



Dr. Bobby Frank (Bob) Thomas

April 23, 1935 - June 27, 2015

Dr. Bobby Frank (Bob) Thomas, age 80, of Kingston, Tennessee, beloved husband, father, brother, uncle, and friend passed away at Methodist Medical Center of Oak Ridge on June 27, 2015. Bob attended St. Andrew's Episcopal Church for over 50 years, and served as a teacher, vestry member, layreader, Eucharistic Visitor, and friend to fellow parishioners.

Staff Sgt. Thomas was a journalist and editor of the Stars and Stripes during his service in the United States Marine Corps. Proud alumnus of the University of Tennessee where he earned a Doctorate in Business Administration, Bob served as a teaching professor and administrator at Roane State Community College for over 20 years. He was an honored recipient of the Sarah Ellen Benroth Award for Outstanding Teaching. He often reflected that "he had the best job in the world" and was dedicated to his students.

Bob was predeceased by his parents Berlie Avilla Thomas and Horace Paul Thomas; sister, Elaine McKee. Bob is survived by his loving wife and soul mate of 53 years, Constance (Connie) Thomas; son, Michael Craig Thomas of Knoxville; daughter, Kelley Elise Thomas Martin and husband Hadley Martin of Lenoir City; brother, Horace Paul Thomas, Jr. of Medford, Wisconsin; nephew, Robert Taylor and wife Laura Taylor of Knoxville; niece, Erin McKee of Destin, Florida; niece, Randi Hirt and husband Dan Hirt of Medford, Wisconsin and their two daughters, Erin and Kelli.

Services will be held at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Harriman, Tennessee,

on Friday, July 3, at 11:00 AM. Celebrants will be Reverend Margaret Blanchard and Reverend Brad Jones. Honorary pallbearers are his fellow vestry members Don Gray, Bill White, Mary Sullivan, Lynn Farnham, Lynne Spires, Chuck Schwaner, Mona Wright, Michael Acree, and Mary Belle Duvivier. Interment will immediately follow in the church Cinerarium. Family will receive friends at a reception in the Church undercroft after the interment. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 190 Circle Drive, Harriman, TN 37748.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUL 3. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
190 Circle Drive
Harriman, TN 37748

Tribute Wall

BJ

“ *Connie & Kids,*
I was so sorry to hear of Bob's passing. He was one of my great instructors and then the first boss I had at RSCC (actually he hired me twice). He was so dedicated to his students and always took care of his staff. You and the kids were everything to him, and he talked about you all the time. I'm sure there is such a great void in your hearts right now. You are in my thoughts and prayers. I will never forget him.
Barbara Jeffers

Barbara Jeffers - July 04, 2015 at 09:13 AM

“ *Dr. Bob: A wonderful, intelligent, and gentle man who was a leader among men and a positive, inspiring, influence for so many students and associates. While others just talked , he put his words into action and got results , especially for his fellow man.*

He loved his job at Roane State and the Students loved him and reflected it in their written reviews . All enthused, he hauled me to the balcony overlooking the students in the lounge and said, " Look at that, all those students and best of all you get a new crop to help every quarter". But he was tough when he needed to be and loved a good heated argument when there was progress to be made for others.

A modest person, he would not talk much about his accomplishments, like growing up in a poor southern mill town and becoming the Quarterback of his High School football team-- and about his success serving our Country in the Marines----and his accomplishments in the business world before and after Roane State teaching.

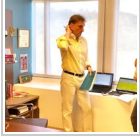
A patient person who was at peace with himself, he would go on an extended trip without having a destination , just driving around on the back roads, stopping to look at a 1949 Ford, visiting for an hour with the owners, and enjoying whatever else struck his fancy along the way. Sometimes ending up visiting old friends he had not seen in many years.

His Family came first---he loved Connie , Kelly, and Mike and he would express his good feelings about ya'll often and without reservation to his friends. He loved his Church and was a hard and successful worker there, tackling some of the tougher jobs and reaching out to those who could not come.

I loved Bob and wish I could have been as good and caring friend to him as he was to me for so many years.

