

Eulogy honouring Dr. Tom Sutcliffe by Dallas and Rose Reid

St Andrews Church Newlands 18 April 2024

[Watch the full memorial service on YouTube.](#)

Tom Sutcliffe what a wonderful man.

Rose and I have missed you terribly these past two weeks. The almost daily exchange of humour and discussions on subjects of interest, were we hoped distracting you from your pain and discomfort.

And, as always, we enjoyed your quirky sense of humour, willingness to have your leg pulled and your laughter.

After we met, at that wonderful high school St. Stithians, we became close friends from the age of around 14.

Both of us loved poetry, and although well known, I believe this is what you would wish.

Do not stand at my grave and weep,
I am not there, I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow:
I am the diamond glints on the snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain;
I am the gentle autumn's rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush,
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft star that shines at night.
Do not stand at my grave and weep.

I remember you inviting me to your, parents' home in Bryanston, opposite the then post office, and its old-world telephone exchange.

Pick up your phone. Wait for the exchange to answer. Tell them the number you wanted then wait for them to plug you though.

Tom, you had wonderful parents, and a pretty younger sister Susan. And, years later, when I was to be married, she gave me a lesson in how to waltz which helped, albeit marginally, due to my self-consciousness.

You went on to study medicine at Stellenbosch, by which time I had spent a year in the army gymnasium and was working for my father's spares business in Bulawayo, during which time we corresponded in the old-fashioned way of letter writing, stamping and posting. And it was because of you, I too decided a degree would stand me in good stead. So, thank you my friend for that.

Once I was back in Johannesburg, and following your finals your parents asked me, to drive your mother's car to Maties and pick up you and two of your medical friends, Iain Thornton, also ex Saints, and Lex Visser.

Following my non-stop drive from your parents' home, I arrived at around midnight. How I ever found your residence, remains a mystery, but you had a spare bed into which I collapsed. Then, sometime during the following day, we left for a week's trip along the coastal route to Durban. Sleeping rough along the way, we enjoyed a number of stops to eat and swim.

Rose and I met up with you and Kathy in Johannesburg when we were both courting and then, sometime later you invited me to be your best man which was a great honour and a pleasure.

You then went on to do your housemanship, and entered private practice in Maritzburg, where you indulged yourself more than ever in the sport of fly-fishing, learned to fly a plane, and drove a convertible Austin Healey. You, certainly were, the proverbial doctor about town.

We then got to meet up again when I was transferred to Durban and we visited you and your ever-growing family for lunch and a catch up on several occasions.

Like so many others here today, I was a great admirer of your amazing wide-ranging talents. Apart from being the doyen of the fly-fishing community in the country your ability to write and self-illustrate so many books on the subject was admirable.

Your talent and detailed knowledge of that particular recreational fishing, led to worldwide friendships and contacts in the field and undoubtedly made you a wonderful diplomat for our country.

One of your other great talents was being an entertaining raconteur telling amazing stories real and imagined. Rose and I, and doubtless many others, enjoyed listening to those yarns. And I still dine out on a story about the cow, the cadaver and the train journey. But we won't go there now. The result, it was always a pleasure for me to see a gap and pull your leg, then await some rude retort which never failed to follow.

I envied your brilliant mind and photographic memory. You were too a good listener. A wonderful attribute for one who knew so much and was interested in everything.

Tom, Kathy and your five beloved children will miss you forever, so will we. Thanks for being my friend. We will miss you terribly, but with gratification and joy.

Goodbye and God bless you, Tom.

And as the Zulus would say: **HAMBA KAHLE UMFUWETU**