

# Thomas Paulson Cranna

Memorial Scholarship

1940-1969



**A** bright and energetic leader who was admired by all, Tom Cranna seemed to thrive on a demanding schedule. His high energy level and organizational talents became evident during his school days in Devils Lake, North Dakota. Tom was recognized as a leader in his class and participated in student council for four years, band six years (*Sousaphone*), chorus, the male quartet, debate, drama, and the student newspaper. He was an outstanding athlete who excelled in high school hockey, football, and baseball. Despite all this activity, Tom maintained an A average in his classroom studies.

In addition to school activities, Tom was a confirmed member of the St. Olaf Lutheran Church where he attended Sunday school through twelfth grade. Tom was also a member of DeMolay.

Throughout high school, Tom had a job taking the six o'clock a.m. readings for the U.S. Weather Bureau. Years later he talked about how he hated to crawl out of bed on dark, cold mornings in the dead of winter to do the readings; but Tom thanked his parents for encouraging him to stick with it and credited the experience with helping him learn the self-discipline which was key to much of his life's success.

Tom graduated from Devils Lake High School in 1958 and enrolled in Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. He continued his hockey career while in college, serving as captain of the varsity team during 1961-62. Two college summers were spent at the US Marine Corps Officers Candidate School. Following college graduation Tom was commissioned as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant and reported to the Naval Flight Training Program in Pensacola, Florida. In 1965, Tom was assigned to Vietnam where he served as a naval aviator flying troop transport helicopters until he was wounded in 1966. Following his recuperation, Tom was honorably discharged at the rank of Captain.

Upon returning from Vietnam, Tom was reunited with his wife, Barbara Bird Cranna, who he had married in 1963, and decided to pursue a life-long dream to become an attorney. (*This decision was inspired in part by Judge Douglas Heen who had coached Tom in American Legion baseball.*) He enrolled in law school at the University of Minnesota, served as president of the *Law Review*, and graduated magna cum laude with the class of 1969. On October 17, 1969, the day that he was admitted to the Minnesota Bar Association, Tom died unexpectedly of a cerebral hemorrhage.

At the time of his death, Tom's young family included his wife Barbara and three young children—daughter Cathleen and twin sons Mike and Mark. Tom was also very close to his brother Kip and parents Clifford (*Scotty*) and Anna Cranna.

Clifford Cranna was known throughout his life as Scotty, which no doubt reflected the fact that he was born in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. At eleven months of age he came with his parents to the United States and settled in North Dakota in 1909. Anna Paulson Cranna's parents were first-generation settlers of Norwegian extraction. Anna grew up in western North Dakota near the town of Eckman. Scotty and Anna met while attending UND and were married in 1936. Anna was an educator and taught school in several North Dakota school systems during World War II. In 1959, Anna returned to

teaching and introduced Spanish to the curriculum at Devils Lake High school. She retired from teaching in 1964 but continued as a substitute teacher for ten years. Scotty put his education to work in the business career that began with stints with International Harvester and Universal Credit. The Cranna family moved from Bismarck to Devils Lake in 1940 when the Desoto-Plymouth dealership became available. With partner Arthur Stromquist, Scotty established Ramsey Motors. In 1960, Scotty launched yet another career as a realtor and real estate appraiser.

Having had the opportunity to attend college themselves, Scotty and Anna placed a high value on a good education; and like Tom, their younger son Clifford (*Kip*) also reached several academic milestones. Kip attended Devils Lake Central and UND after which he completed Officers Candidate School and was commissioned in the Navy. Upon completing his military service commitment, Kip achieved a Ph.D. in Musicology from Stanford University in California. He currently serves as Musical Administrator for the San Francisco Opera.

Scotty and Anna Cranna arrived in Devils Lake just as Lake Region State College was being established as a junior college. They were pleased that the little home-town college was able to provide opportunities for students who otherwise might not be able to pursue a college education. The Cranna family was proud of the progress made by Lake Region State College as it has grown into a comprehensive community college. They were also pleased to be able to make a scholarship gift that will help to open doors for education for students of the future.

The Thomas Paulson Cranna Memorial Scholarship is awarded annually to a senior graduating from Devils Lake High School who attends Lake Region State College. The recipient will be a strong student who has demonstrated athletic ability along with leadership skills and potential. Representatives of the Devils Lake School System join the Community College Foundation Scholarship Selection Committee to identify each year's recipient. ■