

Dr. Thomas Howard Adams

Tribute & Obituary

With sadness, we are reporting the passing of Dr. Thomas Howard Adams, a long-time resident of St George Island, at the Brookdale Assisted Living Facility in New Jersey, following a short in-patient hospitalization. Dr. Adams was 90 years old and is survived by his children Paul, David, & Nancy, as well as his grandchildren Bryan, David, Alison & Michelle (Price).

Dr. Adams was a lifelong teacher, often traveling abroad to share his knowledge and experience with others, and was among the very few who were gifted enough to form lasting friendships with many people along the way. In his youth, he studied music and waited tables in college to pay for tuition. While there met his future wife, Shirley.

Despite signing up for the military to teach music, he was sent overseas to Japan during the Korean War. Shirley sold their car and joined him in an off-base apartment with a Japanese family. He was Sargent Adams then -- when he also trained as the solo American at the dojo where he received his black belt in Judo while working with the Army band, playing the piccolo. Upon discharge, he left military service far behind but returned to school for his master's, then doctorate degrees, under the GI Bill.

After working for the schools as a guidance counselor and principal, and then the Department of Education in New Jersey, he settled into teaching at Trenton State College, primarily in their education department, until his retirement as Professor Emeritus. During these years, Dr. Adams continued to travel, often taking part in cooperative exchanges with other nations, including England, as well as the Near East School Association, living near London for over a year in one, and even exploring the belly of the Sphinx in Egypt in another.

Together with Shirley, he also traveled to several other countries, including Russia, China, and numerous nations in Europe. Although they traveled extensively, home was truly where their hearts were. In retirement, Dr. Adams joined several community causes to protect

the environment and broaden the horizons of others through education and volunteer work, including the Apalachicola Riverkeeper, the Panhandle and Take-Two Players, the Franklin County Literacy Program and Library, Tai Chi instruction, and several others.

But music remained a central aspect of his life, which he sought to share so freely with others. As an accomplished theorist, teacher, and performer, Dr. Adams brought his special musical gifts to the area, whether singing tenor in the Trinity Choir; in barber shop quartets; or, performing special selections on the flute, clarinet, recorder, ukulele, guitar, or piano.

Many of these adventures evolved into groups that continue to meet to this very day, despite Dr. Adams's own relocation back to New Jersey due to health conditions. He continued to share his experiences there too, taking up residence with a lifelong friend and active storyteller, Miss Gwendolyn Jones, of his hometown of Florence -- and who remained with him until his passing.

He also continued sailing on Barnegat Bay with his son Paul in New Jersey -- and was even trying to finagle a place on the Panacea's first planned Transatlantic crossing this summer! Unfortunately, age eventually catches up to all of us and on August 17, 2020 he peacefully closed his eyes for the last time.

Pursuant to his wishes, his ashes will be privately placed with those of his wife Shirley in the Memorial Garden at the Trinity Episcopal Church at a future date.

-- Nancy Adams