



Stewart Moore's Longhorns

FOR years I admired them in Stewart's office at the Lake Forest real estate firm he owned and operated. When he died this spring at the absurd age of 55, his lovely widow Michelle gave them to me, saying that Stewart would want me to have them. I believe it. Stewart liked my eclectic 500-square-foot workshop, and he would, if he could, say that the shop is a good resting place for his six-foot-long horns, which once belonged to a Texas longhorn bull, a humongous one, no doubt. Stewart was a native of Texas, born in Houston in 1953 when I was already a full-grown man. Our friendship may have been generationally unlikely, but it existed nevertheless and was a close one, with touches of father-son affinity. I waxed the horns and polished their leather strap-pings, then mounted the assemblage securely above the workshop's bay window, just below a Mt. Fuji poster and precisely between framed *Los Angeles Times* front pages published on the 1970 day I started working at

the newspaper and the 2004 day I retired. Of course, I had to get up on a ladder. Stewart would have disapproved. I was supposed to call him when I took a notion to climb a few feet off the floor. An old guy like me can fall and break something, he said, and the next thing you know, he is either crippled or dead. As fate cruelly decreed, it was Stewart who wound up dead. He was supposed to hold my hand as I lay dying, not vice versa. It's all so intolerable. But what can I do except things like

this? When I'm working at my computer, as I'm doing right now, I can turn my eyes toward the bay window, perhaps to gather my thoughts for whatever I'm writing, and I'll see Stewart's horns, and I'll smile for a nice moment. In the other direction, at the back of the shop, Stewart's portrait stands next to Kei's, with a symbolic *sake* cup for them to share. Both are gone now – Stewart for just weeks, daughter Kei for 11 years – and I am left with cold memorabilia instead of living warmth.



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