

**Memorial Tribute to Edward D. Palmer III (“Ted”)
BCHS Class of 1961
(d. March, 1963)**

By Dean W. Hartley, Class of 1960

I really miss Ted Palmer. Ted died young, of Leukemia at Albany Medical Center in 1963. At any age he would have been much too young to die, so wonderful were his gifts. Gifts of friendship, ambition, flair, class, imagination. Personally he was such a good friend, and I also developed tremendous respect and admiration for him. Not just during his years at BCHS, but through ongoing contact with him after we both graduated. Fellow students as well as BC faculty still remember him. And there was a memorial fund set up for him at Williams College shortly after his death.

His mother, Alison Palmer, was glad of our friendship, because, she told me confidentially, while dishing out breakfasts at our 1960 “Dawn Dance,” she saw me as someone who had enlarged Ted’s group of friends with upperclassmen and brought him into senior high clubs and organizations. With his ill-health in earlier school levels—and some resulting diffidence—had partly prevented him from fully entering into.

Yes, a wonderful person. Here are some of the interests and activities that led to my friendship, admiration, and respect for him. Some, of course are more important than others. You can decide which:

* Ted worked hard and became an Honor Society member and Salutatorian for the Class of 1961. But he didn’t do it for those two honors. It was the challenge and discipline of the work that appealed. He was also in the second BC class to pursue a complete AP (Advanced Placement) program, designed and inaugurated by Mr. Brooks (Cit. Ed.) in the wake of the Sputnik, challenge.

He became an excellent skier—especially of intermediate and expert trails at Mr. Snow and Jiminy. Put that down to his adventuresome spirit. And Ted really enjoyed the heated outdoor pool at Snow after a long day.

He and I co-founded the Pierian Society, BC’s first literary club, and we edited the first publication *The Pierian Spring*, in 1959-60, with many contributors, under the helpful direction of Eng. teacher Sally Kraft. the publication revealed his wit, as well as good editing instincts.

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Ted's wit was further tested when—despite his continuing shyness—he took a comic, knockabout part in the Class of '61 senior play, *Bells are Ringing*, Fall of 1960.

Right after we met in the Winter of '59, I was awarded the County's Sesquecentennial Hudson-Champlain Prize. It meant a trip to Holland as a cultural ambassador of the state as well. This was great, but it meant a month away from classes. And, more importantly, missing out on the final, secret planning of Doris Pock's big 30th's birthday bash at BCJHS—what I called the "Rally Round the Hag" Party. Who could take over the coordination of preliminary plans—the food (the cake!), decorations, invitations? I turned to Ted, who did a terrific job. He was a Pock fan too. I got back just in time. The April 29 party was a terrific, packed success, and Mrs. Pock was delighted with her "Monsters."

Ted wasn't a team player in sports, except for tennis. Another legacy of his earlier illness, I think, but also, team sports bored him. Even on TV. He was a smooth and deadly tennis player however, and invaluable in doubles. Later, he came to enjoy Williams College football games, he told me. With a date. And BC tolerated indifference to team sports then.

His loyalty to friends came through most clearly, with a relative. He was concerned his close Slingerlands cousin, William "Del" (now "Will") Adamson, who had transferred from BC to an out-of-state prep school, wouldn't know many of his new upperclassmen friends. So he privately asked me to include Del in some get-togethers and parties. That I did, and in turn, introduced Del to blonde Wendy Wriston, for whom the word "personality" might have been coined. The circle closed when they married in 1965.

With a perceptive, analytical mind, he had no trouble with the BC math and science requirements, which flattened me. But he also, quietly, continued his sketching and quite professional drawing, which I didn't discover till later. Most at BC, I think, gave up art after having wonderful Mr. Spelich in 9th grade. Not Ted. That's when he really began.

Taking risks? Two memories crop up here. With little preparation, and no knowledge of the island or its weather, Ted, Del and I wound up making two trips to a shaky A-frame on Martha's Vineyard in summer, '62. (All our parents said a car-trip to the Seattle World's Fair was too much of a stretch, so Mr. Palmer--in real estate--pulled that wonderful little house out of a magician's hat, and off we went). A few clothes, some Sea & Ski, and almost no money. We did everything on the Vineyard you can do there, and came back happy, rested, and tanned. Just what a vacation is for.

...Coming back was kind of a letdown. Albany in summer used to be very flat. So, we planned out and in record time held what we billed as a "Greco-Roman Orgy" complete with colorful invitations, elaborate costumes, scrolls, murals, and sculpture with a literal sit-down (sit-on-the floor of the porch) barbecue, at the Palmer home. Eyebrows were

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raised all over the Delmar-Slingerlands area. Parents grew nervous. Phone lines heated up with speculative gossip. But it was risky fun, and the Palmers wisely turned a blind eye. Knowing just what fun can be when three teenagers put their heads together.

Those are a few memories of why I liked and admired Ted. There was much going on behind the scene that last couple of years which neither he, I nor Del knew about, of course. One can see that now. But I'm glad he didn't know what lay ahead. I'm glad I didn't.

Oh yes, I miss him.



Christmas Vacation, 1959. Mt. Snow
weekend.

L. to R.: Ted Palmer, Polly Hale (both '61)
Linda McCall ('60), Dean Hartley ('60)
and Louise Galisto ('61).

Photo taken by John Lyons ('62; d. 11)