



Jon Charles Thomas

June 13, 2013

Jon Charles Thomas, Sr., 74 of Gainesville passed away on Wednesday, June 12, 2013 at Shands @ UF. Jon was born on January 22, 1939 in Uniontown, PA to Robert and Myrtle Thomas. He served in the US Army from 1957 until 1965, receiving an Honorable Discharge.

Jon was an Entrepreneur and Philanthropist. He has been a Licensed Funeral Director since 1959, owning and operating several different funeral homes, cemeteries and cremation businesses. In 1986 Jon became the Chief Executive Officer of Thomas-Pierce and Company, specializing in sales, acquisitions, mergers, construction, development, marketing, and cash flow management for the funeral and cemetery industries and cremation businesses throughout the United States and Canada. Since 2004 Jon has owned, along with his wife, Patsy, Forest Meadows Funeral Home and Cemeteries, Moring Funeral Home in Melrose, Evans-Carter Funeral Home in High Springs and A-Direct Cremations in Gainesville and Summerfield and has served as CEO for each company since their acquisition.

In 1970, Jon was elected to the Florida State House of Representatives and went on to serve in the Florida State Senate until 1978. Throughout his political career he served on many committees, including Governmental Efficiency Study Commission as its Chairman, Florida Real Estate Commission Education and Research Foundation Advisory Committee,

Chairman of Health and Rehabilitative Services Committee, Appropriations Committee, the Commerce Committee and had been a Board Member of the State of Florida Medical Examiner from 2009 until his resignation earlier this month.

During his lifetime, Jon won many awards, all of which he was so very proud of, with each holding a special meaning to him. Some of those awards include Young Man of the Year in Fort Lauderdale, 1967; Legislator of the Year, 1973, 1976, and 1977 by the Florida Association for Retarded Children; Conservation Legislator - Wildlife Federation and the National Wildlife Federation; Presented the Florida Wildlife Special Service Award, 1977; Recipient of the Leonard L. Abness Human Relations Award, 1978, by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, and most recently, Rotary Club of Gainesville 2012 Ethics in Business Award.

Jon was also very active in the Funeral Care Industry. His professional associations included: Board Member, Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science; Florida Funeral Directors Association; National Funeral Directors Association; Florida Cemetery Association; Independent Funeral Directors of Florida; Selected Independent Funeral Directors: Order of the Golden Rule; American Cemetery Association; Southern Cemetery Association; Pre-arrangement Interment Association of America (PIAA).

Jon was always involved in his community and very committed to his church, wherever he lived. He served in many civic organizations as: President of the Tallahassee Region Soap Box Derby, Inc. Tallahassee, Florida; Past Board Member - Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce; Past Chairman- Bay North Homeowners Association; Past Board Member - Goodwill Industries; Past President - Leon High School Cheerleading Association; Past Chairman -

Leon High School Foundation. Jon served as member of the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce, Gainesville Quarterback Club, and Gainesville Rotary Club and attended Trinity United Methodist Church in Gainesville. Jon also had affiliations with: Royal Order of Jesters, Tallahassee Court #194; Jackson Lodge #1, F & AM; Keystone Chapter - Royal Arch Masons; Scottish Rite Temple, Tallahassee; Morocco Temple, Ambassador at Large, Jacksonville; and Marzuq Temple, Ambassador at Large, Tallahassee.

Jon's success came from ambition, knowledge of business, professionalism and compassion for those he served. He was admired and respected by his colleagues and employees. When asked about his accomplishments, he responded "I owe my success to my love and faith in God, and my family. My family is my most valued reward."

Jon is predeceased by his parents Robert and Myrtle Thomas and a brother James Thomas. He is survived by his wife Patsy Ann Fowler Thomas, children Timothy James Thomas (Lance Licciardi), Hollee Ann Bollman (Kyle) and Jon Charles Thomas II (Karen). A brother Gerald Thomas (Joy) and grandchildren Cole, Hannah and Miles Bollman and Charlie, Julia and Sailor Thomas.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yArKkaw9mkc>

Funeral Service for Mr. Thomas will be held on Sunday, June 23, 2013 at 2:00 pm at Trinity United Methodist Church, 4000 NW 53rd Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32653. There will be a visitation on Saturday, June 22, 2013 from 5:00pm-

7:00pm at Forest Meadows Funeral Home, 725 NW 23rd Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32609, (352)378-2528.

