



CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

Dirk t. D. Held Memorial

Friday, April 27, 2012

Reflections on Dirk t. D. Held

By Richard Moorton, Professor of Classics

Today I wish to reminisce about the things Dirk loved, for as a good man once said, where your heart is, there will your treasure be also.

Dirk loved life and he loved his life. The boyhood stories he told me were happy, and his school days at Brown were filled with excellent adventures, including hilarious astonishment at the madcap Ted Turner, a fellow student. Dirk was fortunate enough to find a young woman as fine as himself, and they became life partners in a patently good marriage. They had two daughters, dear to his heart, as were the two grandsons with whom they presented him. Dirk loved people, and made friends as easily as a bird flies. A bon vivant, he loved good food, good wine, and good company.

Dirk loved to travel. He formed friendships all over the world. A cultivated man, he loved the arts, particularly music, and immersed himself especially in opera, classical music, and jazz. Antiquity fascinated Dirk. He had a passion for philosophy, both ancient and modern. He was a genial conversationalist, wise and funny.

Professionally, Dirk loved the College, and he made it his life. He served in countless ways. The Classics department was his fulfillment. He was perennially Chairman because he did it so well.

He was wonderful with his students and colleagues and was one of the most beloved and respected professors on campus. Dirk was particularly encouraging to junior faculty. He worked like Heracles, but by choice. Dirk considered the Classics Department his legacy—he used those very words—and lived in the hope that it would survive him with the critical mass necessary to cover the enormous range of the field. He poured himself out for Connecticut College and we are in his debt.

In the awful days that followed his death I found myself on the phone with one of his former students struggling with grief. I realized that Dirk lived a good and full life, a life he chose and loved, honorably and well, gave much to many, and that he had passed about as gently as a man can. Searching the language, all I could think to tell the lady was, “The course is over, and Dirk made an A+.” That seemed to help, and I believe it.

Dirk tom Dieck Held, Hail and Farewell. You were a *rara avis*, as fine a person as I’ve ever known. In the time left to me I do not think that a man like this will come my way again.