



## Thomas Alan Pabst

January 16, 1943 - October 3, 2022

Thomas A. Pabst, age 79, of Wayzata, boarded his final flight on the wings of angels to his heavenly home on October 3, 2022. During his 30 plus years of service to his country in the military and federal law enforcement, Tom traveled the world, witnessed history from a front row seat, and lived a life far beyond his wildest dreams as a small town boy growing up in rural Michigan. Tom was blessed with a wonderful life, a loving family, a 55 year marriage, an amazing career, and a great retirement.

Born and raised in Michigan, Tom was the oldest of seven children born to Robert and Louise (Berghoff) Pabst. He graduated from Charlotte High School in 1961, enlisted in the United States Air Force, and was stationed in Okinawa and Cheyenne, Wyoming. Tom commuted to classes at Michigan State University, married his college sweet heart Polly in August, 1967, and graduated in 1969 with a BS Degree in Police Administration.

He was sworn in as a special agent in the United States Secret Service (USSS) at the Detroit Field Office on January 20, 1970, where he served two years working counterfeiting and check cases. He was deployed as a Sky Marshall in September, 1970, flying to and from European capitals, when the US Treasury Department temporarily assigned federal agents to air security to prevent on-flight air piracy by hijacking.

In January, 1972, Tom was transferred to Washington, DC where he was assigned to the Protective Support Division, and then to the Nixon Family Protection Detail. During the Watergate years as a young agent, Tom worked

a lot of midnights standing post outside the Oval Office, at Camp David, Key Biscayne and the San Clemente Western White House. He travelled to the Middle East in June, 1974, where President Nixon visited the heads of state in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Jordan, and Israel. He was aboard the historic Air Force One "Spirit of 76" flight to California on August 9, 1974, after Nixon resigned from office, and Gerald R. Ford was taking his oath of office on the ground back in DC.

Tom returned to Washington, and was assigned to the Ford Family Protection Detail in August, 1974, and also served as Detail Leader for the Susan Ford Protection Detail. He traveled to Japan with President Ford and First Lady Betty Ford in November, 1974, where Ford met with Emperor Hirohito and Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka. In December, 1975, Tom traveled to China with President Ford and his daughter Susan, where Ford met with Chairman Mao Tse-tung and Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping.

One of the most memorable days of his USSS career was America's Bicentennial Celebration on July 4, 1976. Tom traveled with President Ford and his daughter Susan to Valley Forge, Independence Hall in Philadelphia, and to the deck of the USS Forrestal in New York Harbor, where President Ford reviewed the tall ships participating in "Operation Sail 1976", and then back to the White House to watch the bicentennial fireworks over the US Capital.

In 1977, Tom was assigned to the USSS Technical Security Division as Operations Supervisor, and was promoted to Assistant Special Agent in Charge. Tom was part of the presidential advance team to Panama when President Jimmy Carter signed the Panama Canal Treaty on September 7, 1977, giving control of the canal back to the Panamanians in the year 2000. On January 20, 1981, Tom had the great honor of briefing Ronald Reagan on all the bells and whistles in the Oval Office right after he took his oath of office on Inauguration Day.

In February, 1983, Tom was promoted to Special Agent in Charge of the Minneapolis Field Office, where he served until he retired in October, 1996.

Tom had executive oversight for all Secret Service protective and investigative activities in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. On average, he was responsible for the safety of over forty VIP visits to Minnesota each year.

Tom was in charge of coordinating security for the historic visit of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and his wife Raisa to the Twin Cities on June 3, 1990. He represented the USSS in the planning and coordination of security for Super Bowl XXVI in January, 1992. In 1994, Tom supervised the first federal law enforcement investigation and prosecution in the United States of a multi-million dollar telemarketing fraud operation. In January, 1995, Tom supervised a federal and local law enforcement investigation, successfully breaking a \$19.5 million dollar counterfeiting ring in Minneapolis, the third largest seizure of its kind in USSS history at that time. On his last day on the job, former Minnesota Governor Arne H. Carlson issued a proclamation declaring October 12, 1996, "Tom Pabst Day".

A long time resident of Wayzata, Tom and Polly lovingly restored a historic 1945 Cape Cod on two acres. They worked tirelessly with their Bushaway Road neighbors for eight long years to stop the expansion of their historic, scenic two lane road into four lanes. Tom flew the 1776 revolutionary flag "Don't Tread on Me" on the front yard flag pole during the Bushaway Road Preservation years.

Tom enjoyed ice fishing on Lake Minnetonka in the winter, boating and fishing in the spring and summer, and pheasant hunting in the fall with his son and grandson. An avid sports enthusiast, Tom followed the Minnesota Vikings, Timberwolves, the Twins and The Wild. He adopted the Minnesota Gophers after he moved to Minnesota, but was a proud Michigan State Spartan right to the very end of his life.

Tom was a duffer on the golf course, but an awesome caddy. One of the proudest moments of his life was when he caddied 36 holes in one day for his son Brian when he passed the PGA Playing Ability Test (PAT) as part of his requirements to graduate from the PGA Golf Management Program. Years

later he enjoyed caddying for his grandson Jake in Minnesota PGA Junior Golf. Being a father and a grandfather was one of the greatest joys of his life. Tom and Polly provided after school care for their two Minnesota grandchildren for many years, and never missed a school performance or a sporting event.

Tom loved his Swiss and German heritage, and amassed a huge collection of Pabst and Berghoff (mothers maiden name) beer memorabilia during his retirement years. He mastered smoking baby back ribs, and North Carolina pulled pork on the Big Green Egg, and enjoyed hosting backyard barbecues for family and friends. One of his favorite holidays was the Fourth of July. He even proposed to Polly after the fireworks in 1966, three months after he met her.

Tom embraced Christmas with the enthusiasm and warmth of old Saint Nick himself. Christmas Eve dinner guests were greeted by a Christmas Goose Welcome flag, Williamsburg cressets burning at the front door, candles in every window, a Yule log burning in the living room fireplace, and a fresh Fraser Fir decorated with over 200 vintage Santa ornaments. Tom also collected Steinbach and Ulbricht Santa nutcrackers. There was a five course dinner, and a special gift underneath the tree for everyone he loved. Family was everything to Tom.

Tom leaves behind his beloved wife Polly, his daughter Melissa Marks (Drew), his son Brian (Jackie); his Michigan grandchildren Ashlee, Keegan (Katelyn) and Haylee; and his Minnesota grandchildren, Jacob and Madelyn. He is also survived by his three brothers, Kenneth (Connie), Charles (Terrie), and Robert (Cher); and two sisters, Ann Brumback, and Mary (Russell) Schelles. And his faithful Griffon Gracie who never left his side. He was preceded in death by his very special brother William "Bill" in 2021.

In accordance with Tom's wishes, a family memorial service will be held at a later date followed by interment at Fort Snelling National Cemetery in St. Paul. In lieu of flowers or memorials, it was Tom's request that those wishing to remember him take a grandchild, a family member or a friend to lunch or

Happy Hour, and celebrate life and the special gifts of family and friendship.  
Rest in peace Tommy. Hope they have apple fritters in Heaven. You will be  
missed by all who loved you.

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Edina Chapel 952-920-3996

# Tribute Wall

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“ *I just saw this obituary for tom. I attended Charlotte High School with Tom until my parents moved in the 11th grade. My next encounter with Tom was in the USAF tech school. He was in the class ahead of me. He was a great guy and I know he is missed. God bless you, Tom*

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**Rev, Gary Myers** - December 06, 2023 at 10:37 AM