

## Princeton University Class of 1966

### Memorials and Memories

#### George H. Largay II (1944 – 2013)

George died in his Woodbury, Connecticut, home on May 28 after an extended illness.

At the Canterbury School George edited the school newspaper and was a standout member of the football, hockey, and track teams. At Princeton he played rugby and 150-pound football. He belonged to Cottage Club and served as its vice president. He majored in history.

After Princeton, George earned an MBA from Stanford, where he roomed with classmates John Scully, Bill Reed, George Weiksner, and Terry Eakin. He then worked in the family business, eventually selling it to Illinois Tool Works. In 1990 he took a position with classmate Jon Dawson's securities firm.

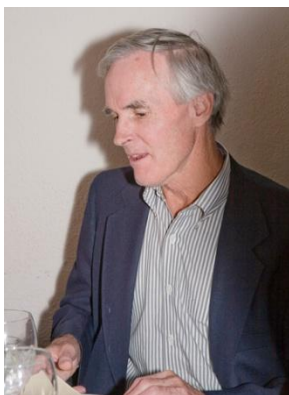
Ever loyal to Princeton, George never missed a major Reunion and was a regular at Class meetings. He hosted a Class mini-Reunion on Cape Cod. Fiercely competitive in athletics (and everything else), he took on all challengers in skiing, hockey, golf, fishing, and sailing. He was an instrument-rated pilot and an avid member of Wianno Yacht Club.

George leaves a large and loving family, including wife Sheila, daughters Blaire, Erin, and Galen, and son Bryan. The Class extends its deepest sympathy to them. We share their sorrow.

*Below, please see "[Reflections on Fifty Years of Friendship](#)" by John Dawson, [Thoughts on George's Life](#) presented at his funeral services by Terry Eakin and John Valiante, and [Memories from John Slidell](#).*

#### Reflections on Fifty Years of Friendship

By Jon Dawson



It is almost impossible to think of George without some fond memories of our athletic endeavors. In fact my first Princeton memory of George was watching him interfere with our goalie. I of course hurtled over the boards and confronted him. What ensued was not exactly a NHL style brawl ( much less the record NHL brawl in Hartford, a radio replay of which George gleefully played before the broom ball games later in life at the Taft rink ). However, the pushing, shoving and words were pretty unusual for intramural eating club competition. On to the numerous touch football games in Palo Alto where George was clearly the best player. For some unknown reason, our friends thought that I was the second best player, a far second at that, so we never played on the same team. Of course George always thought that he should get the first draft choice. The picture below is a classic: an athletic young man soaring high above the crowd to intercept yet another one of my passes. I point out to you that only one player is wearing cleats as opposed

everyman sneakers. I also point out that the normally mild mannered Rick Jones has turned into a touch football beast under George's captaincy and is clearly pushing the intended receiver. George always came ready to play and to win.



The next classic came in Osterville early on a Sunday evening when George organized yet another competition: Whiffle Ball on the lawn of the big house. This time we were on the same team. George was pitching to a team loaded with talented and super competitive Largays. I think that it was Tim that hit a towering drive. I raced toward the rose bushes and pulled up short as the ball landed three feet into them. George was not very understanding when I explained that I was perfectly willing to crash into the rose bushes, but the seawall that they were covering looked rather immovable.

The most recent memories are of the Princeton Reunion matches starting in 1966 against Weiksner and Eakin. True to form George negotiated for me the highest handicap, a measly 29 strokes. Not only that but he got them to agree that the handicaps would be frozen for all future matches. We eked out a victory that first one. Then in 2001 George appeared in my office and told me I had to get better. He had arranged that we would secretly attend the Dave Pelz short game school in late April. But then, leaving nothing to chance, again secretly he arranged for us to travel to play a practice round with the Princeton varsity golf coach. We won that year's match on the 11<sup>th</sup> hole after sinking four long puts early in the round. Talk about coming ready to play and to win.

As we prepared on the day before our third match in 2006, the news arrived that Terry was undergoing immediate bypass surgery. Not to be deterred, George recruited Mary Slidell to play with us. We won the net best ball for the whole tournament of all reunion classes. George was ecstatic. Upon learning that Terry had come through surgery in fine shape, we called to tell him of our victory without him and informed him that we were very sad that he had defaulted by not showing up. I will always remember that smile as he was talking to Terry. It was classic George.

