

Steve was a big man. There was nothing small about Dr. Stephen D. Hayes:

He was a magnum, a Jeroboam, a Methuselah of a man;

A plaid Colossus, astride the aft-deck...swirling a martini in one hand and stabbing raw meat with the other;

Big as a Fifteen-foot Christmas tree, gilded and swagged with red velvet ribbons,...

A Millennium Toast followed by ten courses...a Super bowl coach, calling in plays from a leather wing-chair on the fifty-yard line;

Big as anniversaries...and barbeques...and 21st birthday beers at the bar;

With enough stories to dodge a nun,... and hi-jack a Dodge,...and be back in bed before Brenda found out;

Big as a shiny S600, v12, with .27 drag coefficient, 362 horses, and eight airbags...that does 0-60 in less than five seconds...and Salem to Lynn in usually under an hour...more or less...depending on traffic...and the potholes;

Intrepid commander of barges, and bilges, and planes and trains...circling the globe ten times over;

A Falstaff, Pavarotti, Diamond Jim Brady kind of man...with tuxedo foi grassed to bursting...and still, room for cognac...there's always room for cognac...

Who swashed and buckled for Celine Dion, Sarah Brightman, Barbra Streisand...an unabashed schmaltz and diva-loving man;

Big as best friends since grade school

And a list of rotten e-mail jokes long enough to stretch from here to Uranus;

Too big to sleep...preferring instead to probe the unread tower of journals for gems to be shared the next day...refracted light...broken into reasons for violence...for pain...for hope;

Mending more than a thousand battered hearts...a year...for more than forty years;

Bigger than the building that bears his name;

*The analysts' analyst...teacher of teachers..confessor to confessors...and sidewalk
superintendent to everyone else;*

Big enough to hold court...and hold it spellbound...while barely breathing;

*Big enough to beat the odd...to go through every stage of grief...only to emerge at the other end
laughing...*

*With a laugh as big as a pipe organ...reaching out to tickle the angels and the devils alike...
and filling every cavernous corner so completely...that you didn't even know what silence really
was...until you felt the walls collapse around you.....*

When the Laughter was gone.

-written by Elizabeth Babcock, former Executive Director of Lynn Community Health Center