Dick Martineau was a human resources officer for the federal government. At the end of World War II, he was sent to Munich, Germany to work with the Displaced Persons Commission, and it was there he met his future wife, Dorothy. Tom, their first of three children, was born in Munich where he lived until he was 15 when the family moved to Washington, D.C.

Dick was delighted that one of Tom’s boyhood hobbies was building from scratch landscapes full of self-designed architectural models to surround his toy train tracks. Tom’s skill and creativity in this activity fit well into Dick’s dream for his eldest son—of experiences he had always wanted himself: to become an architect. He often brought home aptitude tests for Tom to complete, and each result “proved” that Tom would be a good architect.

Tom, on the other hand, had caught the “foreign service bug.” Although he had entered and won architecture-based science fair projects during his junior and senior years, he dreamed instead of studying political science and becoming a foreign attaché at one or more U.S. embassies. He wanted to travel and see the world and to be directly involved with helping to make it a better place. Because the family was on a tight budget and had other children to educate, Tom assumed he would have to attend one of the local universities (American, Georgetown, George Washington), but he thought those institutions were fine for a political science major. “But then I got my arm twisted in a good but unexpected way,” noted Tom.

His chemistry and physics teacher had seen Tom excel with his architecture-based science fair entries. He told Tom he should compete for a generous scholarship being offered by Washington, D.C. alumni for the full five years of professional architecture school at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) in Troy, New York. Tom won the scholarship. “I was disappointed and excited at the same time, but my Dad was nothing but pleased,” observed Tom. He was soon New York bound, and he worked hard for the full five-years to keep his GPA above 3.0 to retain the scholarship.

After his first two years, Tom took a summer internship with the State University Construction Fund (SUCF). SUCF was Gov. Nelson Rockefeller’s answer to a potential brain drain in New York State. The big bubble of baby boomers was rapidly approaching college years, and New York had no state university system. The SUCF became the finance, planning, programming, design, and construction agency for what would become 26 new campuses of the State University of New York. Tom’s job in research and development was made a permanent position, allowing him to work part-time as a student and full-time in the summers. “During my time at SUCF, I received a second, salaried education in architecture,” Tom remarked, “focused on computer-based architectural programming, post-occupancy evaluation, and design criteria development in lighting, acoustics, and interior finishes. I got to work with key professionals in those fields: Caudill; Rowlett and Scott; William M.C. Lam; and Bolt, Beranek, and Newman. These experiences had a major influence on the architectural specializations I was able to maintain throughout my career.” Tom’s work there also gave him the opportunity to meet a number of architects who influenced him, especially Buckminster Fuller and I. M. Pei. Because of these interests, the School of Architecture at FAMU became of particular relevance to Tom later in his career.
After earning the B.Arch. in 1969, Tom worked full-time for the SUCF until 1972. He earned the M.Arch. during that period, also in 1972. As the SUCF grew and became more bureaucratic than some employees cared for, a subgroup, including Tom, left and formed a traditional practice in architecture, landscape architecture, and planning in Saratoga Springs, NY—a 60-mile commute for Tom. Although Tom was excited to participate in the planning for the first U.S. nature preserve within urban boundaries—Tifft Farm Nature Preserve in Buffalo—it took only a year for him to confirm that traditional practice was not for him. "It was clear to me early on that poorly informed design often resulted in the worst architectural creations. I was therefore interested in refining pre-design analysis processes, enhancing post-occupancy evaluation, and helping clients become smarter clients, just like SUCF."

Serendipitously, a friend recommended him for a job at Battelle Memorial Institute in Columbus, OH as a Senior Research Architect and Market Manager. In this position, Tom directed facilities planning and master planning research for large-building owners in the USA, Canada, and Europe; was program manager for the HUD-sponsored nationwide Cooperative Housing Demonstration Program; and designed and managed FUTURLAB, one of Battelle’s largest and most successful international multi-client programs on trends and developments in industrial R&D laboratory concepts. "Once more, I had the good fortune of obtaining another salaried education, this time in construction economics and market research. At Battelle, my greatest joy was helping European and Japanese companies market their building products in the USA. I may not have served as an attaché, but I did get to see the world."

