In Memoriam:  
Thomas P. Melady (1927–2014)  
David M. Klocek

Thomas Melady, long-time SCSS member and former U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See (1989–1993), died on January 6, 2014, from brain cancer. After a long and varied career in higher education, political affairs, and diplomacy, Tom spent his last several years teaching at the Institute of World Politics, a Washington, D.C., graduate school. He also returned to one of his earliest interests by writing, with his wife Margaret, a memoir about African independence leaders, *Ten African Heroes*, published by Orbis in 2011.

After service in the Army, Tom graduated from Duquesne University in 1950, and then earned master’s and doctoral degrees from Catholic University in 1952 and 1954. He began writing about the independence movements during the 1960s, when he also served as president of the Africa Service Institute, an organization that promoted ties between Africa and the U.S. He became U.S. ambassador to Burundi in 1969, and then to Uganda in 1972 when the latter country was ruled by the dictator Idi Amin. He served briefly as executive vice president of St. Joseph’s University in Philadelphia, and then as president of Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut, from 1976 to 1986. After volunteer work in the presidential campaign of Vice President George H. W. Bush, who himself came originally from Tom’s home state of Connecticut, he was asked about possible positions in which he might be interested and willing to serve. Tom suggested the post of U.S. envoy to the Holy See, which had only been held by two other ambassadors since diplomatic relations were re-established in 1984. The new president did indeed make the appointment. And this was the occasion for my first meeting Tom: I was part of a team which provided “outgoing” briefings to him at the Central Intelligence Agency because of my work on Polish affairs, which was especially relevant to someone who would be dealing with Pope John Paul II in the year in which the Communist system fell in Poland.

Tom worked closely as President Bush’s point man at the Holy See during the time of the (mostly) peaceful transition in the Warsaw Pact countries from Communist to non-Communist political systems. The Vatican was an especially important position from which to observe, but also to assist and influence, Pope John Paul II’s involvement in this transition. Another area in which he was asked to work was in advancing official
relations between the Holy See and Israel, which he patiently did through quiet meetings among Israeli, Jewish, Vatican, and other leaders, officials, and representatives. These ties were established shortly after Tom left the post at the end of 1993.

Tom returned to Washington, taught briefly at George Washington University, and published several books and articles, including a memoir of his time as Ambassador to the Holy See called The Ambassador’s Story. He became “diplomat-in-residence” at the Institute of World Politics in 2002, and in this position he delighted in teaching, mentoring, and assisting students and colleagues. I worked closely with him there from 2005 until 2012. I particularly remember his advice about always “keeping doors open” to everyone, a position one especially expects to be advocated by diplomats, but also by academics.

Tom received many honors and awards, including an honorary doctorate in 1993 from Franciscan University of Steubenville.