



## Class of 1963 Alumni Notes January-February 2025

**Herb Rosenthal** reports: “**Walt Sturgeon** and I just completed a two week excursion of Iceland and Greenland. This was on a small group trip for which Walt was a co-leader. Walt is a world traveler in support of waterfowl and other birds. Our hotel rooms and ship cabins were about the same size as our room in TD 1627. BUT without the bunk beds which free up a lot of space. We saw all kinds of birds. We went to magnificent waterfalls. Sheep on every smooth patch of ground in Iceland. We also got within 1,000 feet of a Polar Bear. When the bear looked up and saw six Zodiacs with 60 taste treats (us), it must have thought ‘Uber Eats delivery has finally arrived.’ We saw musk oxen having a seniority battle. The loser ran a mile or more to get away. The scenery was beautiful. Many, many icebergs of all shapes and sizes. Colorful fall colors of the ground cover in Greenland. And Walt and I got on just as well as we did 65 years ago.”

It was a cold, rainy afternoon on August 15, 1973 for the inaugural running of the Falmouth Road Race. Approximately 100 runners were lined up to start in front of the Cap’n Kidd bar in Woods Hole, MA for a seven-mile bar-to-bar race to the Brother’s Four in Falmouth Heights. The race was organized by Tommy Leonard, the bartender at the Brother’s Four, who was inspired by Frank Shorter’s Olympic Gold Medal in the Marathon in Munich the summer before. An unknown runner, Bill Rodgers, won the second year, and Frank Shorter himself beat Rodgers in 1975. From there on, the Falmouth Road Race was established as one of the most important non-marathon road races in North America, routinely attracting many of the best distance runners in the world. **Brian Salzberg** was a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Physiology at Yale Medical School, working that summer at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole. He was among the runners and this was his first road race. He finished, bedraggled, in 26th place and was hooked. Brian subsequently finished 21 marathons, beginning with NYC a month later, seven of them under three hours, and including seven Boston Marathons and four NYC Marathons. Falmouth, though,

became his obsession, and this past August Salzberg completed his 52nd consecutive Falmouth Road Race. He is the only person left to have run every single Falmouth Road Race.

**James David Biles III, M.D.** died peacefully at home in Annapolis, MD on September 12, 2024 after a long and valiant battle with cancer. A fourth-generation physician, Jim was a graduate of Yale University (B.A.), Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons (M.D.), and completed his Surgical Internship at Charity Hospital, Tulane University and his Residency at The Brady Urological Institute, Johns Hopkins Hospital. He was accepted into the American Urological Association and was a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons. He served two years active duty as an Army Major at Edgewood Arsenal conducting research before becoming one of the founding partners of Anne Arundel Urology, practicing at both Anne Arundel Medical Center, now Luminis Health, and Baltimore Washington Hospital. He held an Instructor appointment at Johns Hopkins Hospital and was also elected President of the AAMC Medical Staff, serving on several hospital boards. Jim absolutely loved practicing medicine, specializing in urologic cancers, and faithfully served the needs of his patients for 41 years. Jim's other great passions in life were sailing and his family. A self-taught sailor, he grew up racing Snipes on the TVA lakes and continued racing collegiately, helping to establish Yale racing as a varsity sport. He settled in Annapolis so he could continue racing on the Chesapeake Bay. He competed in international 14's and J 24's his entire life, even after becoming handicapped. He was Governor of the J 24 fleet and helped to establish the East Coast Championships in Annapolis. His wife and children share his love of sailing and cruised the Caribbean with him and crewed for him in the J 24 in local regattas, Midwinters, East Coasts, and North American championships. Jim was also very devoted to his family, spending many happy and involved hours with them and their friends as they grew up. He loved dancing with Brenda, played the piano and guitar, and enjoyed reading and lively intellectual discussions. Jim leaves behind his wife of 44 years, Brenda Lee Catterton, three children, James IV, Lindsey, and Michael, and six grandchildren.

