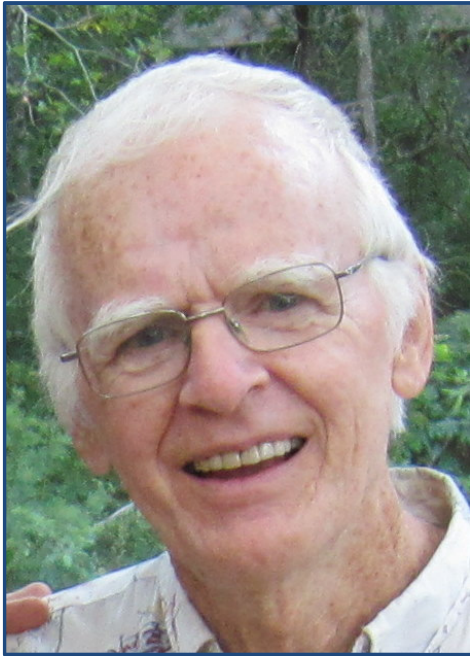


Tom Maher (1939 – 2011)



Thomas Joseph Maher (Tom) was born June 30, 1939, and died May 6, 2011 at the age of 71 in Philadelphia, PA. He battled with an aggressive form of prostate cancer along with many complications of cancer and treatment.

A native of the Bronx, NY, Tom subsequently lived for nearly ten years in the Catskill mountains of New York, followed by over thirty years in Philadelphia, PA. In the last years of his life, he wintered in Sarasota, FL.

Tom was raised with his four older brothers by his father Martin Joseph Maher. Tom's mother, Mary Coyle, died when he was very young. Both of his parents were immigrants from Ireland.

Tom received his Bachelor's degree in English from Hunter College. He was employed for twenty years as a welfare caseworker in Philadelphia, retiring in 2000. He always

brought a blank sheet of paper and a pen with him to meet with clients. If they had brought a child along, he asked the kid to draw him a picture. His cubicle was filled with art from his own daughter, and the children of many welfare recipients.

Tom married Clare Pettijohn in 1970. Their daughter Chloe was born in 1981. Tom was a loving father and husband, saying many times in his last weeks how much he appreciated the care and company of his

wife and daughter during his illness. He is survived by his wife, Clare; a daughter, Chloe and son-in-law, Rick; a brother, Owen and sister-in-law Juanita; step-daughter Shasta; step-grandchildren Sierra and Cedar; many nieces and nephews, and many friends. Tom was



predeceased by his brothers Martin, Fred, and Patrick. Many will remember his cheerful, friendly smile.

Tom enjoyed dancing, singing, playing music, camping, swimming, reading, and writing. He loved being outdoors, and would find beauty in nature wherever he was, including state and national parks, local parks, yards and gardens, parking lots, and along the side of the road. He was always on the lookout for wildlife – birds, turtles, frogs, toads, beavers, and other animals that could be found wherever he was. While on vacation in Bass River State Park in New Jersey, Tom would float out in a little rubber raft each evening to watch the sunset and the emerging stars, sitting very still and enjoying the peace on Lake Absegami. He loved to eat fruit, fresh vegetables, and ice cream.



Thanks to his good friend Howard Rust, Tom discovered the joys of community music, dance, and song when he lived in Woodstock, NY. He picked up the fiddle in his 30s, having never before played an instrument. He began dancing and calling contra, square, and English Country dances. He sought out opportunities of many kinds to sing, dance, and play music. He loved to dance in community with others, and especially took pleasure in the fact that his wife and daughter enjoyed these activities as well.

Tom participated in the music and dance activities of many organizations. He sang with Pennsylvania Sacred Harp Singers, Roxborough Men's Chorus, Sounds

of Liberty Barbershop Chorus, Slaveja Eastern European Folk Ensemble, St. Mary's Episcopal Church Choir, and the Mid-Hudson Madrigal Society. He danced and played music with Germantown Country Dancers, the Thursday Night Contra Dance (PATMAD), SPUDS (contra dance open band), NEFFA (New England Folk Festival), the Country Dance and Song Society (CDSS), Pinewoods Camp, the Delaware Valley Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, Heritage Dance Festival, the Baltimore Folk Music Society, The Philadelphia Revels, the Philadelphia Ceili Group, the Philadelphia Folksong Society, Catskill Country Dancers, Pokingbrook Morris Dancers, Rosendale Song & Dance Society, the Slide Mountain String Band, and many other dance and music festivals, events, and organizations.

He enjoyed spending time with family and friends and looking at flowers in his last months of life. He remained cheerful and friendly, positive and hopeful, always happy to see people, giving them a kind smile.

The funeral and burial were held on May 7th at the Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship in Philadelphia and the Fellowship Cemetery in East Fallowfield, PA. A memorial service will be held June 11 at Summit Church in Mt. Airy, Philadelphia.

Donations in Tom's memory can be made to:

The New England Folk Festival (www.neffa.org), PO Box 2789, Acton, MA 01720

Germantown Country Dancers (www.germantowncountrydancers.org), c/o Cameron Higby-Naquin, 833 Lombard St, Philadelphia, PA 19147

Philadelphia Area Traditional Music and Dance (PATMAD) (www.thursdaycontra.com), c/o Reuven AnafShalom, 2751 Morris Rd., Ardmore, PA 19003