After 13 years, Tom left Battelle in 1985 to become the first full-time Director of the Institute for Building Sciences (IBS) at the young School of Architecture at Florida A & M University. The School was known to embrace Tom’s areas of specialization within the field, and he was excited about creating a research arm for this new, nontraditional School. In addition to developing funding sources for research projects and overseeing the day-to-day operations of IBS, Tom headed a groundbreaking study of building construction regulations in Florida, which resulted, in part, in legislation to train and certify building officials. Later, he served as co-principal investigator of the team that produced the follow-up recommendations for the administration, structure, and content of the New Florida Building Code. He also guided a statewide facilities condition assessment and maintenance strategy for the Florida Department of Transportation. FDOT continues to use updated versions of this strategy to justify its annual facilities funding request to the Florida Legislature.

In 1992 Tom moved into full-time teaching at the rank of full professor. Until his retirement in 2007, he taught a variety of courses at many levels, including his specialties of heating, cooling, lighting, and acoustics. In studio he focused on urban planning and design. He also taught building materials and construction methods, professional practice (ethics), and the “boot camp” for new students, a course named The Building Arts.

Tom has written and co-authored articles and papers in numerous journals and publications on such topics as building commissioning, master planning, facilities planning, urban problems, and facilities operations and maintenance. Since his initial work with them in 1989, Tom has made frequent presentations at International Making Cities Livable Conferences (IMCL), and he became a Board Member in 2002.

Looking back over his tenure at the SOA, Tom most values his experiences with the students. Many of the relationships he developed...
have continued as the students have become alumni and professionals themselves. Stemming from The Building Arts course, his advice to aspiring professionals is quoted below:

It’s almost impossible to ace out architecture. Architecture demands equal attention from the right and left sides of the brain. Very few of us are ambidextrous, and very few of us are ambidextrous, so we are going to have our strengths and our weaknesses as architecture students and as architects. Thus, it would be advisable to play to our strengths but not to let our weaknesses overwhelm us. Architecture is a great preparation for much more than the standard practice of architecture. It prepares us for seeing and understanding the world as a connected whole. There are lots of architecture graduates who have made their mark career-wise without doing traditional architecture. An architectural education helps you to conceptualize in a broad sense. Architecture breeds a sense of interrelationship, of interconnectedness. If you start thinking about one concept, you suddenly see glimpses of how other matters are affected and connected. I see architecture as a big barn that lets lots of people in and that lets lots of people do what they’re good at. So especially to the students who, after the first or second year, become doubters (Is this really for me? Can I draw? Can I do this or can I do that?), it’s about seeing the world in a light of interrelationships and broad systems rather than in terms of one tiny, little concept that leads to another one and that doesn’t allow the rest of the world in. The bottom line: if you revel in the uncertainty and hard work of open-ended thinking, architecture is probably for you.

Though he officially retired in 2007, Tom still enjoys teaching at the SOA as an adjunct. He loves working with the students while avoiding the things he disliked about being a full-time faculty member—the Sisyphian nature of bureaucratic structures and procedures. He continues to consult nationwide with public schools and universities through his business, Productivity House, Inc., and stays active professionally and personally. For example, he recently lectured at the School of Urban Planning at the University of Stuttgart, Germany and at the Royal Technical Institute in Stockholm, Sweden. He also maintains his long-time involvement with the International Making Cities Livable Council.

Personally, Tom feels blessed by and loves to spend time with his family, including his wife of 43 years (Helen), their daughter (Stephanie), her husband (Al), and two grandsons (Nic, 10 and Jake, 7). As when he was a boy, he continues to enjoy building things both large and small, especially for home-improvement projects. Travel and reading remain favorite hobbies as well. Soon, Helen and Tom will travel to Holland to see the spring tulips, then travel up the Rhine to Basel to visit with old friends from Germany.

For more detailed information about Tom’s professional career, please see his résumé.