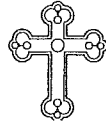
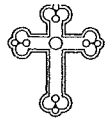


Memories and Recollections of



Tom Faulkner
1908-1996



On Saturday, November 9, 1996, the Rev. Thomas Green Faulkner died at his residence. He had served as the rector of St. George's Episcopal Church in Fredericksburg from 1946 to 1976. During those 30 years there were many changes in his church, his town, his state and his nation. Through all those years he remained a steadfast leader and teacher.

A native of Greensboro, North Carolina, he was a graduate of the University of Virginia and Virginia Theological Seminary, being ordained in 1938. Before coming to St. George's in 1946 he had served at churches in Culpeper and Prince William Counties.

While at St. George's Church he was instrumental in setting up the Rappahannock Big Brothers organization and was the first chairman of the Inter-faith Community Council. He was on the board of directors of The New School, a private school for the learning disabled children at St. George's. He was chairman of the Rappahannock Retirement Community and volunteered with Pratt Mental Health.

Rev. Faulkner was not only a minister, but a historian, philosopher, social worker, avid tennis player, devoted husband and father.

The following memories and recollections are from some of the members of St. George's who knew him in varied ways. The excerpts are written with love and fond memories of a man who influenced the lives of so many of us.

We miss you, Tom Faulkner.



Sally Spiller Settle, Tappahannock, Virginia

It was summer time and we were on our way to Westmoreland Beach for the annual Sunday School picnic. Mr. Faulkner was driving, Miss Elsie Lewis was in the front seat and a bunch of us kids were in the back seat. During a lull in the conversation Miss Elsie leaned over and patted Mr. Faulkner on the arm and quietly said: "Tom, I just wanted you to know you missed several good opportunities to end your sermon this morning."

Tucky Lewis Abel, Tampa, Florida

I remember the Young People's group on Sunday night; it was the highlight of my weekends as a young teenager in Fredericksburg. Mr. Faulkner liked to have us participate in little experiments to show us human nature. I remember one time he had the boys put on blindfolds, hold each girl's hand, and try to guess who she was. In his own way he taught us a lot about how to act and react with other people.

Larry Duckwall, King of Prussia, Pennsylvania

My memories of St. George's are rich and varied. Through all of them swirls a mix of Tom and Mary Faulkner; how could it be otherwise?

We would try to arrive at the church at least 1/2 hour before the service. Miss Elsie Lewis and Mrs. Virginia Gouldman would be fussing over us like mother hens trying to assure that our vestments did not look like we were freshly emerged from a Class 4 hurricane. We would then make our way to the vestibule and hear the last glorious chords of the prelude which Russell Ratcliffe had selected for that day. The processional hymn would start, and we would proceed in full voice toward the altar while being propelled by Tom's reedy baritone from behind us. I recall processionals when I was nervous because I had an offertory solo, or excited because I knew that Wardell Leacock (the finest natural baritone voice I had heard) was going to solo.

After the offering was safely delivered, Tom would present his thoughts for that Sunday. The

minds of most teenage boys usually stray far from the Almighty, but Tom compelled you to listen. He didn't offer fire and brimstone; he didn't preach about a God of vengeance; he spoke about a loving, all encompassing God who knew and accepted our faults and who put within each of us the opportunity for change and grace.

Following the recessional and benediction, I would edge back into the sanctuary to listen to Russell's postlude. His wondrous talent would cause the organ to fill the church with a glorious joyful noise. Oh, what a talent, and what a sensitive accompanist. I can only imagine what a sound he would have produced had the organ's pipes been exposed as they are now.


I had called on Tom and Mary earlier this fall. Tom and I were talking in his room, and Tom was voicing his frustration over his lack of strength and his prolonged recovery. He said he could not understand why he wasn't getting any better. Without meaning to be flippant I suggested he should read his book. He had given the very problem much thought, had expressed it thoroughly and the testing that he, his family and the many who loved and admired him were undergoing was all there. He had already answered his own question. He gave me his wry grin and said: "*I guess you are right.*"

I then asked him to tell me how he and Mary had met. He blamed her of course for leading him to the altar. In his eyes the spark of the memory and the continuance of love still burned bright. He chuckled and glowed at the retelling, and my lasting memory of him will be his joy in remembering and recounting their journey together.

