



Remembering our brothers who have passed from this life

ROLLER, THOMAS JACOB 1895

“Colonel Tom“ died in Coral Gables, FL, on 8 March 1946. His wife had predeceased him, and he was survived by their two children, **Thomas Antrim '36** and Virginia Hilton.

Born in Fort Defiance on 19 December 1877, Thomas grew up in and graduated from his father’s school in 1895. He went on to the University of Virginia to pursue a classical education.

After his graduation from college, Thomas had taught for several years and was considering returning to the University to study law. Following the incapacitation of Professor Roller, his father, in 1905, a family friend and lawyer convinced the two brothers that the greatest tribute they could offer their father was to carry on his life’s work, The Roller School, now called the Augusta Military Academy.

Colonel Tom and Major Charles worked together closely for over forty years, Tom handling the financial and academic affairs of the school while Charles served as Commandant of Cadets and managed sports and the military side of the academy. Tom was perceived to be the dominant brother though they were nominally co-principals from the start. During World War I, Charles went to France while Tom minded the school, a decision supposedly made by drawing straws.

Tom was also more aloof than the gregarious Charles, who relished the nickname "The Big Boy" and who loved the spotlight. Dr. Thomas Alphin '31, who knew both of them well, drew another contrast: "Charles never saw a boy who was beyond redemption, Tom was one to eject those who didn't toe the mark."

The relationship ended with Colonel Tom’s death in 1946. For another 17 years, Charles soldiered on alone until his death in 1963. The Roller School continued for another 17 years, but it came to an end and never reopened after the Christmas break in 1983.