If you would like to make a donation to one of his favorite causes, please see the links below. Or make a donation to one of your favorite charities--Jon would definitely approve.

The Gainesville Fisher House

Shands Long Term Patient Housing - Fund 018039

Haven Hospice

*If you have a special picture or memory of Jon that you would like to share with the family and staff, please e-mail it to us or bring it with you to the visitation or service.

*If you will be traveling in from out of town. The family has reserved a block of rooms at the Best Western Gateway Grand.

Tribute Wall

TB

“ Every profession has certain people who make a true authentic difference - and no question Jon was one of those individuals. I have the honor to work with and cross Jon's path many times over the last 30 years. Jon was tough, honest, bright, terribly bright, and he genuinely loved funeral service. Jon also had guts, and he was not intimidated by a scrap or two. I always enjoyed listening to his stories, and he had a ton of them. Jon did many acquisitions when I worked with the old now defunct Loewen Group, and he was a firm negotiator, to the chagrin of not just a few people in Loewen's corporate development office. Those were many years ago however, and just when many people would retire Jon ventured off into yet another funeral home company. He certainly left his mark on our beloved profession. His memory will live on in the minds and hearts of those who called him mentor and friend. Todd W. Van Beck

Todd W. Van Beck - June 27, 2013 at 05:08 PM

MA

“ John was always much younger than his years in his thought process and insight all tempered with his years of experience - a humble man. I enjoyed the times I was in his presence.

Michael Ammen - June 25, 2013 at 02:46 PM

DB

“ So sorry to read of the death of Jon Thomas, I always enjoyed his company and great knowledge of funeral service.

Doug Bevell
Wilmington Funeral & Cremation
Wilmington, NC

Doug Bevell - June 25, 2013 at 02:38 PM

RV

“ Another member of the Grand, Old Guard of funeral service has departed. May his memory be eternal.

Ray Visotski - June 25, 2013 at 10:29 AM

JR

“ Pat, JT, Hollee, Devon,

The death of Jon hit me pretty hard. I was one of the people he 'picked up' and decided to help along the way. I never knew why or felt worthy of his attention. I think he enjoyed being the 'senior' member of our annual Think Tank in Scottsdale. And he went home and did everything we discussed. He was wise, he was fun to be around, he could bring it academically on any subject we discussed. He also encouraged all of us in our joint Christian faith. He fearlessly explained his "walk to Emmaus" experience and encouraged us all to participate. Jon was deep and wide. Words can never express my gratitude for his influence in my life.

Jim Rudolph - June 25, 2013 at 10:16 AM

RI

“ The Thomas family,

Please accept my sincere sympathy on the death of Jon. I experienced several influential milestones in my life with his support and encouragement.. We both believed in funeral service and the hard conversations that were needed in the family business that many times were too little too late. How insightful and encouraging he was to a young funeral director.

I still vividly remember being in Tallahassee and going for dinner somewhere over the state line that I never would have dreamed going in, had I passed it on the road. The barbecue was delicious, the conversation even better, and everyone seemed to know Jon. I also remember a wonderful fishing trip with Jon and my late Father which I will always treasure.

I was honored to know Jon and will always have very fond memories of him.

Richard Geib

Richard D. Geib II - June 23, 2013 at 05:02 PM

JC

“ Pat, Hollee and Jon II,

I share your grief in your loss of Jon. I had the opportunity to share some time with him by phone several weeks ago. He knew what was ahead for him and expressed the same great faith, for which he was known. Jon assisted me in transferring ownership our family company to the Loewen Group and then enabled Phyllis and me to become Regional Partners. He, Brooks, Phyllis and I had a great time growing a new company. His expertise and knowledge really made the difference. It was not always comfortable sitting across the table from him at closing, but he was the best deal maker I have ever known. The fishing trips were great but knowing Jon was the real value.

