



Thomas E. Porter

August 28, 1936 - June 26, 2011

Thomas E. Porter, 74, of Baroda, passed away on Sunday, June 26, 2011, at Lakeland Continuing Care in St. Joseph.

A memorial service celebrating his life will be held at 12:00 Noon, on Friday, July 1, 2011, at the Fairplain Presbyterian Church, 210 W. Napier Ave., in Fairplain, with Rev. LaVerne Davenport officiating. Visitation with the family will be held at the church from 5:00 until 7:00 P.M., Thursday, and again from 11:00 until the time of the service, on Friday. Burial will be private at a later date. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to either the Benton Harbor Habitat for Humanity, Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen, Lakeshore Public High School, Lakeland Continuing Care in St. Joseph, or the Lewy Body Dementia Association. Messages of condolence may be sent to www.florin.net.

Tom was born on August 28, 1936, in Lansing, Michigan. He was one of four children born to F. Elbert and Lois Porter. He married Sharron Fletcher and together had three daughters, Nancy, Kathy, and Linda. His family was his first love along with education and church. He earned two master's degrees from MSU and WMU and taught Math for 39 years at Lakeshore Public High School. Prior to that, Tom taught high school shop and math classes in Rochester, MI. Tom served on the Michigan Council of Teachers of Mathematics and numerous activities associated with the high school – one of them being the announcer for the marching band. Additionally, he served on many church boards, was a member of the Zion United Church of Christ, and loved being in church choirs throughout his life. Tom will be remembered for his smile and for his love of a good joke as well as being a handyman who was always willing to lend a helping hand. He was fascinated by nature and loved doing outdoor activities often including biking or playing tennis and golf.

Tom is survived by his wife Sharron Fletcher Porter; daughters, Nancy (Clarence) Korendyke of Fort Washington, Maryland, Kathleen (Jack) Dutke of Springfield, Virginia, and Linda (Darrin) Thornton of State College, Pennsylvania; grandchildren, Mary and David Korendyke, Edward and Zachary Dutke, and Layla Thornton; and by his siblings,

Douglas (Cecelia) Porter of Chevy Chase, Maryland, Mary Ann (Bob) Minich of Midland, Michigan, and Dale (Betty) Porter of Nederland, Colorado.

Tom was preceded in death by his parents.

Cemetery Details

Private Burial

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 30. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Fairplain Presbyterian Church
210 W. Napier Ave.
Benton Harbor, MI

Visitation

JUL 1. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Fairplain Presbyterian Church
210 W. Napier Ave.
Benton Harbor, MI

Service

JUL 1. 12:00 PM (ET)

Fairplain Presbyterian Church
210 W. Napier Ave.
Benton Harbor, MI

Tribute Wall

W1

“ He was a terrific teacher, mentor, neighbor and family friend. Smart, witty, caring, occasionally caustic and always willing to help. Tom is a great man who will be missed greatly. May he rest in peace.

William Nitz, class of 1994 - July 05, 2011 at 01:13 PM

AM

“ Probably one of my favorite teachers ever. I just remember his kind smile and calm demeanor when he'd help me with geometry. He will be missed!

Amanda Mortimore-Kramer - July 05, 2011 at 09:45 AM

JL

“ Mr. Porter's mix of wit, character, goodwill and ability to teach the toughest material in a way you could understand it made him my favorite teacher. I still tell some of his jokes to this day. We'll miss you, Mr. Porter!

Jeff LeBlanc - July 05, 2011 at 09:07 AM

KD

“ It is so heartwarming to read the wonderful stories and memories here about my Dad. He was my best teacher (as a Dad, and yes, I had him for Algebra II), and without a doubt a Master Teacher. He helped me when I became a teacher and couldn't "reach" some of my students.
He was very proud of his students. He often began, "One of my former students..." and would relate an accomplishment or encounter. He valued each person who walked through the door of his classroom. Yet, he never understood how much he affected those students. One example of this is one day when we were at the beach with my children. A man came up to me and asked if that was Mr. Porter who taught at LHS. (My sisters and I had this happen quite a bit.) It turned out it was a man who had been in class with me through elementary school. He didn't remember me, but he remembered the one class (Geometry) he had with my Dad! He went up to Dad and thanked him for teaching him math and told him how much it had helped him in his life. Afterward, Dad said to me, "That was very nice, but I only had him for one class!" He truly didn't see how he had helped this man!

Kathy (Porter), class of 1982

Kathy Dutke - July 04, 2011 at 07:07 AM

E1

“ One of my favorite teachers ever. Made learning easy. He even came to my house and played basketball with me. You don't find teachers like him everyday. Take care Mr. Porter, I will miss you.

Eric Bahm - Class of 1989 - July 02, 2011 at 06:58 AM

JM

“ Having Mr Porter as a teacher helped me to realize that I was not the "math dummy" that my 8th grade math teacher lead me to believe I was. When my son asks me who my favorite teacher in high school was, I have to say it was probably Mr Porter.

