

The Life and Love of Tom and Elaine Taylor

By Kathy Stewart (February 2021)

Tom and Elaine are highlighted in this issue because of their amazing dedication and valuable contributions to St. Matthew for over 50 years. I happened to call Tom for this interview the day before his birthday. He couldn't believe he was telling me he's 90 years old! It was a joy to talk with him as he shared the wonderful parts of his life with Elaine. I was inspired by his devotion to Elaine, God, and St. Matthew. I only wish I could share all the details of his many stories, but unfortunately I had to limit this article to one page.

Tom is currently living in West Seattle where he is closer to his family and will attend St. John the Baptist. The love of his life, Elaine, died last April. He says he is somehow managing without her, although his sorrow remains ever present. Anyone who saw Tom during a church service at St. Matthew noticed he often had his arm around her. They were an item for 71 years.

Tom and Elaine were 19 years old when they met at the University of North Dakota, in 1949. At the time, Elaine was dating the "big man on campus" who was the captain of the hockey team. However, by luck (Tom prefers to describe this as "God's work") he and Elaine met when one of Elaine's sorority sisters introduced them to each other. Tom stole Elaine away and won her heart by attending her violin concerts and keeping his promise that he would go to the Episcopal Church with her. They married right after college graduation and moved to Chicago. He chuckled as he told me some of the prices back then. Elaine's in-state tuition was \$35 per semester; Tom's out-of-state tuition was \$70 per semester. The cost of Tom's room & board was \$65 per month, and he purchased a used '42 Chevy for \$200!

Tom was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army, in 1953. Since he had a degree in journalism, he spent most of his service as a public information officer with the 11th Airborne Division, at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, where their daughter Susan was born. Then he became director of the U.S. Press Center in Berlin where he and Elaine enjoyed what Tom described as a "nice life style." Sixteen months after Susan was born they had twins, Mark and Cynthia. They were fortunate to have a maid for \$25 a month who helped with the children. This allowed Elaine to enjoy life outside the home. She belonged to three bowling teams! They attended the Protestant Cathedral in Berlin that the Allies purposefully did not destroy in WWII.

After three years, Tom and Elaine chose to leave the Army and move back to Chicago where they lived from 1956-1969. During this time their last child (Peggy) was born. They continued going to the Episcopal Church; this time in Homewood, a suburb of Chicago. In 1969 Tom accepted a job in Tacoma and moved their family to Federal Way. The Taylors knew the Latsis family who are long time members of St. Matthew. Beth and Tom Latsis immediately invited the Taylors to St. Matthew. Over the years, both Tom and Elaine have been very involved at St. Matthew. Elaine served on the Altar Guild and other committees for several years, while first working at a private financial firm for the Weyerhaeuser family; and then in the real estate department at Jack-in-the-Box. Tom served on the Vestry in leadership positions over many years. One of the most meaningful experiences he had at St. Matthew was his special time at the Hallmark Nursing Home. For approximately 25 years, Tom, Dick Elofson, Tom Peterson, and Frank Blacker offered Morning Prayer and provided pastoral care for the residents. Some called him "Father" Tom and one staff member asked him to baptize her baby; of course, he declined the honor.

With Elaine's passing and Tom's recent move to West Seattle there is a big hole at St. Matthew. We miss them both! However, their love of God, their dedication to each other, and their many contributions to St. Matthew will always be an inspiration.

