

Half Staff – W.S Mallory Lash

February 23, 2007

W.S. Mallory Lash, a life-long outdoorsman, hiked and trekked the world, while rising to become a principal in one of Boston's most prestigious architectural firms, died on Friday morning, Feb. 23, 2007 at Addison Gilbert Hospital, Gloucester. Married for 56 years to MaryAnn (Smith) Lash, with whom he made their home on Rowe Avenue, Rockport, he was 78. Diagnosed with thyroid cancer in December 2002, he underwent several operations and clinical trials, stoical about the physical challenges, hopeful for the treatments. His wife has said, "Music and the out-of-doors were his private solace during his illness."

Love of the outdoors was expected of Mallory Lash. Born in 1928, he was named for the legendary Mount Everest climber George Mallory who disappeared on Mount Everest in 1924. He was introduced to the outdoors by his father William – an engineer who explored a number of far northern "bush" sites for Quebec Hydro-electric. Later, Mallory Lash would climb extensively on Vancouver Island, the mainland of British Columbia, Washington State and here in the East in the White Mountains, the Adirondacks, and the mountains of Maine, where he created a cross-island safari, east-to-west on Mount Desert Island.

The Lash family hiked together through Cape Ann, and the New Hampshire woods, sailed on Rockport's Sandy Bay and Maine's Penobscot Bay. One summer the family took a two-week horse-drawn caravan trip through western Ireland, undaunted by having to trade in their first horse who turned out to be a runaway.

Sailing in the summers would be supplanted by skiing in the winters, at more than 60 ski areas here and abroad by his wife's count. "He enjoyed racing on cross-country skis well into his seventies," his daughter Stephanie remembers. By his own admission, his younger daughter Cynthia recalls, "His favorite month of the year was January, because it is the snowiest and coldest."

Lash vacations were other worldly as well and the envy of his awed friends and neighbors: camping in Siberia, hiking in Mongolia, hiking around the Black Sea. returning to Mongolia a second time, Mr. Lash said their adventure "was something we feel is very rare in this world because it's a forgotten corner of the planet." His and his wife's last trip was just this past June – two weeks in the mountains of Switzerland.

"Shortly after Mallory and my sister were married, I went with them on a mountain climbing expedition in the West," recalls Michael Smith, his brother-in-law. "That is when I learned just how calmly assured Mallory was, and how competent to deal with difficult situations."

Meanwhile, among the bricks and mortar, his architectural career flourished. After graduating from the Harvard Graduate School of Design in 1953, he practiced as an architect in Vancouver, British Columbia, and Boston, before. In 1959, he accepted a position in the Boston Architectural firm of Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson & Abbott, then as now one of Boston's most prestigious firms. Over the next 30 years, he rose to become a principal of the firm, overseeing major projects at Brown University Medical School, Wellesley College Library, Brandeis University, Rhode Island Hospital and many other schools, hospitals and libraries. He was quoted in a Boston Globe interview of 1980 as stating that, "Architecture is an art, whose medium is people. If you can make it work, you can



make anything work.” He saw it as “a drama of designing and coordinating all the players.”

Both the Town of Rockport and the Lash family benefited from his architectural expertise. He initiated and was the first chairperson of the Rockport Historical Commission, an early effort in 1976 to preserve the genuine charm of Rockport that has attracted visitors from all over the world. To establish a photographic record of historic buildings, he would get up with the sun and by 6 a.m. be on his bicycle and out photographing historic buildings before cars parked in front of them. Mr. Lash was also the chairperson of the town library building committee that oversaw the conversion of the old Tarr School building on School Street into the new town library, known as the Denghausen building.

At his home in Rockport and at his vacation home in Jackson, NH, he put his building skills to work. In Rockport he devised Rube Goldberg ways of venting the summer’s heat or opening high windows with a pulley system, even once building a moon-viewing pavilion for his daughter’s rabbits. He also built a Norwegian-style log cabin writer’s retreat in Jackson for his wife. His most recent project was an addition to his daughter’s 200 year-old home on the village green in South Amherst.