Julia (Nye) Miller Class of 72

Julia Miller - July 01, 2011 at 08:33 AM

NP

“ Mr. Porter is one reason that I went on to minor in math at Grand Valley. He was a great teacher, one of the best I had at Lakeshore. My condolences to his family, and God's peace in knowing that he is now singing with the angels around the throne of God.

Nancy (Strong) Pike, LHS class of 1973

Nancy L Pike - July 01, 2011 at 08:07 AM

MP

“ Michele Pesosky lit a candle in memory of Thomas E. Porter



Michele Pesosky - July 01, 2011 at 03:49 AM

A8

“ I remember Mr. Porter's Geometry class fondly - his dry sense of humor, his "Porter's Puzzler" bulletin board, his homework policy (Homework did not get graded, it was a learning tool. He merely tracked whether a student did their homework. He made it clear to us that the only time this record was called on was if parents asked why their child was struggling in his class. At 15 or 16, this was quite meaningful to me. Imagine a teacher telling me that I could judge whether I needed to do the work to understand the subject!). I also remember him singing the low bass notes in Lakeshore Summer Theatre. Praying for his loved ones who mourn his departure, even as Heaven celebrates his arrival... (I hope I get to share a folder with him when we sing in the choir up there!)

Aaron Niemi, LHS Class of 87 - June 30, 2011 at 11:20 PM

AN

that should read Aaron Niemi, LHS Class of 1987

Aaron Niemi - June 30, 2011 at 11:22 PM

DD

“ Mr. Porter was one of my favorite teachers in high school - he made geometry easy to understand and we had fun along the way. I will always remember Mr. Porter's sense of humor, patience, and kind generosity. He touched so many people's lives through his many years of teaching at Lakeshore High School, including mine (LHS Class of '85) and my mother's (LHS Class of '64). I had the pleasure of knowing his family outside of the classroom, and I always enjoyed my times with them. When we happened to run into Mr. and Mrs. Porter at a restaurant after years had passed, we had a wonderful chat and they proudly showed us pictures of their growing family. We pray for them now as we share their loss. His family has lost a courageous husband and father, and his community has lost an exemplary gentleman.

Darrell J. Dinges, LHS Class of 1985

Darrell J. Dinges - June 30, 2011 at 09:43 PM

MN

“ Tom Porter was a teacher's teacher, He never gave up on those of us who had trouble with geometry. He also had a beautiful singing voice which I had the opportunity to hear many times. It was a pleasure to chat with him from time to time throughout the years, he will be missed.

Mary Jo Nye LHS '73

Mary Jo Nye - June 30, 2011 at 09:09 PM

JA

“ Mr. Porter was my favorite high school teacher. I had him for Algebra 1, 2, 3 & 4 and Geometry 1 & 2. He reminded me so much of my grandfather. I had the opportunity to see Mr. and Mrs. Porter every once in awhile at the grocery store and chat for a few. He will be missed!

Jennifer Arent - June 30, 2011 at 08:08 PM

LW

“ Both my husband and I have warm memories of Mr. Porter. I personally remember his amazing yo-yo skills! For me, it was a nice distraction from the geometry. ;0)

He will be missed.

Lance Wagner '91 and Laura (Anderson) Wagner '93

Laura Wagner - June 30, 2011 at 08:02 PM

CN

“ Mr. Porter was an amazing teacher. My whole family had him as we passed through high school and each of us have great memories of him. Despite already being at Lakeshore for 30+ years when I had him, he still found new ways to reach all students and connect with each of them. Mr. Porter was an inspiration to me as I became a math teacher and I will always remember him fondly.

*Cheli Nye
Classof '95*

Cheli Nye - June 30, 2011 at 07:53 PM

CG

“ When thinking about Mr. Porter, I have to echo some of the sentiments, whether direct or implied, written by others. After all the teachers I've had over many years, throughout a variety of schools, I find it difficult to remember even a handful. Only a few have touched me in any way that I still have memories of them; Mr. Porter is one of the very few who holds fond memories for me. Although in the Lakeshore school system for just three years, I was impressed with Mr. Porter because he was a devoted and knowledgeable teacher, involved and nurturing with his students, friendly but able to discipline, and always with a ready, genuine smile. Even though I probably haven't seen Mr. Porter since I graduated in 1966, I'll still miss him, realizing his presence. Of course, good men are always present in our minds and our hearts, even when they're gone from this earth.



I pray that all who are mourning Mr. Porter find strength and comfort in many happy memories that he's left behind.