The morning of his funeral I met my long time friend Betty Chinn Cassidy at Goolrick's. We had a hot drink and walked up the hill to St. George's. We arrived early and were able to get a good seat on the aisle where we could see well and hear the music. While awaiting the start of the service I had an opportunity to reflect on what he had left us. My thoughts went to my favorite Christmas anthem: Handel's "For Unto Us A Child Is Born". Tom was childlike in his faith, both in his God and in all of us. He left us the challenge to love and respect each other as he had done.


During the processional Mary walked up the aisle, head high and shepherding a flock of children as has long been her wont. How could it be else? She had been the driving force behind the formation of the youth groups during the 50s. I suspect those activities will once again gain momentum.

We have been blessed to have this team shared with us. I don't mourn for Tom; I am glad that his and his family's suffering is past. I selfishly mourn that I will no longer have access to him, and I resolve to try to meet the challenge he has left us all.




Judy Hawkins Barton, Fredericksburg, Virginia

One of the most memorable communion services I ever attended was conducted by Mr. Faulkner when I was a teenager attending summer camp at Roslyn. It was held on the hillside under a huge oak tree. We all sat on simple wooden benches and knelt on the ground. I think of it often to this day.



Cal Reneau, Fredericksburg, Virginia

While stationed at Quantico, I went south to Fredericksburg on a blind date. Two months later in September, Tomi and I eloped. When her Mother, Thelma Lewis, found out about it nothing would do but we be re-married in a small ceremony at St. George's. Tomi and I went to see Mr. Faulkner and arrange for the ceremony. He picked up the prayer book, opened it to the marriage ceremony, and started mumbling things like "*We can omit that*" and "*We don't need that part.*" He finally looked up at us and said "*Well, it's down to Dearly Beloved...I now pronounce you man and wife!*" We ended up with a wonderfully simple service and his blessing on us has lasted 38 years.



Phoebe E. Willis, Fredericksburg, Virginia

St. George's Episcopal Church, Fredericksburg, Virginia, stands as a vital lengthened shadow of a man, the distinguished Rector, the Rev. Thomas G. Faulkner, Jr. 1946-1976.

A former teacher of languages and mathematics, the Rev. Faulkner conducted informative confirmation sessions, preached classical sermons, but was above all a true minister of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, a devout and joyous minister. Under his leadership, the church property was properly restored to prime condition from a new slate roof to the family room flooring.

In organization, a rotating vestry plan was adopted in 1946 and St. George's and Trinity

joined the other city churches for a united Thanksgiving service.

A much needed addition, really a connecting link was added and promptly paid for - named McGuire Hall, in honor of the Rev. Edward C. McGuire, 1813-1858, who served all three buildings on this site.

It is fitting and in good order that the former Parish House, now adjoining the St. George's church building be designated as Faulkner Hall, honoring this beloved and highly esteemed Rector and friend.



Adeline S. Conway, Fredericksburg, Virginia

I first met Mary and Tom in the summer of 1942. I went to a church conference at Woodbury Forrest and Mary and Tom, newlyweds, were there as counselors.

They were called to St. George's and "my group" were their first "Young People."

Tom married us and christened our four daughters. He also married Alice and Tom (the 1st of the 4 to be married).

We'll always remember -and treasure- the phone calls we got on our Birthdays! To think that a busy man would take his time to call each of us was remarkable.



Doris Webster Hickman, Gilroy, California

"O God, give me strength to live another day. Let me not turn coward before its difficulties or prove recreant to its duties. Let me not lose faith in my fellow men. Help me to keep my heart clean, and to live so honestly and fearlessly that no outward failure can dishearten me or take away the joy of conscious integrity."

