Res), November 2015
Sofia Dandreano Korn ’49, December 2015
Carl F. Leavens ’49, December 2015

TRIBUTE

Thomas Pryor ’40: A Step-Grandparent and Alumnus who Embodied Meliorea

It was a typical wintery night in Rochester—bone-chillingly cold, and I was finishing up a game of squash when I remembered my step-grandfather, Tom Pryor ’40, telling me about a plaque with his name on it somewhere in the Goergen Athletic Center. I had been a Rochester student and member of the club squash team for nearly three years and had never noticed it. When I found it, it would be the first and last time I would be able to see his plaque before his death last December.

Tom was born and raised in Rochester, and after graduating from the University, went on to earn an MBA from Harvard. He always told me that he credited Rochester for not only offering him an exceptional education, but also building him up to be the man he would become in his professional career and personal life. As an alumnus, he felt obligated to give back to the school. He served on the Trustees’ Council, and contributed toward the development of the Goergen Athletic Center.

He was not only a devoted alumnus; he was also a lovable, kind-hearted step-grandfather. As a kid, my family and I would travel down to Florida at least once a year to visit him and my biological grandmother in Key Biscayne. For hours, I would sit down and listen to Tom’s stories of his life both in and out of college. Even as a hyperactive kid, I would never have trouble sitting down with Tom to listen to his life’s experiences. He had many words of wisdom that he shared with me. There was one piece of advice that stuck with me the most: “Do the right thing if it fulfills yourself and feels like the right thing to do, not because you want to be acknowledged for it, or to impress others.”

Years later, I realize that Tom embodied Meliorea—“Ever Better.” He gave back because he felt like it was the right thing to do. He didn’t care about being acknowledged for his contributions to the University, although he was very appreciative of it.

Every time I pass his plaque on the squash courts, I think about his words of wisdom, the lives that he touched, and the legacy he left behind for me to continue. I’ll love him always.

———ERIK CHIODO ’17

Hugh D. Outterson ’49, January 2016
Richard B. Tobin ’49M (MD), December 2015
Russell D. Johnson ’50, August 2015
Robert B. Kelley ’50, December 2015
Gardner N. Mouton ’50M (MD), December 2015
Morris E. Richardson ’50, December 2015
Diane Grallie Strassburger ’50E, January 2016
Francis A. Sullivan ’50, December 2015
Mary Louise Craig ’51, November 2015
Jean Armstrong Hendrickson ’51, August 2014
Russell J. Redman ’51, December 2015
Edwin E. Gordon ’52E, ’53E (MM), December 2015
Theodore J. Hodges ’52E, September 2015
William H. Jones ’52, December 2015
Charles J. Amorese ’53, December 2015
Joan Armff Morgan ’53, ’54N, December 2015
Donald C. Nickason ’53, December 2015
Mary Fricker Tyndall ’53, January 2016
Harold N. Langlitz ’54 (Mas), November 2015
J. Robert Yoder ’54M (MD), December 2015
Beverly Sparks Dick ’55E, January 2016
Sallyann Reed Rice ’55N, ’58, January 2016
Letha Mae Brown Ridley ’55 (Mas), December 2015
C. Richard Van Niel ’55, January 2016
TRIBUTE

Alice Denham ’50 (MA): A Charismatic Fixture of Literary New York

“I remembered when the UNC English Department helped me get a graduate scholarship at the University of Rochester,” Alice Denham ’50 (MA) wrote in her 2006 autobiography, Sleeping with Bad Boys. “Why not here at Chapel Hill?” she asked her favorite professor. “Because this college discriminates against women,” he allegedly replied.

Denham, who died in January at the age of 89, fulfilled many roles during her career. She’s best known as a writer and a model who frequented the literary salons as well as the bedrooms of New York’s literary elite throughout the 1950s.

She was also a gifted student of literature, both at North Carolina, where she graduated Phi Beta Kappa, and at Rochester, where she completed a master’s thesis—a copy of which sits in the stacks of Rush Rhees Library—entitled “T. S. Eliot: His Theory and Practice of Poetic Drama.”

Denham recalled that she never had a woman professor at Chapel Hill. There weren’t many in the 1940s. At Rochester, she took courses with Bernard Schilling, George Curtiss, Wilbur Dunkel, and Kathrine Koller—not just a woman professor, but the chair of the English department.

Among the courses Denham completed were The History of Ideas (taught by Schilling); The English Novel (taught by Curtiss); and a course in 18th-century literature, also taught by Schilling, which she would have attended along with undergraduates in the honors program. She was granted her master’s degree on June 12, 1950, at the University’s Centennial Commencement.

Unlike prominent writers Galway Kinnell ’49 (MA) and Shirley Jackson (who was enrolled as an undergraduate from 1934 to 1936, but did not complete her degree), Denham does not appear to have had any writing published in the student literary journals. Her alumna file is slim. It includes an Alumni Office questionnaire in which she reports her August 1950 marriage to Samuel Lee Kutz ’50, and their subsequent divorce, granted 16 months later.

In January 1955, Denham wrote to Rochester Review with an item to be included in Class Notes: her short story “The Deal” had been published in Discovery #5. It was the same story that would be reprinted in the July 1956 issue of Playboy, in which she was also the centerfold. A newspaper clipping describes her Playboy appearance—“... Alice got a package deal for her pictures and her story”—and includes her comment: “The fact that they would pay more for some sexy pictures than for their featured story just about sets the tone of the magazine.”

She concluded her letter to Review by noting, “The REVIEW is becoming more interesting all the time!”

To an alumna who would go on to publish poetry and novels, and to serve as a founding member of the National Organization of Women, it seems fitting to return the compliment: throughout her long life, Alice Denham became more interesting all the time. ☔

—MELISSA MEAD

Mead is the John M. and Barbara Kell University Archivist and Rochester Collections Librarian.