**Ian Robertson** remembers: “Jimmy Biles was a member of the 1959 Bullpups, who included everyone who tried out for Freshman Football. He had a fulfilling medical career as one of our country’s most gifted urologists. In 2019 he attended our ’59 Bullpup memorial for **Jerry Kenney**. Jimmy was on crutches. He had developed two kinds of cancer, one in his rib cage that required removal of ribs on his right side, and another that caused the loss of the use of his right leg. Jimmy paid little attention to his ‘disability.’ In 2020, **Mimi Head** invited Jimmy, his wife Brenda, and me to spend ten days in her glorious home in St. Barth’s. Jimmy was unfazed by the precipitous stairs that accessed Mimi’s home, or the sand he had to cross to get into the ocean. We became fast friends, frequently sharing long phone calls. Then in 2021 Jimmy told me his cancer had returned. This time little could be done. Jimmy was able to participate in at least two trials. The trials slowed the growth of cancer but came with nasty side effects. He still swam, sailed and laughed. But about a year ago he needed a scan. He told the technicians to be careful because he had a very fragile back. Despite the warning, they dropped him. Jimmy was paralyzed from the chest down. Our calls continued. You would never know that the bright, laughing man on the phone was heavily medicated and unable to walk or even turn over. Jimmy wrote: ‘I still live each day to its fullest, very happy to still be here, and not dwelling on the end.’” Complete versions of Ian’s remembrance of Jim (illustrated in Ian’s inimitable style) and of Jim’s autobiography can be viewed in the In Memoriam section of the Class Website ([www.yale63.org/biles2.pdf](http://www.yale63.org/biles2.pdf)). **Victor Sheronas** writes: “Jim’s eternal upbeatness was both infectious and uplifting. He always took my call; he always answered the phone himself; he was always laughing and upbeat; his mind was always sharp; he always wanted to engage in meaningful conversations; he never complained about his limitations; I always felt better for after talking to him. All this while essentially paralyzed in bed. He never lost his joie de vivre; he set the bar incredibly high.” **Phil Stevens** recalls: “Jim was a dedicated brother in Beta Theta Pi, where he was Chairman of the house one year, and pledge trainer another. I loved his Memphis drawl, and his great wide smile and good humor.”

**Alan Bruce “Sky” Magary** died of natural causes at his home in Litchfield, CT on September 28, 2024. Magary was nicknamed “Sky” by his mother shortly after his birth in Elgin, IL on September 20, 1942. After graduating from Phillips Exeter Academy (1959), Yale University (1963), and Harvard Business School (1967), Magary would more than live up to his nickname by embarking on a career that took him from the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad to Pan Am Airways, Hyatt Hotels, and finally Republic/Northwest Airlines. It was at Northwest that Magary, as Vice President of the airline’s Marketing Department, implemented the first domestic smoking ban that any airline had ever attempted in North America. Despite fierce opposition from the tobacco lobby, the ban proved to be a historic success, with other airlines soon instituting bans of their own, and the U.S. government codifying the ban as law in 1990. Magary also had footrests installed in front of every seat on Northwest flights. Airlines had never been so accommodating to all of their passengers, and perhaps never will be again. After a change in Northwest’s ownership, Magary left the airline in 1991 and retired to Litchfield, CT, where he remained for the next 33 years, playing golf (as best he could) and collecting vintage railroad timetables. He was a contented man, and ended his life that way, surrounded by his wife and kids, and loved by them forever. Magary is survived by his wife of 60 years, Susan, along with their three children, Alexander, Amanda, and Andrew, and eight grandchildren.

**Ross Mackenzie** remembers: “I met Sky at Exeter and roomed with him for three years at Yale. At Yale I knew him as a guy who entered with soaring SATs, exhibited maddening brilliance, rarely studied, and drew solid grades. He had the answer to practically everything – and if he didn’t he would make up one that might sound more plausible than the real thing. Perhaps his favorite word was ‘impressive’ – an apt self-description. He had a clam-shell memory, a sardonic wit, and an abiding good heart. We had easy fun trashing Yale’s cattle-brained left.” **Phil Stevens** writes: “I roomed with Sky and Ross Mackenzie our Sophomore Year in Branford. Discomfort with their ultra-conservative politics ended that relationship, but I traveled for three months throughout Europe with Sky in the summer of 1961, a fantastic trip, and he and I remained good

friends. On that trip he added to his cherished collection of railroad timetables, which was assessed as unique and valuable by Yale's rare book specialists. I remember him as cheerful and outgoing, very smart, and a great travel companion." **Guy Struve** adds: "Sky and I ran across each other in various conservative groups at Yale. Sky had an eagle eye for unfounded statements and lapses in logic, and I learned to think things through carefully before saying them to him."

