

Franklin Thomas (Tom) Butler Berry Academy Class of 1965 Mount Berry, Georgia

Reluctantly launched from Berry at graduation, I was off to Mercer University in Macon to become a college man. After getting used to having women in my classes, a daunting task for a healthy 18 year old, I settled into college and fraternity life with a serious eye for studying, and the other on the war. With Viet Nam at full throttle I wanted to complete my education before going into the military.



I received my degree in Psychology in 1969 and worked in sales until I enlisted in the Army for three years in 1970. After Basic at Ft. Jackson and Advanced Training at Ft. Sam Houston and Valley Forge, I was assigned to Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, D.C. Washington proved to be a very volatile place to live. With the war and Watergate it was always a boiling hot spot. I was a Psychiatric Specialist and worked with every type of diagnoses, most being drug and psychotic backwash from the war. I received a healthy dose of the ravages of war by being in Valley Forge. It was the eastern amputee hospital and I saw more than I wanted to see of the devastation and carnage.

I was released from the Army after my three years and came back to Atlanta to live. I first worked as a drug counselor and then became director of a large Senior Center in Douglasville, Ga. During that time I started graduate school and received my Masters Degree From Georgia State University in Exercise Physiology in 1980.

In 1974 I hired a beautiful Shorter College student for a summer job and she finally decided to go out with me after much harassment on my part. Two years later she jumped at the chance to marry me. See how things change! Beverly received her degree in music and has been a teacher in Douglas County for 28 years.



I helped open a gym as manager in Douglasville in 1984 and later became a partner in the business. We now own three Gold's Gyms and have remained at the forward edge in the industry.

Beverly and I have two fantastic kids. My oldest, Ben, is 21 years old and presently a Senior at the University of Georgia in Athens. He is in the School of Business in marketing and real estate. My beautiful daughter Polly is 19 years old and is a Sophomore at the University of West Georgia, presently with an undeclared major.

We are members of The First Presbyterian Church of Douglasville. I exercise daily and also practice yoga and meditation on a regular basis. I read constantly and enjoy writing. I paint in oils and do some drawing as well. I have been taking painting lessons for two of years. I play the guitar and love to cook. My love for cooking comes from my years in Hill Hall working for Jean and Richard Wood, two of my superheroes.

Since leaving Berry, I have revisited my memories times through dreams of the night and day. The truth is that has never left me. The beauty of the land and the mysterious chemistry of all the people I lived with, worked with, and learned from, altered my DNA and caused a shift in the force of life forever. I believe that was true for most of us. Our changes most certainly for the good. So now I look back. With each the young faces of those so dear to me fade just a little, but become more precious to my understanding of my life since Amazing how those short years colored all the rest.



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Tommy Butler as I remember calling him now goes by just Tom. He has been a tremendous asset in helping us prepare for our class reunion. As I have mentioned previously, he has the ability to paint with words some of those lost memories from our old high school days. Some of Tom's fondest memories were winning the 1964 Christmas Basketball Tournament, went to the state basketball tournament two times, best memories were the everyday happenings at work and school. He was very fond of all the faculty and staff. Tom worked at the gym, campus crew, and dining hall. His greatest achievement since graduation was receiving the International Sales Award from the International Racquet Sports Association. Civic and community involvement include United Way, Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis Club and D.C. Coartern Track Club. His favorite hobbies include writing, painting (oils), reading and antiques (junk).

You can take the boy out of Berry but you can't take Berry out of the boy.
David Woody