

# Thomas Franklin Deitz

Thomas Franklin Deitz, born in Murphy, NC, and long-time resident of Young Harris and Athens, GA, passed from this life at his home in Gainesville, GA, on Monday, April 27, 2009, following a valiant struggle with problems related to his failing, yet lion-sized heart.

Deitz, and brother to sisters Sarah Virginia and Wilda Lea, lived and grew up in Young Harris, where he attended both Towns County public schools and Young Harris College, where in later years he would return as a part of the extended college theatrical troupe. Upon his graduation from Young Harris with an A.A. degree and recognition in Who's Who in Junior Colleges in 1971, Tom attended the University of Georgia, where he earned his B.A. in English in 1973, and his M.A. in English with a focus on Medieval and Mythic Literature in 1975.

Writer. Teacher. Artist. Brother and Son. Friend. Tom was all of these, and more.

The author of 20 works of Fantasy and Modern Myth, Tom explored not only the spaces between the worlds, but the rituals attendant upon growth into adulthood. His books, beginning in 1986 with *Windmaster's Bane*, examined the lives of young protagonists grappling not only with the fantastic, but with the at-times seemingly overwhelming obstacles in the mundane road of adolescence. These tales resonated with Tom's enthusiastic fans, who saw themselves in David Sullivan, and Calvin McIntosh, and Liz Hughes, and through whom they could dream the Hero's Dream. Tom even revisited his first work, with a 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary revision of *Windmaster's Bane* in 2006. This last work would receive acclaim, as Tom received the Georgia Author of the Year for Young Adult Fantasy and Young Adult Literature Award for 2006. He was also the 2007 recipient of the Phoenix Award for lifetime achievement, given by the Southern Fandom Confederation.

Though Tom was always a teacher, his formal time in the classroom found expression first at Tri-County Community College in his birthplace, Murphy, NC, and would deepen into the exceptional bond he created with both professional colleagues and students at Gainesville State College, beginning in 2004. In the classroom, Tom's passion for literature fused with his strong drive as a mentor. Proof of this prowess was his recognition by Gainesville State as the Ann Matthews Purdy Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Member of the Year in 2008.

As brother and friend, Tom was a mainstay of the University of Georgia Wesley Foundation in the 1970s, and in 1976 was one of the founders of Bryn Madoc, the local Society for Creative Anachronism chapter in Athens. In the SCA, Tom explored the full range of his interests in the Middle Ages, as artist, musician, costumer, actor, and even on occasion, as warrior. He was a Master of the Laurel in

the SCA, and was a Baron of the Royal Court , as well as principal of the Order of the Dreamstone of Bryn Madoc, and the Master of the Dance for the Order of the Displayed Moon. While at the University of Georgia , Tom also worked in the Georgia Room in the University Libraries and was a longtime member of the Flying Rat Toli Team.

Tom is survived by his mother, Beulah N. Deitz, of Hiawassee , GA , his sister Wilda Quarantino and her husband Bob, of Goodyear , AZ , three nieces, Leann Underwood of Lynchburg , VA , Tonya M. Keiser of Lakewood, CO, and Sheri L. Q-McLaughlin of Silverdale, WA, and a nephew, Frank Willcox of McKinney, TX, as well as a number of cousins. He is also survived by his lasting words, and a legion of “family of the heart,” all fortunate enough to have been touched by Tom’s exceptional zest for life, and by his fierce resolve to live that life to the fullest.

Tom and his family ask that those who wish to honor his memory consider a contribution to the Gainesville State College Foundation, P.O. Box 1358, Oakwood, GA 30566, where a fund to benefit the English department will be established in Tom’s name.