



## Terence W. Murphy

September 18, 1927 - December 22, 2012

Terence W. Murphy (obituary written by the deceased)

In my late twenties I cast off my former life. Its obituary you will have to seek out elsewhere. I came to New York City intending to leave behind me confusions which were hobbling my existence, moral confusions, social ones, psychological, sexual, private. Alas, when I reached that great city, I found out they had not been left behind. I had come a long way and gone nowhere. And was going nowhere, a tracker who had stopped tracking, a writer who wasn't writing, a person without compass or anchor and very much as sea.

Then one night I attended a party in Manhattan. There I met Sebastian Puleo whose obituary appeared in this newspaper last July. A few weeks after our meeting we moved in together. The year was 1957. We stayed together till his death. The time span speaks for itself. A relationship exceptional in terms of its length and which would be exceptional in any category of relationship, straight, gay or goulash. Exceptional also in its lack of excursions. Despite the sharp differences in us, differences in temperament, personality and general outlook, and despite the sharp quarrels the differences could provoke, I never wanted to be with anyone but him. So we quarreled. Quarrels are living. We quarreled and then got each other coffee.

By the time saying "I do" had been made lawful for those once forbidden it, it

had also in many cases become irrelevant, whether the couples were straight, gay or goulash. Couples in arrangements of long standing , what did saying "I do" have to do with them? What the saying is supposed to help effect have been afforded long before, in silent private commitment. Else the arrangement wouldn't have lasted.

We worked our own strategies: instead of insisting on hard autonomies, we surrendered ground. We kowtowed if we had to-not too humbly. If we had to, we showed triumph, kinder and gentler if we could. Qualities in the partner we had once disdained or overlooked we found merit in. Sometimes to our surprise, we found those qualities sustained relationship as much as those that attracted in the first place. Mundane means romance. We grew into each other and hence, on into our old age and all its disadvantages, We forget things. We make mistakes. We embarrass ourselves and our partners in the company of others. A turn-off-the very sight of us can be a turn-off. We're not turned off. The disadvantages of the partner are ours beside. The outer aspects may differ. The source is all the same. We tether, we relate, we identify, we empathize in a way the young and middle aged cannot imagine. Well aware of our own fragilities, we take thought for the fragility of the partner, In all old age, that's what love is.

"Tenderness" is the word Sebastian used to define it-that there was more tenderness in these later years than there had been earlier. I can't begin to tell you how bereft I've been.

There will be a graveside service at 1 pm on Friday, December 28, 2012 at Cedar Park Cemetery. Sebastian's ashes will be in the coffin with me, for this obituary is as much his as mine, as much mine as his.

Terence Murphy was born in Alpena, Michigan in 1927. He graduated from Hillman Rural Agricultural High School and Western Michigan College of

Education. He is survived by his brother and sister-in-law, several nieces and nephews and by Dwight Valentine, the caretaker and inheritor of our memories.

# Tribute Wall

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“ *Mr. Murphy, You were one of my favorite teachers back at RMHS. You taught me so much and I'm glad we were able to keep in touch if only for the past 2 years.* ”



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**Gail Hofmann** - December 26, 2012 at 04:00 PM