**Steven Lawrence Miller** passed quietly on August 17, 2024 after a short illness. Steve was a graduate of Yale University where he was a resident of Saybrook College and later of the newly-established Morse College. Steve attended Duke Law School, graduating in 1966. He then joined the United States Navy JAG Corps, being stationed in Newport, RI, Philadelphia, PA, and Pearl Harbor, HI, where he served until 1972, rising to the rank of Lieutenant Commander. After the military, Steve moved with his family to South Charleston, WV, where he practiced admiralty law and litigation for the Charleston law firm of Kay Casto & Chaney and later struck out on his own, establishing the law firm Steven L. Miller and Associates in Cross Lanes, WV, where he practiced litigation and bankruptcy law until the early 2000s. Steve also served a term as City Attorney for South Charleston, WV and was active in West Virginia politics. Steve loved his children and grandchildren and relished telling them stories about practicing law. He also chronicled the life and adventures of a beloved character, Oscar the Pig, which were stories that his children and grandchildren always preferred to the stories about practicing law. Steve is survived by his children, Glenn Steven Miller, Dr. Hilary Sarah Miller Jones, and Gregory Lawrence Miller, and nine grandchildren.

**Richard E. Sampliner, M.D.** died on August 17, 2024. He left behind a stellar list of accomplishments. By far the one he was most proud of was his family: his wife of 58 years, Linda, his sons Rob and Steve, and his grandson Gabe. His marriage was one of love, adventure, laughter and tears, and a true sense of shared partnership. Dick's contribution to the field of gastroenterology endures. He was known and respected internationally. His pioneering work in eradicating premalignant lesions of the esophagus revolutionized the prevention and treatment of

soft tissue cancers throughout the body. He was honored with many awards throughout his career. He considered the success of his trainees his most important professional accomplishment. Colleagues, family, friends and neighbors will remember him for his zany sense of humor, his dedication to his craft, his exceptional brilliance, his unfailing curiosity, and his profound love for his family.

**Joe Alpert** writes: “I remember Richard well both when we were at Yale and during many years when we worked together at the University of Arizona College of Medicine. Dick was smart, energetic, and calm under stressful situations. He was Professor of Medicine and formerly headed the Gastroenterology Section in the Department of Medicine. I am sorry he is gone and saddened by his suffering.” **John Impert** remembers: “Dick was my assigned roommate Freshman Year, and we chose to remain together during my three years in New Haven. Although Dick was from Cleveland and I grew up in rural upstate New York, our fathers were both physicians, and we had enjoyed similar upbringings and parental expectations. Dick's father had decreed that while he would pay for college at Yale, he expected his sons to come back and live at home while medical students at nearby Case-Western Reserve Medical School. Dick complied, but then ‘escaped’ with Linda to treat patients, teach, and do research in the Southwest. Dick was a no-nonsense student at Yale, studying hard while eschewing extracurricular activities. Dick mostly deferred dating to medical school, and he married Linda as soon as feasible after graduation. It was clear to me that Dick remained deeply in love with Linda all his life.” **Bill Kramer** shares: “The group in Vanderbilt 2 saw a lot of the groups in Vanderbilt 1 and 3 which was Dick’s suite. My memories of Dick, whom we called ‘Sampliner,’ all revolved around his laugh and big smile. I lost track of Dick after graduation, although I would see him at Reunions, still smiling.” **Mike Smith** recalls: “I had the good fortune to be a suitemate with Dick for four years, first in Vanderbilt and then in Pierson college. His determination to acquire knowledge and his study habits were an inspiration to me. That I was able to navigate the intellectual challenges at Yale was in great measure due to Dick's example. I lost contact with Dick after graduation until we reunited in Tucson some years ago. At

that time he had been diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's disease. It was fascinating to listen to him describe the difficulties in making the diagnosis. When I met with him he had no discernible cognitive impairment. We met for two years in a row and then the third year he didn't show for lunch. I later received an email saying that he had forgotten." **Neil Thompson** writes: "I knew Dick Sampliner starting in 1952 as a classmate in the sixth grade at University School in Cleveland. He was very bright and a prodigious worker. I always liked and had a very high regard for him."

