

Tim Van Hooser

by Michael C. Alewine

If you work long enough anywhere, you will see people come and go, and it seems such a natural and organic process. But this is so very different. On April 19, 2009, we received the call that our friend and colleague, **Timothy Lee "Tim" Van Hooser**, had died suddenly at his home in Maxton.

We are all still very much in a state of shock. There is a memorial poster at the Reference Desk and people are still just learning of the tragic news. Scores of students and community patrons still come up to the desk and share their disbelief and such wonderful stories of how Tim helped them – many stating that they would probably not have passed a certain course if it were not for Tim's research assistance. If you knew Tim, then you know what a great loss this is. I have never met anyone that Tim did not get along with or that he would not help out at the drop of a hat. He touched so many people's lives, and he was a good friend to all.

Tim worked at the Reference Desk of Mary Livermore Library for more than six years providing reference services. He had a great sense of compassion and embodied the strongest service commitment that I have ever witnessed in a library. His charm and wit were tremendous. He told fantastic jokes and laughed at mine, which really are not that funny. He was a giving person in all things. He was also a talented musician and performer.

Tim lived a life and a half in his 51 years. Tim was born September 20, 1957, in Nashville, Tennessee, a son of the late **Perry F. "Pete" Van Hooser** and **Marilyn Kempton Van Hooser**. He traveled around the country and the world working in the entertainment industry, including traveling with Broadway shows. He also worked as a singer, dancer, and piano player aboard a number of cruise ships and traveled throughout the Pacific and Caribbean.

Tim later settled in West Palm Beach, Florida, where he worked at the West Palm Beach Public Library. One of his duties was operating the Library's bookmobile, which housed a collection of more than 2,000 volumes and served citizens throughout West Palm Beach. He often spoke so longingly of his time in Florida.



Tim Van Hooser

Photo by Bobby Ayers



Tim Van Hooser, Robert Arndt, Michael Alewine, Carl Danis

Photo by Cindy Saylor

Tim later moved to Maxton, North Carolina, to care for his mother. In the capacity of Library Technical Assistant for Reference Services at Mary Livermore Library, Tim provided reference services during the evening hours. He also chaired the Social Concerns Committee and volunteered to help anyone in the Library – all you had to do was ask. He often provided entertainment at library functions and always provided choral assistance with the annual Christmas dinner, where he managed to put a smile on **Susan Whitt's** face and made everyone laugh by finding clever ways to incorporate her name into the lyrics of such standards as "The Twelve Days of Christmas." Tim also worked part-time at DeTamble Library at Saint Andrews Presbyterian College in Laurinburg.

“Tim’s friendship transcended age, race, gender, religion, and all the other politically correct categories. Somehow Tim was able to relate to the ‘person,’ regardless of the outer trappings. He made each individual feel like his special friend because his heart was that big and he was able to be a caring friend to countless individuals. When Tim interacted with someone he gave that person his undivided attention as if that moment, that conversation, was critically important to him, and it made a difference in his relationships with his colleagues, the patrons, anyone who came into the Library,” said **Anne Coleman**, Assistant Dean for Research Services.

In 2007, Tim transferred to William Madison Randall Library at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. Although he hated to leave UNCP, he was so excited about trying something new and about the increased opportunities for entertainment jobs at local Wilmington clubs and restaurants. Of course, he fit right in at Randall Library, and he greatly enjoyed the charms of Wilmington.

This past year, when the economy began to take a sharp downturn, Tim returned to Maxton, where he still maintained a home, and he took a position as an administrative assistant in the Communications Department at Saint Andrews Presbyterian College. Tim said that it was a very exciting and demanding position, and that he enjoyed the dynamic challenges that he faced each day. He was never bored. At one point in time, Tim was working at UNCW, UNCP, and Saint Andrews simultaneously, and we are still not sure how he did this. But, that was Tim. There was just no way to keep pace with him.



Tim Van Hooser and Cindy Saylor

Photo by Bobby Ayers



Tim Van Hooser and his dog, Maggie

Photo by Cindy Saylor

Tim was president of the Maxton Historical Society and involved in many charitable causes. He sang and played piano at many churches and local festivals and charitable events. He always freely gave of his time and energy, even when he could not afford to do so. He was always a featured act at the Collard Festival in Maxton. He also played at restaurants and private parties, adding a taste of elegance in his tuxedo.

Tim is survived by his partner for life, **Tom Waage** of Maxton; his stepmother, **Toula Van Hooser** of Laurinburg; two brothers, **Perry "Pete" Van Hooser III** who is serving in the United States Navy SEALs and **Hans Van Hoover** of Ohio; a sister, **Marilyn Jo Van Hooser** of Ohio; an uncle, **Gary Van Hooser** of Ohio; an aunt, **Sandra Yinglin** of Ohio; and a host of friends across the country and around the world.

“Tim was like a brother to me,” said **Cindy Saylor**, Assistant Chief Information Officer for Educational Technologies and Client Services. “He was the most genuine and non-judgmental person you could ever know, and he cared for everyone he met along the journey of his fascinating life. He was the eternal optimist, seeing the glass as a full pitcher for which he would share if your glass was empty and needed a refill. This man could find a silver lining in anything. Tim had a passion for people, animals, music, art, local history, baking, and jokes. Good golly, could he tell a knee-slapper! His talents also included creating some out-of-this-world desserts and brightening a room just by walking into it. If you knew Tim, you understand the sadness for the loss, but you also realize how blessed you are to have known him. He’ll reside forever in our memories and our hearts.”