In 1957, when we graduated from high school, each of us was given a small blue book of prayers, psalms, canticles and offices called "Prayers New and Old." Each book was inscribed "A small token of a great deal of love and sincere good wishes for (the person). Devotedly, Tom and Mary Faulkner." Especially marked were 4 favorite prayers of which the above was one. It always reminded me of Mr. Faulkner, "my minister" until his recent passing. It spoke to his bravery against unpopular causes, his wanting to love all men equally (including those who may not have attended regularly but were part of the family of St. George's), his courage in holding the light of good

example high so that we who watched might have a pattern to follow, his insistence on "doing your best" and encouraging us teenagers to hold fast to the ideal, all the while understanding our needs and mistakes. It could not have been easy to be our minister- we were a headstrong bunch-yet I think we all believed that that was who Tom Faulkner inherently was. So, we left our church home infused with that same bravery of his, that love, understanding, courage and a will to do our best. Many of us have gone on to serve our church as vestry members, Altar Guild Directresses, Presidents of ECW, choir members, youth directors, secretaries and Diocesan officers, girded by the training and guidance Mr. Faulkner gave us. The last little prayer book gift went with us into the wide world so we could remember where our focus should be and how we should endeavor to lead our lives. We were ready for any occasion. My little blue prayer book has been with me on many intense occasions from praying for a family member near death to speaking at my father's memorial in a large cathedral. All the years of learning and training encouragement and love given by those who guided me early on are always there in that book for me to use. Thanks, Tom and Mary. You did a good job and we all love you for it.

On a funnier note, remembering again how difficult it must have been at time for Mr. Faulkner to maintain the dignity of his office, one Christmas pageant flies to mind. Because I was blond and 17, at last I was to participate, not as a choir member or the organist, but as.. "The Angel Gabriel," complete with huge wings and a halo! Such excitement!! My best friend, the brunette, was to be the Virgin Mary. Anyone who knew us should have known that no matter what our roles, we would inevitably "get the giggles." And so, Mr. Faulkner was forced to carry on with the Scripture reading of the annunciation, accompanied by a shaking angel and a Virgin, Mary who never bowed so low. Unable to stop, we were nonetheless mortified. Everybody in town was there! If, however, you sneaked a glance at Mr. Faulkner, you couldn't help but see the gleam in his eye. I wonder if he remembered the same two as cherubic 3-year-old angels, proudly singing "Away In A Manger" while their halos popped off?! Life was never dull at St. George's.



Barbara and Mac Willis, Fredericksburg, Virginia

Tom Faulkner has been an important part of our lives since we were teenagers.

In the late 1940s, we met at the Young People's Program conducted by Tom and Mary at St. George's. While we were all having a wonderful time, Tom employed his keen mind and genial nature most effectively to stimulate discussion and to cultivate a sense of religious and moral values.

When we returned to Fredericksburg and to St. George's in 1957, Tom made us welcome. He baptized our four sons and saw to their confirmation.

Tom adopted the practice of calling each parishioner, however old or young, on his or her birthday. This delightful gesture confirmed what we already knew, that we were dear to his heart, as he was to ours.

Beth Massey Pendleton, Belton, South Carolina

One Christmas Eve at midnight service I remember Mr. Faulkner saying that "*if you stay real still and listen real carefully you can hear the angels singing.*" So, for once, I did exactly what he said and sat real quiet in church. You know, I felt like I heard them! So now, every Christmas Eve, I sit real still and listen for the angels.

Anne Brooks Brauer, Fredericksburg, Va.

Time: 1946. Event: Miss Elsie's Godchild gets married at St. George's on Thanksgiving morning. Bride 18 years old, Groom 20 years old. Minister: Mr. Tom Faulkner.

The prospective bride and groom are told to take lessons from the "new Minister" at St. George's before their wedding. (The groom-to-be, already an Episcopalian raised at Trinity Church, needed some persuasion that this was the bride's decision to make, not his!) Miss Elsie, who took her job as godmother very seriously, arranged for the couple to take the lessons. The bride's mother had died two years before, so Miss Elsie (along with Helen Kline) was running the show as far as Episcopalian protocol was concerned.

Lesson Day arrived, and the young couple approached the big house on Washington

Avenue that served as the Faulkners' rectory. The groom was unsmiling and a little grumpy until he reached the rectory door, where he was greeted by a beautiful young redhead full of smiles. Yes, it was Mary Faulkner. The bride and groom were surprised but very happy at this warm reception from so young a minister's wife.