Ben

ben plant - July 03, 2015 at 03:14 PM



“ *Very sorry to read the news of Prof. Thomas' passing. Like many others at Roane State, I was positively influenced by this great man, his outstanding kindness, his tremendous intellect, and his sincere dedication to his students. No doubt the impact of his life's work will be felt for many years. Sincere condolences to the Thomas family during this difficult time. -- Scott Sills (Roane State Class of 1985)*

Eric Sills - July 03, 2015 at 11:55 AM

CF

“ *I am so sorry to see this. There are no words. I am sending positive thoughts and prayers to you all. I am so thankful for Bob inviting us to the anniversary of Saint Andrews and the chance to see everyone.*
Cathy Carroll Freels
and family.

Cathy Freels - July 02, 2015 at 05:15 PM

AH

“ *Kelley,*
Those we hold closest to our hearts never truly leave us. They live on in the kindness they have shared and the love they brought into our lives.
Keeping you and your family in my thoughts and prayers.

Anne Holder - July 02, 2015 at 07:09 AM



“ Sweet Connie,
I am so sad to hear about Bob. You and Bob came to mean so much to me when you would bring Communion to Missy and Henley's home and we would share together. I will be praying for you.
Love
Ginger Schubert

Ralph Magill - July 02, 2015 at 06:28 AM



“ Enjoyed being a student under Dr. Thomas. He was very encouraging and supportive.

Teresa Cook - June 30, 2015 at 08:52 PM



“ Kelley, I enjoyed working with your dad during his many years as a RSCC faculty member. He will be missed by his Roane State colleagues, family and friends. Thinking of you and your family at this difficult time.

Myra Peavyhouse - June 30, 2015 at 08:32 AM



“ I arrived at Roane State 23 years ago for my first college business teaching assignment, full of doubt and unfamiliarity. I was blessed by God's hand for Dr. Thomas to always have time to guide me and encourage me, all with a warm smile and genuine patience. My relationship with him is something for which I will always be grateful.

I pray God's grace be upon all of his family and friends.

Randy Nesbit

Randy Nesbit - June 30, 2015 at 08:25 AM

TC

“ I always enjoyed the spirited debates Bob engaged in at Roane State. He will be missed.

Tim Carroll

Tim Carroll - June 30, 2015 at 08:24 AM

DM

“ My deepest sympathy to the family. When I joined RSCC, Bob was sort of a legend. I always loved watching Kelley talk about her Dad. She would get a special sparkle in her eyes that Daddy's Little Girls always have.

Deb Miller - June 29, 2015 at 09:16 PM

SS

Your family is in my prayers. Sandy Stiles

Sandy Stiles - June 30, 2015 at 08:22 AM

AF

I'm very grateful for the opportunity to pay tribute to one of my professors and colleague. Bob's love of teaching didn't preclude explaining the 'why' of things. He saw his students as individual thinking human beings who deserved to be listened to and heard, not merely receptacles to be filled. He deserved to wear his calling as a crown of gold!!!!!!

A Odell Fearn - June 30, 2015 at 10:17 AM

CL

I had the pleasure of visiting with Dr. Thomas a few months ago in the Roane County Assessor's Office. Dr. Thomas was my first advisor when I arrived at RSCC. I was in search of a degree in Management and Supervision. We had a lot in common with me being in motel management and always enjoyed talking about all the crazy things that could happen. I enjoyed every class and every visit I had with him and he made my days at RSCC exciting. One class I remember more than any was a management class where we had to speak to a group. Everytime we stammered he would hit a garbage can and scare us out of our wits. I did learn to speak in front of a group.

Cheryl Laxton - June 30, 2015 at 12:10 PM

MB

I have fond memories of Bob. He was a fine man. Becky and Scott and I extend our condolences.

Mark Barker - July 02, 2015 at 11:26 PM

SR

I am so sorry to see the passing of Bob Thomas. Even though I didn't know him, I am sure Connie and Kelley are heart broken. They were his number one fan. My love to the family. Sharon Mills Ridenour

Sharon Ridenour - July 03, 2015 at 09:17 AM