

Former Seneca Principal, Tom McCarthy, dies at 82



On July 21, 2016, Seneca lost one of her own. Thomas Rutherford McCarthy, 82, passed away after battling Stage 4 melanoma. He was born in New London, CT in 1934 and graduated from Union College in Barboursville, KY and from the University of Louisville. He spent 34 years in the Jefferson County Public School System as a biology teacher, counselor and principal at Seneca High School. He later served as principal at Durrett and Valley High Schools.

But he was a horse trainer before he was a teacher, dating back to the late 1950s. His grandfather was a jockey in Ireland and both his father and uncle trained horses at racetracks in New England. The army draft cost him a chance at veterinary school at Ohio State, but it didn't keep him away from horses. Even after beginning his education career in Jefferson County, he kept his hands in every aspect of the thoroughbred business. With some help from his two sons – Tom.....Tim – he built his own farm on 12 acres of land in southeastern Louisville, put up the barn and fence, baled hay, spent time foaling mares and kept a daily training log for each of his horses. Teaching and training were two professions that worked well together. McCarthy could get to the track before dawn to tend to his horses, then teach, then get back to the track for the afternoon races. He is best known for the 2009 Blue Grass Stakes winner and Kentucky Derby runner, General Quarters, who he claimed for \$20,000 in 2008.

He may have been a famous trainer with a horse in the Kentucky Derby but to those of us who called Seneca home, he was a beloved biology teacher, counselor and principal. Whether you experienced him as principal/enforcer, knowledgeable biology teacher or good-natured bestower-of-diplomas, Seneca High School would not be the same place without his influence. Our condolences go to those who survived him including his wife of 54 years, Patricia Scanlon McCarthy; children Tom McCarthy (Jamie) – Seneca Class of 1981, Dede McCarthy – Seneca Class of 1982, Molly Adams (Mike), Tim McCarthy (Andrea) , Meg Livesay (Kenny) and his eight grandchildren. May he rest in peace.

Information from Courier-Journal, Wikipedia.org, ESPN news, paulickreport.com, Reed Palmer Photography/Churchill Downs