**Richard Tobin Thieriot** was born into the newspaper profession, and he loved it. His great-grandfather cofounded the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1865, he learned the business from the time he could write, and the day before he died of natural causes in his sleep on September 27, 2024, he was working hard in his office. In his 82 years of life, Thieriot was also many other things: an environmentalist, a rancher, a farmer, a combat Marine, a wrestler on his college team at Yale. But it was all rooted in that ink-stained trade his family blessed him with, and when he ran the *San Francisco Chronicle* as editor and publisher from the late 1970s to the early 1990s, he left his imprint on every corner. "My father was an editor in every way," said his daughter, Justine Thieriot. "He loved editing, loved books, loved words, and he cared a lot about having things done well. Sometimes you'd even tell him a joke and he'd say, 'Hmmm, you might try that a different way.' Thieriot worked with state and federal agencies to place most of the family's 17,000-acre Llano Seco Ranch in Butte County – in the family since 1861 – in conservation easements to preserve the natural habitat there. 'The ranch was his passion,' said his daughter Justine. Thieriot was an avid duck hunter, 'and he was a good shot, but shooting the ducks wasn't what it was all about,' she said. 'He mostly just loved being out in that beautiful place that he loved.' After earning a bachelor's degree in English at Yale University, Thieriot served in the Marine Corps from 1964 to 1967, doing combat duty in Vietnam. After being honorable discharged as a captain, he earned an M.B.A. degree at Stanford University and began working at the *Chronicle*. Thieriot is

survived by his wife, Angie Thieriot; their five children, J.P., Simon, Charlie, Richard, and Justine; and nine grandchildren.

**John Lahr** writes: “Richard Thieriot, my pug-nosed pal and roommate throughout my Yale years, died in his sleep on September 27. I loved him. I tweaked his grumpy cheeks. Between his college years and his old age, Dick’s solid outline remained more or less the same. He was built like The Little King: solid, portly (always hitching up those charcoal grey slacks), with his tortoise shell eyeglasses propped up on top of his shiny bald pate, looking out at the world with beady stoic amusement. Dick’s reserve was part of his authority and his allure. His guarded soul was hard to fetch but the detachment made him compelling. (Even though he was neither an outstanding athlete or scholar he was selected for Book and Snake). Dick was by turns impish, grave, stubborn, and charming. Very charming. His combination of gravity and hilarity were irresistible. Dick was some kind of Princeling, the scion of one of San Francisco’s first families, who went on to be editor and publisher of *The San Francisco Chronicle*. He wore his power and his pedigree lightly. Under the shellac of his conservative persona (the tie, Brooks Brothers jackets, grey flannels were his never-changing mufti), he had a rollicking side. Once, as undergraduates, coming out of the Plaza in New York, juiced on too many Tika Pooka Pookas at Trader Vic’s, Dick hijacked the horse and buggy across the street and, with me riding shotgun, galloped through Central Park until the driver of the buggy caught up with us in a taxi near the Metropolitan Museum. Dick had spent an four years as officer in the Marine Corps. He’d seen action. He was slow to anger but he could be a hard-ass. His sternness , however, hid a tenderness, even a fragility, which he rarely showed the world. Once, staying with him in San Francisco, I came downstairs to find Dick in his blue boxer shorts, a cigarette dangling from his lips, spoon in his hand, stooping over high chairs of his two baby sons and feeding them eggs benedict. Dick lived like a pasha. He shuttled between his ranch in Chico, where latterly he was trying to farm walnut trees not cattle; his trout stream in Oregon, where he roamed his domain on a trike and smoked cigars while he fly fished; and a house in Punta Dela Este, Uruguay. I knew him in all these places,



but the place where he lives for me is in rooms in Branford. He is my Yale. We were witnesses to each other's beginnings and to a fellowship which, despite the separation of continents, never lost its amperage. God, he was a great guy."

**Jon Larson** remembers Dick Thieriot as follows: "I met Dick on the Old Campus Freshman Year as he was part of the West Coast contingent of San Francisco Bay Area classmates I associated with naturally including **Bill Robbins** and **Peter de Bretteville**. If I had to describe Dick in a single word, to me he epitomized the word 'affable'. He was always pleasantly easy to approach and to talk to; friendly; cordial; warmly polite; and a courteous gentleman. Karen and I would on occasion run into Dick and his ever gracious lifetime partner Angie in the lobbies of the San Francisco Ballet, Opera, and theatre." **Phil Stevens** writes: "Five guys shared a Branford suite right under Harkness Tower. Just two remain. We have lost **Johnny Bowen**, **Jerry Stevens**, and now **Dick Thieriot**. I knew Dick the least; we had little contact after graduation. But I admired and respected him; he was serious, and true, and had a quick sense of humor and a ready laugh."

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