Mary served tea and cookies while Tom worked out the details of the service with the prospective newlyweds. Tom agreed to let Mr. Moss, the minister from Trinity Church, perform the first part of the service; Tom himself would do the final vows. In this way both strong Episcopal families were pleased.

On the big day, Miss Elsie was down front all dressed up, and Helen Kline saw to it that Mary Mount played beautiful music and returned her fee to the couple for their honeymoon. It must have been a good wedding: it lasted forty-six years, and the couple never ventured out of their faith.

The Rev. Charles R. Sydnor, Jr., Fredericksburg

Tom had a nickname which a few parishioners who were his close friends even dared use in his hearing. It was "EARS," or sometimes affectionately "OLD EARS." This was not just because he had large and prominent ears; it was also because he listened closely to what was happening to his flock, and would speak out passionately whenever he perceived someone was not getting fair treatment. As my supervisor when I was the assistant at St. George's, I knew I was going to get an earful when Tom started talking and those ears turned red. He would thunder at me about how I had mistreated a staff member. If those ears turned crimson, invariably it meant he was right and I had been wrong. So I learned to have enormous respect for "OLD EARS" for not only were they keen and astute barometers of fairness, they were weapons in his constant concern for justice for all.

Betty Chinn Cassidy, Maryland

Everybody knows about the pains of adolescence. I was one of the fortunate ones who had a comfortable place to ease into those transitions. It

was the St. George's rectory, where Mr. and Mrs. Faulkner lived.

During my teenage years, in the 1950s, Mrs. Faulkner sponsored a very active Young People's group. Some of its members met at the rectory, during the week, to plan activities for Young People's. The meeting gave me an opportunity to linger on, long after the work was done, to talk with the Faulknors. Their lives were filled with the task of shepherding a large congregation, but they both had a loving tolerance for the questioning and confusion of a perplexed teenager. They always made me feel welcome and worthy of the time they gave to my temporal and spiritual education as we sat talking around the kitchen table.

They had a profound effect on my thinking. For example, I have no memory of discussing race relations directly with the Faulknors, yet their attitudes and Mr. Faulkner's sermons certainly clarified that issue for me, changing old prejudices.

Some old timers like me may remember that in those days over the chancel was painted an admonition, "Take heed, therefore, how ye hear." In that time and place, we heard Mr. Faulkner's voice. He didn't always say what we wanted to hear, but he always spoke for Christ and His Church. May he go from strength to strength. Let light perpetual shine upon him.



Warren and Jinxie Forbush, Fredericksburg, Virginia

Tom Faulkner and his staff at St. George's were a big influence in the moral and spiritual growth of our daughters Sarah, Jane and Mary



during their formative years in the 1950s and 60s and on into their teens in the 1970s. Tom was always helpful, friendly and cheerful and we shall always remember his thoughtful birthday phone calls and his hearty laugh.

Our daughters sang in the junior choir and always had little tales to tell from their experiences there.



George M. Van Sant, Fredericksburg, Virginia

When I first joined St. George's church in 1958, I was the proud possessor of a brand new, shiny Ph.D. in Philosophy and had just been appointed an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at

Mary Washington College. Tom and Mary Faulkner had made my late wife, Peggy, and me most welcome to the parish. Tom was very excited about having a philosophy professor in his flock. This led to some amusing conversions. He had studied a good deal of philosophy as an undergraduate at the University of Virginia, and we had been taught by many of the same professors, so we delighted in comparing notes on their idiosyncrasies.

We had not had too many such conversations when I realized that Tom, like many genuinely serious people, was fun to tease. I used to produce a good deal of dismay in Tom by maintaining that my professional commitment as a philosopher prevented me from ever proselytizing in the classroom. As a philosopher I was committed to a questioning and skeptical attitude towards everything. I convinced him that I felt that I had to leave my Christian faith outside the gate when I entered the campus. Of course this wasn't true, but he believed it, and it upset him.