Know that you are in our prayers....Phyllis is unable to travel, so we will not be in attendance.

Buddy

J. C. Buddy Carothers - June 22, 2013 at 04:30 PM

BC

“ To Pat, Jon II, Hollee and your families, I am so sorry for your loss. Jon was a good friend and big influence on me in my career. He is the best deal guy I ever saw - truly the "Rainmaker." Away from business (but never far away with Jon!), we also had a lot of fun on the boat and in your homes in Tallahassee. My family joins me in feeling your loss.

I will unavoidably be unable to see this weekend, but I will be thinking of you. Best wishes.

Brooks Cowles

Brooks Cowles - June 21, 2013 at 05:56 PM

JH

“ Jon was such a positive role model for all parents involved in Leon High School activities. I knew he could always be counted on to find solutions that worked for everyone. I am very saddened that your family has lost such a wonderful husband, father, and grandfather. Please know you have my deepest sympathy, and send love and prayers to you all.

Janice Hogenmuller - June 20, 2013 at 04:08 PM

LC

“ Jon was a leader in our industry, and example of what creativity, hard work and commitment can accomplish. Jon enjoyed the success of his efforts and the respect and admiration of funeral and cemetery professionals in Florida and far beyond. I am so sorry that we had to say goodbye. My love and prayers to Jon's family. I hope that all you all find comfort in your wonderful memories and in the love of your family and wide circle of friends.

Lisa Coney - June 20, 2013 at 01:01 PM

PA

“ I would like to offer you my condolences.

We were saddened to hear of his passing. My father died a few years back from that exact same illness. He fought hard to beat it, and I am sure Mr. Thomas didn't want to leave you guys either. It is a tough hand to be dealt, but I am certain he played his with dignity and style. May he rest in peace.

Paul Anderson - June 20, 2013 at 10:30 AM

LS

“ We enjoyed knowing Jon and working with him on the ushering team at Trinity Methodist, and we consider it a blessing to have had Jon as part of this group for a couple of years. It is with much sadness that we have learned of Jon's passing and offer condolences to his family. Our thoughts and prayers are with you at this difficult time. May Jon rest in peace.

Laura & Jack Shaw - June 19, 2013 at 12:30 PM

TC

“ Jon and I are first cousins and have known each other since we were infants. He was my oldest and dearest friend. As children we went to the beach, played golf, rode bikes , went to zoo's and carnivals and did many other things that kids do together. We always stayed in touch with each other over the years attending Florida football games and having dinner with our wives and families. I've grown extremely proud of Jon in the way he grew to become a very successful entrepreneur and businessman. He was always determined and eager in pursuing his goals and was always willing to work hard to make his business a big success. I truly admired him. Jon was a very good man and I know he is with God. I loved Jon and I will miss him.

Thomas Carney - June 19, 2013 at 12:18 PM

PW

“*My deepest sympathy to Jon's entire family. What an amazing career he had and legacy he left. I had known Jon for many years and only learned that we were both from Western Pennsylvania and alumni of PIMS when I was fortunate to be seated across from him and his lovely wife at an FCCFA dinner at the Governor's Club a couple of years ago. What a great conversation we had that evening. Such a sharp mind and keen understanding of the Death Care profession. What an influence he had on the profession in Florida, but also throughout North America.*

May your family find strength in His love and your faith, and find comfort in fond memories of good times together. Rest in peace my Masonic Brother.

*Sincerely,
Paul White
Vice President
Funeral Services, Inc.
Tallahassee, FL*

Paul White - June 19, 2013 at 10:16 AM

RY

“ I met Jon several years ago as my alter ego "COO COO" THE CLOWN as I was involved in the Florida State University Circus as a clown instructor. I was approach by Jon and was asked to come out to the retirement home of his dear mother to conduct a private birthday party show. Just after this engagement the new friendship began. Jon approached me once again and said he had a long life dream to become a clown. He once again asked me for my professional assistance and asked for a private training to get him started and to begin the transformation from Jon to "MT NOGGIN" the clown. He was and outstanding man, friend and a great and funny clown. The last time I saw Jon he asked me to come over to his home and gave me some of his clown possesions and a pair of his clown shoes. As I was hesitant in taking them I only promised to wear them in his honor. Now Jon I have some BIG shoes to fill for now and forever you will remain a special friend to me in human life and clown life. As they say in the Circus "Bump A Nose" I will see you down the road.

