

Remembering Tom Davis, 1931-2017



Photo by Mark Greenberg, 2016.

Thomas C. Davis died February 16, 2017. A trustee of the Vermont Historical Society from 1989 to 1993, Tom was deeply and intimately associated with state and local history. A seventeenth-generation Vermonter, he was a keen observer of institutions, people, and events in his native community of Barre, many of which he wrote about in his first two books of memoirs: *Out from Depot Square* (2001) and *Beyond Depot Square: More Central Vermont Memories* (2006). Tom was drawn to politics early in his life and as the son of Republican Governor Deane C. Davis, he had many opportunities to observe Vermont politics up close. But motivated by what he called his “social justice gene,” he moved in a different direction in his political and public life and made almost as much history as he wrote about in his third book of memoirs, *Echoes of Vermont: People and Politics in the Green Mountain State* (2010). Among many other accomplishments in a long career in government and public administration, Tom was the founding director of the Vermont Office of Economic Opportunity under Governor Philip Hoff; secretary of the Agency of Human Services under Governor Tom Salmon; state director for U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy; and regional representative for the U.S. Department of Labor under Secretary Robert Reich.

In recent years, Tom took an active role in the rehabilitation and federal recognition of Barre’s “Old Labor Hall”; conducted several oral history interviews with political figures of the 1960s and 1970s, some of which were used for the Vermont Historical Society radio project, “Green Mountain Chronicles”; was president of the Vermont Labor History Society; and was himself the subject of an oral history project by radio producer Mark Greenberg, who recorded many hours of Tom’s recollections (soon to be available on the Old Labor Hall website). In these interviews, Greenberg recently wrote, “after all that he did for the state of Vermont and the Barre community, Tom Davis’s voice can continue teaching us what it truly means to be a public servant and citizen.”

MICHAEL SHERMAN, *Editor*