As our conversations continued over the years, and as I listened to his sermons, I came to realize that Tom was also a philosopher. He, too, was a struggler and a questioner. The book he published before his death makes this clear. At the same time I have never known anyone who could explain what he called "Christlike love" better than Tom. With Tom, if you could understand how Christ loved and how we must try to love as Christ loved, then everything else followed for Tom. Tom's preaching has been nicely complemented by his successor because no preacher has ever made me understand how God loves, and how God loves me, better than Charles has.

But Tom, in addition to being a philosopher, was a man of courage and principle. Those of us privileged to know Tom back in the fifties and sixties had to admire how Tom kept his eye on the goal as he steered this parish through some rough times. The foundations for our parish's present reputation as being an "out reach oriented congregation" were laid during Tom's stewardship. The Mental Health Association, the Personal Counseling Service, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and the racial integration of the Fredericksburg Ministerial Association all happened because of Tom's determination. He was the kind of man who gets knocked down, brushes himself off, and quietly returns to the fray. He just would not quit pursuing the things he believed in.

St. George's has been truly blessed for over the last fifty years with outstanding leadership. We

can never too much "...praise famous men and the fathers who begat us." *Ecclesiasticus*.

Alis Bailey, Fredericksburg, Virginia

Tom Faulkner was a wonderful minister. He gave the church a real spiritual feeling.

Mary Frances Funk, Fredericksburg, Va

I knew Tom Faulkner a long time. In fact I served on the vestry under him. He performed the funeral service for the Sweetzers and for Hotsie, and did such a fine job that I told him I hoped he'd be around long enough to do mine!

I remember that he was very careful with the Church's money. One time the secretary told him (hinting for a new desk) that she kept tearing her stockings on the rough edge of the one that she used. Mr. Faulkner said he'd take care of it. He did. She came back from lunch early and found him sanding down the splinters!

Bob Baker, Fredericksburg, Virginia

I knew Tom Faulkner long before I met him.

I was covering the civil rights movement and turmoil in the South as a Journalist. I found that a small minority of whites, spread thinly throughout the region, was taking a stand for decency in the maelstrom of anger, prejudice, confusion and racism of the times.

Some were clergymen who stood tall against intemperate vestries and congregations. Tom Faulkner was among them. The Vestry of St. George's had directed Tom to ban black membership and racially integrated services in the church and to discourage black visitors.

But Tom Faulkner refused to obey those orders.

"I believe Christ, my Lord and Savior, opposed segregation in any form," he told the Vestry. He managed to hold on until the election of a more moderate Vestry.

Thus Tom Faulkner had joined that minority of whites whose courageous stand for Christian principles, morality, decency and brotherhood provided a dialogue until the moderate but silent white majority spoke out.

I never interviewed Tom Faulkner in those days and didn't meet him until I came to Fredericksburg in 1976. But I knew Tom Faulkner. He was a hero.

Wardell Leacock, Superior, Montana

Mr. Faulkner was a good man, not just as a minister, but as a person. He was someone who was willing to sit down and talk to you and help you to get things straight. I enjoyed singing at St. George's and still sing in my church out here in Montana.

Tomi Lewis Reneau, Fredericksburg, Virginia

I have been away for many years, (too many it seems at times), but St. George's is and always has been the core of my life. My aunt, Elsie Lewis, made sure I was at Sunday School every Sunday for 16 years straight, while Rev. Faulkner made sure that I grew in a spiritually straight line during that time. All that has been said by these other folks holds true for me. Whatever good I do in my life is due to the guidance of my family and my church.

But my favorite memory of the Faulkners comes not from church but from another source. Every Christmas season there were wonderful dances held in Fredericksburg. Women wore their most beautiful gowns, whilst the men were oh, so dignified looking in their tuxedos. At one of these dances when a waltz began playing Tom led Mary out onto the dance floor. She, with her beautiful red hair and sparkling eyes was dressed in a long, blue gown. He held her 'just so'...not too close and not too far away. But it was not must the way he held her, but the way he looked at her. I was only seventeen or so, but I knew at that moment that I was seeing true love between two people. They slowly waltzed in a large circle, and the others at the dance seemed to melt back into the sidelines, leaving the floor for these two alone. It was magic. And I'll never forget it. To this day every time I hear a waltz, I smile inside, and remember...