

Thomas Ray

Tom Ray, 78, of Kitty Hawk has run his last race. He hailed from West Virginia and called Kitty Hawk home. He is survived by his wife Julia of the home, son Patrick, and his wife Barbara, of Hampton, and daughter Jennifer; brothers and sisters: Lucille "Boots" Lambert, Martha Bevins, Rea Ann Shultz, Jesse Ray, Naomi Causey, Carol Williams and Thurman Ray, two granddaughters and one great-granddaughter. He was preceded in death by his oldest daughter, Cathy.

Tom retired from civil service at Fort Monroe where he worked after Langley. He dedicated himself to helping others through alcoholism counseling and family support. He retired from active duty in the Air Force as a Chief Master Sergeant. He also worked for the Division of Alcoholism Services for a number of years. He earned degrees from St. Leo College and Hampton University and completed advanced studies at Indiana University.

Tom is known throughout the peninsula as a runner who not only strived to compete in the thousands of races he entered but to encourage and motivate countless other runners and would-be runners as well as volunteer whenever possible. He was very active in the Colonial Road Runners, and the Peninsula Track Club as well as a member of the Outer Banks Running Club. He was inducted into the Hall of Fame for the peninsula running clubs in 2007 for his lifetime accomplishments running.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Duck Church Disaster Relief Fund or the Sign Fund (PO Box 8010, Duck NC 27949) in his honor are preferred.

There once was a runner named Tom
Who encouraged his friends to run.
He always was eager to enter a race
And run his best to come in first place.

He loved the visiting with friends as he ran
And encouraging others to run as well
He finished 44 marathons and
Too many half marathons to tell

He volunteered when he could
He knew that he should
For volunteers make the race
He knew to be the case

Tom was always willing
To help out a neighbor or friend
He fixed up a cottage so he could
Be hospital to his friends

The neighborhood will never be the same
Folks will wonder what happened to the man
Who ran down the streets on a regular basis
But never looked up as he ran to see faces

He fished off the bridge with his daughter
Who always caught the most.
Could it be because he was always helping
To bait her hook?

If a family member or friend was in need
He would see what could be done to help
Whether it was passing on a car or lending a hand
To do what they could not.
Generous he was
Whether through actions or gift
He shared what he had

The world will not be the same
At least in our small part of it
As Tom has gone on to rejoice as we
Are left to celebrate his life.