



## Herbert D Thomas

June 14, 2020

### Herbert D. Thomas Obituary

Herbert D. Thomas known to all as Herb, died on June 14, 2020 at Medford Leas at the age of 89. Born on December 24, 1930, Herb was the son of Herbert and Florence Thomas. Herb had a brother, Ronald, who died in his late teens. Herb's death follows on the heels of the death of his dearly departed wife, Jean, of 64 years who passed on March 11.

Herb was a cradle Episcopalian, baptized in February 1931 at Grace Church, Newark, NJ, which remained Herb's parish until he relocated to Burlington County in the early 1990s. During those 64 years, he held many positions both in the parish and in the Diocese of Newark.

A product of the public schools in Kearny, NJ, Herb received his bachelor's degree from Hobart College in 1952; was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1953 and served in an anti-aircraft unit on the West Coast until discharged in 1955. Herb joined the Fidelity Union Trust Co. (a forerunner of Wells Fargo); rose to the position of Assistant Personnel Manager (before Human Services) and left in 1958 to join the staff of the General Theological Seminary as its first Secretary for Alumni Affairs.

Over the course of his 35 years at GTS, Herb held many titles. He retired in 1993 as Vice President for Operations, which meant he was responsible for the physical plant which consisted of a New York City block of buildings and three adjacent apartment buildings. While at GTS Herb received a master's degree from New York University in Higher Education Administration.

In 1956, Herb married Jean Erskine and in 1959 Jean gave birth to their only child, Liz. In 1995, Herb and Jean moved from Nutley to Mount Laurel to be closer to Liz and their only grandchild, Kristen.

Once settled in Mount Laurel, Herb and Jean joined Trinity Church Moorestown, where Herb was actively involved and served on several committees. He also served on numerous committees within the Diocese of New Jersey. He was an office volunteer at Trinity until recently and loved to tell Jean, he was "heading off to work!"

The church played an enormous role in Herb's life. He loved his time at General Seminary. The Thomas home in Nutley was always full of life, love and laughter and served as a

suburban gathering place for students and young priests and their families who looked forward to a day in the suburbs, away from the hustle and bustle of New York City. Herb loved to garden, read, finish the New York Times crossword puzzle, and answer, correctly, the final Jeopardy question every night. He loved his small family immensely and unconditionally and eagerly awaited the daily call from his granddaughter, reporting on her news of the day.

Herb, like Jean, couldn't wait to pull into the driveway of Liz's Avalon house where they would sit on the deck, enjoy the salt air and visit with neighbors who became family. Herb loved the title of "honorary grandparent" bestowed on him and Jean by Casey and Jordan. Herb is survived by his daughter, Liz Thomas, son-in-law, Jim Kehoe and granddaughter, Kristen Van Iderstine.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Book of Remembrance, c/o Trinity Episcopal Church, 207 W. Main St., Moorestown, NJ 08057.

Condolences may be left at <http://www.lewisfuneralhomemoorestown.com>

# Comments

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“ To the family of the Rev. Herb Thomas: although I did not know the Rev. Thomas, I hope you will accept my sympathy in his passing and my prayer that God will hold you in the palm of His loving hand during this time. I see in a comment below that there is a Scottish connection so, thanks to Google Translate, I will ask God to bless you all: Dia gad bheannachadh. The Rt. Rev. Carlye J. Hughes, Bishop of Newark

**Carlye Hughes** - July 15, 2020 at 08:46 AM

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“ Herb Thomas

It is difficult to bear Herb's passing, following so soon after Jean's. His Scottish family want Liz, Jim, and Kristen to know that their thoughts are with them.

A common reaction to any mention of Herb among us is to his sense of humour and fun. Herb had many more qualities to admire, however. Liz' lovely account of his life confirms that he was a man of many talents and interests, devoted to his family and with the family background which drove him to be a good citizen.

Margaret and I loved our times with Jean and Herb, both in Scotland and in the United States. They visited Scotland on a few occasions prior to us travelling to the US. Margaret and I weren't keen on flying anywhere at the time, but Jean and Herb were persistent in their wish to welcome us to their country. Herb was astute enough to encourage me with, as he put it, 'a couple of games of golf'. I asked where the courses were situated and he replied with some sense of mischief 'Have you heard of Pine Valley and Merion?' Next stop for me was the Travel Agent!

Herb's loyalty to his Church was obvious to us and while we were with them in the Aberdeen area in the north-east of Scotland we enquired if he and Jean would like to see St Andrew's Cathedral in Aberdeen. This is the Cathedral of the Scottish Episcopal Church. The plan was approved and Margaret somehow managed to have the Cathedral opened for their visit. The flags of the States of the US hang in the Church and Herb was enthused by his knowledge of the history of the Episcopal Church in the US. He enjoyed chatting to the Provost about Samuel Seabury, prominent in the Episcopal Church in the US and generally soaking up the significance of St Andrew's Cathedral to the Church to which he belonged for so long.

These are just two of the many memories we have of Jean and Herb. They were lovely people and I will miss Herb's dry sense of humour. And I will miss my futile attempts to encourage him to refer to 'The Open Golf Championship' and not to, as he termed it, 'The British Open'!

Jim Hutton

**Jim Hutton** - June 22, 2020 at 04:05 PM

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“ Dear Liz,

This seems to impersonal but I want you know your father and mother meant much to me. Herb saw me through seminary in so many kind moments. He greeted me when i arrived at Grace, Newark as George Bowen's first curate. His smile, wisdom and devotion were part of my formation as a priest and a person. Your Mom and I went off to learn yoga together back then. There are so many small moments of collected kindnesses.

Please know you and Kristen are in my prayers as you navigate the time to come. Herb is too, but he has so many pulling him upward he has fully arrived.

Much love,  
Carr Holland

**J Carr Holland III** - June 18, 2020 at 09:22 PM

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“ Herb was the sweetest man and we're so sad about his passing. We will forever cherish the visits we had with Herb and Jean over the years. They will both hold a special place in our hearts.  
The Boyd Family

**The Boyd Family** - June 18, 2020 at 09:26 AM

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“ Jeanne & Herbie we're neighbors of ours in Mt Laurel. Our first home! Such a blessing to have moved next door to a couple as lovely as Herb & Jean, who taught us how to be good neighbors and quite by example, how to live a life full of grace, gratitude & love.

Adopted Grandparents to my kids. Herb and Jean never missed a birthday card or holiday card to Master Ryan or Miss Mollie. They were the first door we knocked on to Trick-or-Trick. A special Halloween treat waiting for each child. I won't forget our special spaghetti and meatball dinner, the many conversations about gardening, traveling and of course family. And most recently, our visit early this February, where the kids enjoyed a soda and some cookies, along with good conversation with both Jean and Herb. We joined them at Sunday chapel to sing hymns and Jean and Herb knew every word of each song...no sheet music needed. So grateful God put you both in our path...better yet, right next door for 15 years. God bless you both, you will be missed dearly. Your legacy will live on for generations.

We love you!



**Kate & Joe** - June 17, 2020 at 12:37 AM

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“ We love you Liz. You were blessed with a remarkable father! Jim and Kathy. God Bless You

**jim linus** - June 16, 2020 at 03:16 PM