

## **Brief Biographic Sketch of Douglas Putman** (And How the TATC Came to Build a Cabin in his Name)

[A few details of the life of Douglas Putman (who died at age of 24) and how the Putman family and TATC united to build a cabin in his memory]

Douglas Lee Putman was born in 1953 in the Norfolk area. His father was stationed here and served in the Navy.

He has two sisters, Debbie and Susan.

Sometime in the early 1960's his father was transferred to the northern Virginia area, and the family relocated.

In the early 1970's Douglas started attending Virginia Commonwealth University, in Richmond, Va.

Besides an abiding love of music (he played the guitar), Douglas loved the outdoors, especially hiking and camping.

While in college he hiked parts of the A.T. and especially enjoyed visiting the Pedlar District of the George Washington National Forest, which extends from the James River north to Rockfish Gap, along the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains (the section of the A.T. that our club maintains is in this district and, while in college, Doug hiked over Three Ridges Mtn., just about the time, or just after, our club took responsibility for maintaining it).

In July of 1977 Douglas died in an auto accident. He had planned to go camping the very next weekend.

His family wanted to do something to memorialize Douglas, and the idea of a cabin or shelter for hikers appealed to them.

They approached the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, centered in the Washington, D.C. area, but that club already owned, operated, and was responsible for a couple dozen mountain cabins and didn't want to take on the project of building a new one.

The Putman's contacted the A.T. Conference in Harpers Ferry and (I believe) the Wintergreen Resort in Nelson County, Va. concerning the idea of a cabin.

TATC had, about a year earlier, inquired at Wintergreen as to any isolated and abandoned old cabin that might be on their sprawling property, with the idea that the club could perhaps lease it, fix it up, and make use of it. One such cabin (in the Laurel Springs area) was located and considered, but ultimately rejected.

Our club's president at the time (Jacque Jenkins) had her name and phone number on file with Wintergreen concerning the possibility of a cabin there, and (as I've heard the story told) when Mrs. Putman called to inquire about having a cabin built in memory of Douglas, they gave her Jacque's number.

In December of 1977 Jacque received Mrs. Putman's initial call concerning the matter; they talked for two hours. She conveyed Mrs. Putman offer to the TATC board about a week later.

After several years of research and inquiry, with little or no money on hand to buy land or construction materials, and with our only option being the possibility of fixing up and or leasing a couple of abandoned cabins, the clubs Cabin Committee wholeheartedly supported the idea of accepting Mrs. Putman's offer.

In July of 1978 the general membership of the club agreed with the committee's recommendation and voted to accept the Putman family's offer of approximately \$15,000 to build a cabin in honor of Douglas. Details were worked out and the deal was legally concluded that September.

In early January, 1979 the club acquired 15 acres of land in Nelson County, land all but surrounded by National Forest property. The 15 acres the club bought was about 3 miles, as the crow flies, west of our section of the A.T. and Three Ridges Mtn.

Work on the cabin project began that same month (January, 1979).

Though not entirely finished, the club had a Dedication Ceremony for the cabin in May, 1982, with the Putman family in attendance, along with officials from the Park and Forest Service, and approximately 80 TATC members.

Work continued apace, and by Aug. of 1983 the cabin was completed to the point where rental usage to club members began.