*Christine Gaunder
Carson CA*

Christine Gaunder - June 30, 2011 at 04:54 PM

KS

“ Thank you for sharing your dad and husband with us. He was a wonderful teacher, man and always a friendly face whenever and where I would see him. May God watch over your family in their time of sorrow. Kim Rospierski Schmidt

Kim Rospierski Schmidt - June 30, 2011 at 03:18 PM

JG

“ What a wonderful and unforgettable "gentle-man"!! Even many years after graduation,, Mr. Porter would always smile and have something nice to say when meeting him at the grocery store, or on some other occasion. Several years ago, while working as an Election Inspector, we ended up using Mr. Porter's classroom as a voting precinct. He would always have a little "thought-provoking" puzzle on his bulletin board for us to ponder during election day, and would then check in at the end of the day to see if we had solved it! We will miss his wonderful smile and gentle nature! Joyce (Geipel) Gano - LHS Class Of 1965

Joyce (Geipel) Gano - June 30, 2011 at 02:04 PM

PH

“ *When I think of Mr. Porter, a beautiful smile comes to mind. He was my math teacher too in the early days of Lakeshore High School. I did not know him well, but from the stories you all have told on here (Bruce, Dan, Terry), his lovely smile was indicative of a giving, caring spirit. Mr. Porter is one of those few human beings who somehow stays with you. I am grateful that our paths crossed, all those decades ago. A lovely, lovely man.*

*Patrice (Gauder) Heeran
Class of '65*

Patrice (Gauder) Heeran - June 30, 2011 at 10:42 AM

JJ

“ *1 file added to the album In memory of Mr. Porter, from his students*



Joe Jewell - June 29, 2011 at 11:44 PM

LM

You guys are cool. What a great tribute!

Linda Mantke-Dolezan - June 30, 2011 at 08:53 AM

CP

Mr. Porter would be so very flattered to be remembered by so many!

Chris Dwan Preston Class of '66

Chris Dwan Preston - June 30, 2011 at 08:59 AM

CP

“ *Tom Porter was just a good guy! He always had a kind word, a joke, and a smile for all. His teaching methods and delivery would keep all the kids interested...even the non-math kids, like me. It was obvious he loved his job and the students he taught. He was always one of the first teachers invited to our reunions, just because he was our Mr. Porter. To think of the thousands of students' lives he so positively touched and the memories we all carry with us is amazing. God speed, Mr. Porter!*

*Chris Dwan Preston
LHS Class of '66*

Chris Dwan Preston - June 29, 2011 at 09:47 PM

DB

“ My favorite teacher at Lakeshore High was Mr. Tom Porter. He was interesting and professional, and made Algebra my favorite class. He was always happy and positive, with a contagious smile. And he was always supportive, and when we talked he made me feel worthwhile and important.
I appreciate having had Mr. Porter as a teacher and model, and I will miss him.
Bruce L. Benson, Ph.D.
Class of 1965

Dr. Bruce L. Benson - June 29, 2011 at 03:06 PM

VN

“ Vicki Nye Nitz lit a candle in memory of Thomas E. Porter



Vicki Nye Nitz - June 29, 2011 at 12:51 PM

TM

“ Tom Porter was my high school math teacher (LHS '65) and one of my favorite people, someone I will always have fond memories of. He always had a smile on his face and good things to say. Even though math wasn't "my thing", I never minded going to his class because of his great attitude. Lakeshore was sure lucky when they found him and were smart enough to keep him. He gave so much to so many people over the years and I know he will be missed by all who knew him. My best memory of him has nothing to do with math...I had lost an opal out of a ring and the floors were terrazzo in the halls....Mr Porter actually found the small stone for me by getting down on his knees and putting his head as close to the floor as he could so as to see the stone.... amazingly, it was there. He then glued it back into my setting for me....and it's still there today! He was a man of many talents.... God bless you, Tom Porter

Teresa (McDannell) Molnar - June 29, 2011 at 12:14 PM

DD

“ Tom was my math teacher (class of '66) and taught at least one of my children. I saw him just before he retired and we reminisced about the old days. He said he still kept the giant slide rule on the wall in front of his classroom to see who in his modern day classes might ask what it was. He was a great teacher, and a good man with a great sense of humor and engaging personality. All of his students - myself included - are grateful for his tutelage.

(One final thought on Tom: when I was a senior, as we were all trying to determine our futures, I used to say I was deciding whether to become a shepherd or a brain surgeon. Tom was teaching a wood shop class as well as math. On the eve of graduation he presented me with a beautiful wooden shepherd's staff - hooked top and all. I kept it for years. I never became either as it turned out. And I never forgot Tom.)

Dan Deja

Daniel R. Deja - June 29, 2011 at 11:10 AM

BN

“ I'm one of Tom's students from long ago--LHS '65. Eventually, I became a teacher myself, an English Prof at the Air Force Academy. I ask my students at the end of the semester what they think they'll remember from class 20 or 40 years later. I tell them that in all honesty I remember nothing from many of my classes. But Tom's classes--I still remember them well. As if it were yesterday. Tom always communicated the joy of engaging knowledge and learning. He'll always live on in the hearts and minds of his many students.

Bill Newmiller

Bill Newmiller - June 29, 2011 at 10:51 AM