William Stanley Mallory Lash was born on May 29, 1928, the son of the late Alfred William and Dorothy (Worth) Lash in Montreal, Canada. When he was eight, the family moved to St. Catharine’s, Ontario. He attended prep school at Ridley College in St. Catharine’s before graduating from George School in Newtown, Pa., to which he transferred because it was a Quaker school. He graduated from Haverford College in 1949, having majored in history of art, and from the Harvard Graduate School of Design, with a degree in architecture in 1953.

Following graduation from Harvard, he returned to Canada as a practicing architect, first in Ottawa and then in Vancouver. He joined Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson & Abbott in 1959, from which he retired as a principal in the firm in 1990.

A pacifist and independent thinker, Mr. Lash was committed to “finding a solution.”

Mallory Lash leaves his wife, MaryAnn, the owner of Peter Smith Publishing in Magnolia; two daughters, Stephanie Lash of Orrington, Maine, and Cynthia McHale of South Amherst; two granddaughters and two grandsons.

ARRANGEMENTS: A memorial service will be held on Thursday, March 1, at 10 a.m. in the Universalist Unitarian Church, 4 Cleaves St., Rockport. Funeral arrangements are being conducted by the Burgess & Mackey Funeral Home, 201 Main St., Rockport.

Boston Globe

Mallory Lash, 78; architect loved traveling, climbing
By Daniel J Muse, Globe Correspondent | March 1, 2007

Mallory Lash was named after famed mountaineer George Mallory , who died during a summit attempt on Mount Everest in 1924. Along with the name came the audacity and skill of the British

climber.

Mr. Lash climbed mountains across the country, from the West Coast to the peaks of New Hampshire's White Mountains. He and his wife of 56 years, MaryAnn, visited the far reaches of the globe. Their trips included camping excursions in Siberia and Mongolia and a two-week horse-drawn caravan trek across western Ireland. Their last trip was to Switzerland in June.

W. S. Mallory Lash of Rockport, a Boston architect, died of thyroid cancer Feb. 23 at Addison Gilbert Hospital in Gloucester. He was 78.

Born in Montreal, he moved with his family to St. Catharines, Ontario, when he was 8. He attended a preparatory school at Ridley College and George School, a Quaker school in Newtown, Pa.

Mr. Lash graduated from Haverford College, where he majored in art history, and from the Harvard University Graduate School of Design with a degree in architecture in 1953. In 1957 he joined the Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson and Abbott architectural firm in Boston. Mr. Lash worked at Shepley Bulfinch until his retirement in 1990.

"Clients and colleagues alike knew they could always rely on him, whatever the nature or magnitude of the project," said Carole Wedge, president of Shepley Bulfinch, in a statement. "Mallory was one of those rare people who truly gave his all to every client."

A colleague of 15 years at the firm, Lorrel Nichols of Quincy, often traveled with Mr. Lash to projects outside Boston, and the two found a mutual love of skiing and climbing. Mr. Nichols said his friend was at home on the slopes and regularly left the less fleet-footed Nichols in his wake. Their joint projects included the Danbury and New Milford hospitals in Connecticut and a building at Brown University. Mr. Lash worked on many projects at universities, hospitals, and libraries around Boston and Providence.

Another of his partners, Mason Smith of Cambridge, recalled that Mr. Lash's steady hand served him in business as well as in the mountains.

"He was just as solid as a rock," Mr. Smith said. "He was definitely the kind of guy you wanted holding the rope."

Colleagues remembered Mr. Lash as constantly seeking new experiences and as someone with a seemingly infinite reserve of fantastic stories.

Mr. Lash never used the buildings he designed or the mountains he climbed as platforms for boasting, however. His polite demeanor remained constant even when, early in life, he brushed close to fame. Mr. Nichols said that once in the 1950s, the tall and lean climber was asked to audition for the role of Tarzan in a big-screen film. Mr. Nichols said his friend politely declined.

"I think it just wasn't his cup of tea," Mr. Nichols said.

In addition to his wife, Mr. Lash leaves two daughters, Stephanie of Orrington, Maine, and Cynthia McHale of South Amherst; two granddaughters and two grandsons.

A memorial service will be said at 10 a.m. today in Universalist Unitarian Church in Rockport.