



Mr. Ross H. Dabney

June 10, 1934 - November 1, 2014

Easton:

Ross Hutcheson Dabney, of Miles River Neck, Talbot County Maryland, died peacefully on November 1, 2014, in Easton, Maryland. He was born in Dallas, Texas to Lewis Meriwether Dabney and Crystal Ross Dabney in 1934.

He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Charlotte Gmelin Dabney, his daughters Susan Dabney, of Easton, Maryland, Barbara Hohenlohe, of Laurach, Germany, Joan Clickner, of Charlottesville, Virginia, Dr. Frances Faro, of Denver, Colorado, and twelve grandchildren. His brother, Lewis M. Dabney III, also resides at the family farm on Miles River Neck.

Ross Dabney was summa cum laude at Princeton University ('55), and earned a Ph.D in English Literature from Harvard University. He taught as a college professor at Smith College, University of Virginia, Mount Holyoke College, and Sweet Briar College, retiring in 1998. He published a critical work on the novels of Charles Dickens. He sailed log canoes for thirty years, and enjoyed the outdoors with his dogs, but also played the classical guitar, spoke several languages, and read prodigiously.

In lieu of flowers, the family would prefer a donation to the Chesapeake Log Sailing Canoe Association, c/o MRYC, P.O.B. 158, St. Michaels, MD 21663.

Cemetery

Private

Comments



“ I am showing up rather late to share my appreciation of Mr. Dabney who gave to me a great love for literature, a delight and understanding of eccentricity--his black lab would lie under the table while Mr. Dabney recited L. Carroll's "The Jabberwocky" with his wonderful distinctive voice--for the life of those who will live in Church towers (that was where his office was in my SB days), for making one's quite peculiar and loved life. He inspires me today, more than thirty years after I knew him. He taught me Poe and Hawthorne and delivered Chaucer to me for always in the wonderful gutturals of Middle English. He was so talented, as a teacher, a man who knew how to live a life--I would run across him occasionally chopping kindling and gathering firewood in the Sweet Briar woods with his dog, Lucy,--and a Fool in its highest sense celebrating the gifts and surprises his made life gave him: playing renaissance music in the chapel, riding his bike across the road to his college, playing a part in the Faculty play. He so belonged to the life of the university when College held, for anyone who wanted the ideal of Cardinal Newman, the hope of the renaissance man (read here Human), the delight that is literature and the mysterious that are the woods. My gratitude to his family and his colleagues for helping to create a space in which I could know this extraordinary man. Chris, SBC, 1983, English major.

Christina Rubino - June 06, 2018 at 09:14 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Karen McGoldrick - November 07, 2014 at 07:12 PM



“ He changed our lives...he was our teacher...we loved him.

Karen - November 07, 2014 at 07:13 PM



“ We were fortunate to know him and learn from him at Sweet Briar College.

Beverley - November 08, 2014 at 02:34 PM



“ A serious scholar, Ross Dabney also had a great wit and sense of fun, engaging his Sweet Briar students in edifying banter while also encouraging their academic reflection on the works of Thackery, Dickens, Yeats and Pound.

His classes opened minds. I am not surprised at all to learn of his love of water and wood log canoeing. I came to Sweet Briar from a land-locked plains state and was having trouble fully grasping the mysteries of the tide and the power of an ocean as described in a poetry class: I simply had never seen the ocean. Mr. Dabney stopped the discussion right there and then, and implored SOMEone in the class to TAKE ME TO THE BEACH the following weekend. A hand was raised, discussion continued, and I got to go on the road trip of a lifetime. Remember when YOU felt the ocean for the first time?

I also have fond memories of the dinner parties he would host for his Spring classes. I remember a linen-draped table in the front yard of the lovely Dabney home, candles, conversation, peach wine and dancing daughters entertaining our group. It is one of my favorite memories of my time at SBC in the late 1970's. I am grateful for my fond memories of Ross Dabney, his family, and the classes I had with him (and Tillman, his beloved retriever.)

Amy Campbell Lamphere - November 08, 2014 at 06:25 PM



“ Ross' wit and trenchant humor and his generosity in sharing his great wisdom enriched my years at Sweet Briar and truly inspired generations of Sweet Briar women.

John Jaffe - November 08, 2014 at 08:54 PM



“ Ross was a great colleague and a good friend. He fancied himself a European style college Don and was forever quoting English, German, and Latin poets. He liked to provoke people, to see what they really stood for. And he respected those who could justify their convictions. We fought all the time, but we also could exchange witicisms at the drop of a hat. We will miss you, Ross. Life at SBC was a lot more interesting when you were here.

John Goulde - November 10, 2014 at 06:36 AM



“ Uncle Ross: I could write a book chronicling all of my fond memories of you both in and out of the classroom. You were a gentleman and a scholar, and yet you were also always first in line to pull off a prank--and we sure pulled off some doozies back in the day! I learned about literature and life from you, and I still to this day apply what I learned about teaching from you to my own students. You were larger than life, and you still loom large in my life.

Andie Yellott - November 14, 2014 at 10:44 AM



“ Ross Dabney was a unique individual. I have many fond memories of evenings spent with him spent over drinks, at carnival parties in the Dabney household, and at monthly poker games with our poker group. Ross always loved to enter a lively discussion, had an interesting sense of humor and a dog who was usually by his side. His presence on the campus contributed much to making Sweet Briar such an interesting place.

Ronald Horwege - November 15, 2014 at 10:46 PM



“ It is a joy to read what everyone wrote about my father, and of course Tilghman, our half chesapeake, half golden retriever. My father also loved music, and played Renaissance music on the lute in the Collegium Musicam, and at home, where he had his daughters sing parts- not as wonderfully, or course, as Mary Jane Oliver.

Susan Dabney - February 02, 2015 at 10:36 PM



“ I would say that to know Mr. Dabney was to love him, but Lord knows he rubbed some people the wrong way. Of course, they were all stupid people with no taste.

One of the things I remember most about Mr. Dabney was his respect for women. Not everyone at SBC genuinely liked and respected women. Mr Dabney did. Perhaps it was because he loved his daughters and wife so much. He always made ruthless fun of any man he didn't care for who was dating one of his daughters.

Mr. Dabney was always right. He liked to remember that his mother used to say "Ross is always right" and he was. I remember Mrs. Dabney once said ' You know you're right, but he still wins the argument'. So true. I always felt that he could beat you in an argument then take the opposite opinion and beat you again.

Mr. Dabney had high standards. I went sailing with him a few times. I was completely hopeless at it. He'd order me about and get increasingly angry when I couldn't perform up to par. I always felt bad for him at those times. I could see that he knew I wasn't capable and he didn't want to be hard on me, but he just couldn't stop himself.

I suppose it's trite to say that the world was a better place with Ross H. Dabney in it. That doesn't make it any less true.

Patricia Winograd - July 22, 2015 at 09:43 PM