During the period 2001 to late 2007, we worked together. He was an unbelievable investment mind, especially considering that he had no formal training. He contributed to our strong results with ideas in

financial stocks, Chinese and Russian companies when no one was thinking that way, and a host of other special situations. His classic in the late summer of 2007 was the sell recommendation of AIG with the comment, “they are in everything that could get them into trouble.” As important, he was a real credit to the reputation of the firm. He was courteous and gentlemanly to all, but would surprise the brokerage community and managements with how well prepared he was and how he went to the heart of the issues and would not suffer platitudes as substitute answers for his penetrating questions. As I have told people in the industry of his death, the universal reply has been what a good guy and true gentleman he was.

It is impossible to put into words what this friendship meant to me and many others over all the years. His presence made every special occasion so much better: weddings, birthdays, reunions, Stancos. He always showed up. He enriched our lives with humor, fun, honesty and incredible loyalty. He was a gift.



### **NOTES FROM THE LARGAY PRESERVE—June 3rd, 2013**

Terry Eakin and John Valiante shared their thoughts on George Largay's life during funeral services at the lakeside Largay Preserve on June 3rd in Middlebury, CT. Although Terry knew George at Princeton, the close friendship John and Terry enjoyed with George began in September 1966 at Stanford Business School.

#### **Not Just an Athlete**

John: Sports are often considered a metaphor for life...some would say sports were George's life given his talent and passion for competition. George certainly was a graceful athlete in all of the many sports he played—football, hockey, sailing, tennis, golf, fishing among others. But, George was not just an athlete...he had many interests all pursued with the same great passion he had for sports.

His family was always at the top of the list; business not far behind; his interest in art, specifically photography and cinematography, became a new pursuit due no doubt to the numerous wedding and grandkids' photo opps in the offing; music, especially the many trips with the Weiksners to the Met for operas, or even the song he penned for Dawson's 65th—to the tune of Merle Haggard's Okie from Muskogee; environmental causes also became a focus of his intense interest...George spent hours

describing his work to clean up the destructive "oyster bags" in Osterville...if I see one more "oyster bag" photo, I'll....

### **Kiley Ski House**

My earliest memories of time with George and Sheila derive from my numerous visits to the Kiley ski house in Warren, VT, near Sugarbush. Accompanied by weekend dates, or occasionally Terry, I took great liberty with the open invitation that George and Sheila offered. Mr. Kiley would often give me the "not you again look" but I could never resist the chance to ski with George.

We took turns timing each other skiing Stein's Run. We carried bamboo slalom poles borrowed" from the mountain over to Sunrise where we would ski gates and hike to the top of the course, looping till the mountain closed. George always won more than his share of our races, which of course had the unintended effect of only making me more determined to win...and return!

### **Small Cup Begins**

Terry: Besides skiing in Vermont, the Eakins, Largays and Valiantes had an annual tradition of skiing together, an occasion presumptuously dubbed the Winter Olympics—we were legends in our own minds! Beginning in 1979 when we were 35 years old, we celebrated 21 Winter Olympics together in the subsequent 28 years. Virtually every Winter Olympics featured the obligatory Nastar event and George's version of the Biathlon—racing down a slope we would stop to shoot sour balls with a sling shot at pizza-pie-plate-targets tacked to trees or poles. The evenings were spent competing in infamous lounge lizard events like darts and nerf ball, and of course the Opening and Closing ceremonies celebrating the gathering of athletes. At the initial Winter Olympics in Sun Valley, Idaho we had a pool near the condo and unfortunately George had left his swimsuit and supporter at home. Stopping in Ketchum to buy replacements, it seems the supporter selection was limited and only one size was available— small! Thus, the Winter Olympics trophy became the Small Cup in honor of George's purchase. The Small Cup Trophy that I have here this morning was ceremoniously awarded to the winning athlete at each Winter Olympic closing ceremony, and George won his share of the competitions.

### **Cup Injuries Mount**

Over the years we skied many venues—Alta, Jackson Hole, Aspen, Deer Valley, St. Anton, Sun Valley to name a few. One early memorable Winter Games took place in Aspen. The Jon Dawson's had joined us for this competition at which George introduced a new event—the Luge. As most experienced lugers know, course preparation is paramount, so we set about with shovels building a long course with many twists and sharp turns in the sun-softened snow. As the sun began to set and the lugers began their second runs, the by-now-heavily-rutted course iced up considerably giving lugers pause. With George threatening DSQs for failure to complete two runs, the lugers sucked it up and made it across the finish line. Jon Dawson's worker comp claim for back complications is still pending in Colorado. John: In the early 1980's we held the games in Jackson Hole. This Winter Olympics introduced a demanding Super Nastar GS on a course used for US Ski Team training. During our second runs on the icy course, Terry fell on his second run only three gates from the finish and broke his leg, creating great pain and worse—disqualification. The icy conditions and deep ruts were obviously a key factor in Terry's accident, though I know George is up there right now saying, "No, Terry, bad technique!"

