

Thomas Godfrey

January 9, 1923 ~ May 8, 2023

Despite still having a valid driver's license, Thomas Godfrey - World War II Veteran, Aeronautical Engineer, Restaurant Executive, and world-class curmudgeon - "Croaked" on May 8, 2023, at age 100. He groused the whole time but loved every minute.

Tom is survived by his loving wife Marilyn, who was by his side in his final moments.

A builder, a deal-maker, and a risk-taker, Tom was possessed by the entrepreneurial spirit. His natural drive and curiosity always had him in search of the next big thing, be it business ventures, investment opportunities, or technologies past (aerospace) and future (cryptocurrency). He'd often say with a sly wink that his only regret was he, "never got stinkin' rich."

But if true wealth is measured in family, friends, and experiences, then Tom was very rich indeed. He and Marilyn traveled extensively, seeing the great wonders of the world. An avid fan of the Olympics, Tom attended multiple games, beginning in 1932 in Los Angeles. And of course, there are his four children, two step-children, three nephews and nieces, 12 grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren, and friends far and wide. If you knew him, you'll miss him, which is a sign of a life well lived.

Born on January 9, 1923, in Billings, MT, Tom was the oldest son of Harold and Lorna (nee Shaw). He was preceded in death by his parents and his brother Gordon and his sister Nancy.

He proudly served his country in the Army Air Corps. from 1944 to 1946. As a First Lieutenant in the 74th Bombardment Squadron, 6th Bomber Command, 6th Air Force, Tom was a navigator aboard a B-24 Liberator. His squadron's mission was to protect the Panama Canal. He described the experience as cramped, cold, and the great honor of his life.

Prior to his deployment, Tom married Janet Vandenburgh (divorced, deceased) in September 1944 in San Antonio, TX. They met while attending Pomona College. After his discharge, Tom attended the University of Washington where he graduated with degrees in Aeronautical Engineering and Industrial Engineering. After graduating he took a job with Lockheed (Boeing lost out because of the weather) and he and Janet settled in Northridge, CA, where they raised their family: sons Doug, Peter (Anell), and Gordon (Suzanne); daughter Carolyn Roll (Steve); niece Jane Vandenburgh (Jack); and nephews Hank (Nancy) and George Vandenburgh (latter deceased).

In 1965, he and the family relocated to Salt Lake City, UT to work for JB's Big Boy Restaurants. He served 16 years as President and Director of Development. He was instrumental in expanding the business from its humble beginning to more than 125 restaurants in 14 states.

He married Marilyn Christofferson in 1974 and was a great mentor to her two sons, Mitch (Susie) and Kerry (Ana).

After retirement, Tom and Marilyn moved to Maui, where Tom built a gorgeous house with his own hands (and lots of help). He spent his later years welcoming his family to his home and touring historical sites with his grandchildren. He continued to coin new phrases, known as “Tomisms,” that most of us can’t help but use daily. Of all of them though, the one that sums Tom up best is what he’d often say with every Maui sunset: “Just another crappy day in paradise.”

A memorial service will be held at 11:00 am on July 6th at The Chateau at Le Jardin, 1910 East Dimple Dell Road (10600 South), Sandy, Utah

Forever the inquisitor Tom donated his body to research at the University of Utah School of Medicine.