Randy COO COO THE CLOWN Yarborough - June 16, 2013 at 08:32 PM

DS

“ My thoughts and prayers are with the Thomas family. Jon was a delightful patient, but we have to trust that he is in a better place free of pain, illness, and disease. RIP Jon.

De Sellers - June 15, 2013 at 02:20 PM

NK

“ A WONDERFUL man with a WONDERFUL family!! They are ALL very special and I thank God for placing them in my life so many years ago!!!! RIP Jon! You have earned your wings!

Nancy King - June 15, 2013 at 02:19 PM

DK

“ I just learned of Jon's passing while in Spain-Jon gave me the opportunity to make the transition from a licensed Funeral Director to a cemeterian and be part of the coming together of these two great industries - Jon was a great mentor, teacher and probably did more to change the death care industry in Florida than anyone else - it was a great honor to have been associated with, work with, be taught by and be a masonic brother of Jon - Jon and his family are in my thoughts and prayers and I will always remember Jon for what he did for me.

Douglas Kinzer - June 15, 2013 at 01:07 PM

GL

“ Jon, you will be missed by all those that knew you for your passion and love for the industry, your desires to help others and your kind ways. Your helping hand and all that you did to bring joy and happiness to so many will be remembers forever. I enjoyed our relationship for so many years and my heart goes out to your family as we remember you during this loss.

Glenn Lyle - June 15, 2013 at 10:31 AM

JB

“ Mr. Thomas held a depth if wisdom and a genuine sense of compassion that few people do. He was a monumental contributor to the Funeral Profession in many ways, and will truly be missed. Warmest regards and deepest condolences to the family from your friends at Hiers-Baxley Funeral Services, Ocala, FL.

Justin Baxley - June 15, 2013 at 03:30 AM

DT

“ Pat, J.T. and family,

Darlene and myself send our heart felt sympathy. Jon was such an inspiration to us and I will never forget the help he gave me when purchasing our business from the rest of my family. I felt comfortable calling and asking him for advice. He was such a gentleman as well as one of the most knowledgeable person I had ever met. I considered him a dear friend and will miss calling and talking with him.

*David & Darlene Twiford
Twiford Funeral Home
Elizabeth City, NC*

David H. Twiford - June 14, 2013 at 10:08 PM

KW

“ *What an inspiration to all Jon! I am so grateful to share a few special memories of family times and reflect on your diligent efforts to uplift us all like going to clown school and cooking up blueberry pancakes. I smile with joy seeing and learning from a loving example. A heart of one who is desiring to be an eternal blessing is shining its light among us~! Be comforted ~!! Thank you Jon~!*

Kristi Wolfe - June 14, 2013 at 08:17 AM

SC

“ Jon was a pillar in our community. We talk about leaving legacies...and Jon has done so. His good work, his dedication to his community, his business spirit and his love of his family will continue for decades to come.

I came to know Jon when he was my Leadership Gainesville dean. We sat and talked for hours about politics, family, life, religion, children, adversity. No topic was off limits and only his love of his family and compassion exceeded his knowledge and experience.

J.T. was lucky to have such an amazing role model as a dad. Our community was lucky to have such a wonderful human being as our friend, neighbor, representative.

Jon is a perfect, shining example of why I started my company. I wanted to showcase the individuals, businesses and non-profits that make us proud to call the Heart of Florida our HOME. Jon was all three.

I pray to God for the good moments to overwhelm you and the sadness to run its course quickly. I would imagine Jon is looking down on us and wondering who is going to cast the next line.

God just took home a fantastic wingman!

Scott Costello - June 14, 2013 at 07:54 AM