



Thomas B. Hunter III

May 20, 1928 - December 4, 2022

It's often said that a man is measured by the company he keeps. And for Lake Forest's Thomas (Tom) Benton Hunter III, this was the perfect ruler.

"Our Dad was an incredible judge of character," says son Willard (Bill) Hunter. "He loved to hold court with the people from all walks of life who knew the community best—whether it was at Sandy's in Highwood, Caputo's in Lake Forest, or Loons on the Limb in Boca Grande. Dad's friends were all hardworking good people that anyone would be proud to know."

The community lost a good friend and an even better man on December 4, 2022. Tom was 93.

A strong sense of community was a driving force in Tom's life, having been born to Thomas B. Hunter Jr. and Harriet Goodrow on May 20, 1929, in Evanston, Illinois. While his father worked in the family business Thomas B. Hunter Associates, a sales organization in the radio and electronics sector—his mother would renovate homes the couple purchased and then sell them, something not at all typical of homemakers at the time. Young Tom lived in 10 different homes along the North Shore throughout his childhood.

Tom attended elementary school at what is now known as the Gorton Community Center in Lake Forest. It was here that he met his future wife,

Maxine Mae Morrison, when they were in the sixth grade.

“Tom loved to tell the story that way when Gorton was a school, he snuck under the stage and had his first kiss with Maxine after she finished playing in a piano recital,” says long-time friend and former neighbor Brenda Dick.

The Hunters’ love story was one that would span more than seven decades.

“She was his first girlfriend, his only girlfriend,” adds son Thomas (Tom) Hunter IV.

After earning his pilot license and completing his studies at Kenyon College and Northwestern University and his time with the Army Military Reserves, Tom joined his father at Thomas B. Hunter Associates and worked there until he retired in 1989. He then went on to serve on bank boards in Illinois and Florida, including the Hyde Park Bank in Illinois—USAmeriBank, which was the first bank to be part of a multi-bank holding company in the state. USAmeriBank subsequently became JPMorgan Chase. Tom proudly served on these boards with his brother-in-law Harrison Steans.

Perhaps one of Tom’s most meaningful accomplishments was the creation of the Hunter Family Foundation in 1994. It will celebrate its 30th anniversary next year.

“Our Dad didn’t grow up in a family that had a philanthropic foundation—it was all new to him when he founded it,” Tom IV says. “But it gave him the opportunity to go out and financially support individuals, causes, and organizations that were important to him and Mom.”

Initially, the Hunter Family Foundation invested in the arts, as it was a shared interest of Tom and Maxine.

“Our Mother was very involved with the Chicago Symphony, Ravinia, and the Art Institute, so those became causes that were important to my Dad, too,” says Bill.

Yet, it wasn’t long before Tom found himself giving to more community-based initiatives like Lake Forest Open Lands, Northwestern Lake Forest Hospital, Chicago Botanic Garden, The Garden Conservancy, North Lawndale College Prep High School, Boca Grande Health Clinic, Boca Grande Community Center, and the Island Charter School.

Today, the mission of the Hunter Family Foundation is to improve lives in a long-term and sustainable way by supporting education, healthcare, economic development, and the environment in communities where members of the Hunter family live, work, and have philanthropic interests. It is the foundation’s belief that “families should have equitable opportunities to learn, play, and grow in the communities they call home.”

Tom’s two sons oversee the running of the Hunter Family Foundation that now has three full-time employees.

“We’re doing things we’ve never done before and my Dad was very open to that,” Bill explains. “He gave us great freedom to follow our own instincts. Dad was always open to new ideas, new people—even if they were outside his own way of thinking.”

One of Tom’s favorite volunteer organizations was the Lake Forest Garden Club. He was an honorary member—and the only man invited to belong to this all-women club.

“Our Dad didn’t contribute to causes for any accolades he might receive as a result,” Bill adds. “For the most part, he liked to fly below the radar and shun the spotlight.”

Such humility was also evident in Tom’s lifelong friendships. “Tom was incredibly interested in anything you might have to tell him,” says Brenda. “You could be at a holiday party talking with him in passing about something as trivial as honey. Then a few days would go by and you would find a jar of honey in your mailbox. There wouldn’t be a note to say who it was from, but you knew there was only one person who would know to do such a thing.”

A competitive sailor (including participating in the Race to Mackinac) and racquet sports player from a young age, it wasn’t until later in Tom’s life that he deliberately set out to explore new interests like traveling, photography, camping, and hunting.

“To Dad, winning was fun, but it wasn’t the whole game,” Tom IV says, who adds that his father kept his squash bag packed and ready to go, long after he stopped doing competitive sports. “He was always hoping to get back in the game.”

But perhaps the greatest relationships of his life were with his grandchildren. “We definitely saw a softer side of Dad when he became a grandfather,” Tom IV says. “He was a little tougher as a dad because his parents hadn’t perhaps been firm enough with him. But as a grandfather, he loved to take our kids up to the Full Moon Restaurant and let them order whatever they wanted and then head over to Fort Sheridan and look at the military tanks. They have such great memories of those times.”

Thomas Benton Hunter III is survived by his wife of 70 years, Maxine; sons Thomas B. Hunter (Tsch) of Lake Forest, Willard M. Hunter (Lori) of Lake

Bluff, grandchildren Thomas Ruffin Hunter, Tscharner de Graffenried Hunter (Alex Tonelli), Benjamin James Hunter, Peter Morrison Hunter (Sara), Willard King Hunter; great grandchildren Brannen Marie Tonelli, Nicholas Hunter Tonelli, Mae de Graffenried Tonelli, Owen George Hunter, and Charles Louis Hunter.

Memorial contributions can be made in Thomas B. Hunter III's name to Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital and Chicago Botanic Garden.

A Memorial Service will be held at 1:00 p.m., on Saturday, March, 25, 2023 at St. Andrews Episcopal Church, 380 Gilchrist Avenue, Boca Grande, FL 33921. There will also be a Memorial Service at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 13, 2023 at the First Presbyterian Church of Lake Forest, 700 N. Sheridan Road, Lake Forest, IL 60045.

For information, Reuland & Turnbough Funeral Directors of Lake Forest, 847-234-9649 or www.RTfunerals.com.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

MAR **25**. 1:00 PM (ET)

St. Andrews Episcopal Church
380 Gilchrist Avenue
Boca Grande, FL 33921

Memorial Service

MAY **13**. 1:00 PM (CT)

First Presbyterian Church of Lake Forest
700 North Sheridan Road
Lake Forest, IL 60045

Tribute Wall

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“*“Uncle” Tom was like my second father. There are so many wonderful ties between the Hunters and the Farleys. I do not have enough space to write all of them The glue was Tom Hunter who we affectionately called “crabmeat” originating from his many visits to our place in Maine. Tom represented the best in a person. He was generous without wanting credit, kind to everyone and a wonderful husband and Dad. His laugh was infectious but his love for people and life always so evident. I will miss you, Tom.*

Edward Farley - March 22, 2023 at 06:08 AM