With Terry in St. John's Medical Center, George determined that the final event—nerf ball foul shooting—had to be held bedside since the event was critical to determine the Small Cup winner. With no place to hang the nerf hoop in the sterile room, George and Maggie went to Ace Hardware looking for a way to hang the hoop. They came back with a life size cardboard cutout of Pat Summerall—former Giant placekicker and Ace spokesperson—upon which to hang the hoop. With nurses agog, George insisted we all shoot our nerf shots from exactly the same distance—no slack for Terry even though he was in a hospital bed! Terry proceeded to nail the event from his bed, five-for-five shots with nothing but net, taking the Small Cup away from George despite his Nastar DSQ.

### **Playing by the Rules**

Terry: George was always our Commissioner and organizer in these events and took the rules seriously. At one Winter Olympics the dart competition ended in a tie for second place. But as the athletes retired to their rooms believing the gold award in darts had been determined, George reviewed the standings and realized that the actual second place winner was critical in determining the ultimate Small Cup winner. Not to be denied, George banged on doors and literally pulled Lindsay Eakin from her shower—soaking wet and wearing only a shower cap and towel into a heated dart-off completion! It took Lindsay ten Winter Olympics to forgive George for that.

### **With a Great Heart**

John: My time together with George was not always spent competing. He was equally comfortable coaching, refereeing and just watching athletes in action. Maggie and I would annually catch up with our son Chris at Lake Placid where his alma mater Clarkson played in the ECAC Hockey Tournament. George joined us one year for this hockey intense weekend of collegiate hockey where his alma mater often enjoyed success. Not content to be confined to hockey, George took Maggie and me to ski Whiteface and take the tourist trip down the Olympic bobsled run. But his interest in seeing our son and us was the measure of his friendship. During another visit to the east, George knew I loved golf and had always wanted to play the Country Club of Waterbury—a wonderful Donald Ross classic. Unfortunately, he was still recovering from a torn Achilles tendon and he was unable to play. Nevertheless, he rode the entire way in the cart with me while I played the course—in pouring rain! George was a great friend with a big heart...I will miss him. But, I will not miss the emphatic reminders of Princeton victories over the Bulldogs, though rare.

### **Small Cup Retired**

Terry: But it was the Winter Olympics and our Small Cup competition that was the vehicle the Largays, Valiantes and Eakins used to be sure we found time each year to enjoy another vacation together and to catch up with what was happening in our lives. George was our self-appointed Commissioner and organized our fun. Without George laughing and competing with us in the future, the Small Cup will now be retired and John and I will place it in his casket today. George, you were our organizer and the center of our competition and you have earned to permanently retain the Small Cup. You were a great friend to us—and many others—and we will miss you.

## Memories from John Slidell – June 23, 2013

Reading Terry and John's remembrances of George, rekindled memories of some other Largay "sporting events" from when we roomed together sophomore year in Campbell. Its courtyard was one of our playgrounds, and we enjoyed several somewhat unique games there.

One was our version of "Tinkers to Evers to Chance" (the old baseball double play combo). Billy Koplovitz, George and I spent hours (when we probably should have been studying) taking turns hitting grounders to each other with a broomstick and old tennis ball. The object was to execute the best "mythical" DP, and obviously George was the smoothest and most graceful at it, although Billy had been a great second baseman in high school.

With others, we held croquet matches in the courtyard. While the ultimate goal was the normal one, to get through all the wickets first, the best part was sending an opponent's ball into one of the dorm entries. This usually meant down the stairs to the bathrooms resulting in a loss of a couple of turns. However the ultimate thrill was to send someone's ball down the Blair Arch steps (loss of five turns as I recall)! I still remember George's frustrated look when that happened to him and he had to stand around and watch, while the rest of us continued to play through wickets to win the game.

Perhaps most unique was a game George created. He would ride a bike in front of us (maybe ten yards away) and Billy and I would throw footballs at him trying to knock him off the bike! We had such little luck knocking him down, we switched to throwing the football at the bike's front wheel, trying to jam the nose of the ball in between the spokes so it would stop abruptly and throw him off the bike. George responded to this strategy by slamming on the bike's brakes just as we threw, so we would lead him too much. After we adjusted to that he developed a new dodging technique where he would quickly turn the front wheel of the bike at a 90 degree angle (so the ball would miss it) then somehow manage to turn it back in time to avoid crashing!

I enjoyed your stories about George, so wanted to share these with all of you.