Tom as a Research Advisor

The Warner Memorial Symposium

NCAR Foothills Lab
Boulder, CO
2 December 2011

Terry C. Tarbell
Tom—The Person

- Calm, hardly ever got his feathers ruffled
- Hard worker
- Dedicated to advancing the art and science of meteorology
- Immensely enjoyed NWP and working with students
1970s PSU NWP Environment

- PSU Computer Center had IBM mainframes
- Cray 1 at NCAR, only access terminal was at Land and Water Resources Building
  - Submit card decks for weekend or over night runs
  - Output mailed on microfilm
Forecaster vs Modeler

• The forecaster is unhappy when the model makes a poor forecast
• The modeler is amazed when the model doesn’t blow up!

John Hovermale
Tom—As a Research Advisor

- Ingredients of a meteorological NWP modeler:
  - Meteorology
  - Mathematical approximations [finite differences, etc]
  - Code [efficient implementations, FORTRAN]

- Tom excelled in all three ingredients
  - PSU MM’s efficient memory use was Tom’s creation
Tom—As a Research Advisor

• Master of helping to set up model runs to address specific problems
• Master of interpreting results
Tom—As a Research Advisor

• Tom epitomized: “Seek to understand, then to be understood”
  – Excelled at reading and commenting on drafts
  – Excelled at assisting advisees with research plans
Tom—As a Research Advisor

- Tom was the master of the open-ended question, the probing question
Tom—As a Research Advisor

- Always made time for students
  - Advisees had weekly meetings but could drop in at any time
  - Taught by example
- Always encouraging
  - Never made advisees feel like there was no hope
Tom—Many Thanks!!

- Research Advisor
- Friend & Mentor
- Father & Grandfather
- Scientist
- Researcher
- Meteorological Modeler

Tom will long be remembered for his numerous contributions to meteorology and by the colleagues he interacted with over several decades.