

Robert Auchincloss

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Pleasant Valley - Robert G. Auchincloss, 84 of Pleasant Valley, NY died July 23, 2015. He wished his obituary to be a personal statement so here are his words. I was very fortunate to have had an incredible life that included many amazing people and adventures. There were strong worldly parents and stepparents, I am survived by two wonderful wives, Sandra Opdycke and Bonnie, three beautiful daughters Robin (husband Eli and kids Emma and Ada in NYC); Brooke (kids Luci and Luna in Cape Town, South Africa), and Megan with partner Matty in San Diego. CA. plus my second wife's niece, Janet Foucher, a significant goddaughter Courtenay Lewis, a long term education addict, Karin Muller; plus two very important long term relationships: one over 40 years with Tom Smith and his family and another for some 30 years with Tree Arrington, his wife and the REAL Skills Network family that have made a huge impact on my life.

My mother was a beautiful seemingly fragile woman who led me through her complex life. She was married three times. First to my father who as an Auchincloss was listed in the Social Register, but preferred to be known for the fact that he had the first hanger at Newark Airport and was the first to fly the mail in New York State in the 20's; he was behind the scenes at the stock exchange as they built the ticker system, he was General MacArthur's signal officer in the Pacific and the first to land in Japan to set up the surrender location, and later became president of Tracerlab, then of AMP, Inc. My first stepfather was president of Lockheed Corp, he helped to set up Panam Airways in South America, then was president of Cerro de Pasco Corp. of Peru. My second stepfather was a French diplomat and poet who received a Nobel Prize for poetry in 1960.

That life meant that I met many famous people. At a young age I was led back to the dressing room to shake the hand of Arturo Toscanini, conductor of the NBC symphony orchestra. Around the age of 12 I was taken to Supreme court judge Felix Frankfurter's camp on the Potomac river and met Dean Acheson (Sec of State) and Francis Biddle (Attn General). In 1948 at Milton Academy I was playing with my yoyo and bounced it off the vest of T. S. Eliot then shook his hand with the yoyo string still in place to congratulate him on receiving the Nobel Prize for literature three days earlier. Invited to the inaugural ball for Eisenhower in 1953, I managed to get Pearl Bailey to autograph my program. I was at the ceremony when Jacques Chirac (then mayor of Paris, later President of France) presented my mother with the keys to Paris for her work for French poetry. My mother also received the Legion d'Honneur for contributions to French poetry.

Equipped with a Harvard MBA I sold aluminum for Kaiser, then even though I had won a plaid patterned ice bucket in a sales contest I was let go for lack of funds. An interview with Thomas J. Watson, President of IBM, led to a job and started a 28 year career where the industry went from punched cards, to large computers to PC's (I travelled for them to 35 states, went to Japan three times and Europe half a dozen times). After retirement I did business as: The Great Hot Air Balloon Emporium (commercial balloonist 20 years, over 400 flights); Wind Adventures (ballooning and certified windsurfer sales, instruction and trips for 10 years), Kasual Kayaks (16 years kayak sales and trips). I served at site selection manager for local Habitat for Humanity, treasurer for a local Sierra Club Chapter and the Barrett House and as Commodore for the Hudson River Board Sailors. I was a Co-founder of Neighborhood Housing (building housing with Model Cities money in Poughkeepsie) and of REAL Skills Network Inc. (Running programs and trips for students at risk in Poughkeepsie). Education has been a passion since I spent doing five years of research into the future of education for IBM products. REAL Skills has been direct contact with learning for thousands of Poughkeepsie inner city kids and members of the community with programs and theater productions. I am very proud of what happened there.

Blended in with all that; was single parenting and sharing life and growth with my three daughters. They are very different, but all vibrant, intelligent, independent, brave, loving, caring people whom I am immensely proud of. Each is unique, but all have made a great mark on the world.

Interested in seeing the world, I traveled to more than 40 countries, spending two months in New Zealand and Australia to hike the Milford Track, dig sapphires in the outback, watch the USA win the America's Cup near Perth, tour Tasmania, staying in hostels. I trekked in Nepal for 22 days in the mountains where there was a revolution when I was in Kathmandu. I flew a hot air balloon as a guest at the World Championships in Saga City Japan; swam with pilot whales in the Canary Islands, windsurfed in Maui, skied in Austria, snowboarded in France and kayaked in the Galapagos and canoed in Alaska. In Peru I traveled to 16,000 feet in the Andes and toured a mine 3,000 feet underground. Motorcycles have been a passion since I was 16 and rode my Harley in Sweden when my father was part of the Marshall Plan there. I did 3,000 miles in woods riding competition motorcycle enduros and trials. Still addicted in my seventies I went to rallies in Ohio and West Virginia and a special trip to Nova Scotia.

My tonsils were taken out twice, I had polio when I was nine (had to be carried from floor to floor in school, but fully

recovered). Broken arm at fifteen, appendectomy in college, broken collar bone in motorcycle event in my 40's, Later prostate removal took my cancer, a knee replacement helped, then a quintuple bypass, two valves repaired and a pacemaker kept me active until cancer came to close the door.

When you have a life such as I have had and felt such a connection to the world you wonder; just why was I so lucky. What was my responsibility to properly use that knowledge? I knew I would not do anything really great or notable, but just wanted to bring everything I had to each interaction, each person that I met. I guess my idea was that I would present a positive, thoughtful, caring effort to every connection, doing whatever I could to make that moment be the best that it could be.

My motto was "Keep on Truckin'" and I can recommend that to you. If you get a chance to do something, try it; bring to it the best you have. It can lead you to remarkable places, connections with great people, adventures and personal satisfaction.

Funeral arrangements are being handled by the Timothy P. Doyle Funeral Home 371 Hooker Ave. Poughkeepsie, New York 12603. If you would like to leave an online condolence please visit www.doylefuneralhome.com



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Published in the Poughkeepsie Journal from July 25 to July 27, 2015

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