



Thomas Paine Ball

September 5, 1939 - February 8, 2025

Thomas Paine Ball Jr. was born on September 5, 1939, in Weed, California, to Dina Janet Barni (born 1914 in Jackson, CA) and Thomas Paine Ball Sr. (born 1908 in Sisson-the original name for Mt. Shasta City before 1925). Tom's grandfather, Frank Ball, worked in the lumber industry and owned the Pioneer Box and Lumber Company in Mt. Shasta in the early 1900s. His grandmother, Sarah Armilda Foren, was the company's cook, and Tom's father worked there in his youth.

On his mother's side, Dina's family had recently immigrated from Italy. While Tom was growing up in Mt. Shasta, his Italian grandmother, Ercilia Regoletti Barni, lived with the family. Italian was often spoken at home, and when Tom began kindergarten, he was sent home with a note pinned to his shirt that read: "Please teach this boy how to speak English!" His family believes this early multilingual experience helped cultivate his lifelong gift for learning languages and understanding complex ideas. His sister, Stephanie Louise joined him in 1942. Her fascination for Italy drew her to study art in Florence in 1961 and she remains there today.

As a young boy, Tom joined the Boy Scouts of America, where he eventually earned the rank of Eagle Scout and served as Chief of the Order of the Arrow. At age 17, while attending the Lassen Boy Scout Camp, he witnessed a martial arts demonstration that sparked a lifelong passion. After just one year of study, he earned his black belt in 1958 from the American Judo and Jujitsu Federation (AJJF). That passion endured throughout his life-he would go on to

achieve a 10th Degree Black Belt, the highest rank in the AJJF, and serve for many years as its Senior Professor. Even at the highest rank, Tom remained a devoted student of the martial arts and generously shared his knowledge with all who were eager to learn. He touched thousands of lives through the martial arts, both on and off the mat.

In 1960, Tom met Janice Georgene Birdwell in Phoenix, Oregon, where he had founded and taught at the Medford Judo Academy, which still exists today under the leadership of his first black belt, Larry Nolte. In 1961, Tom and Jan moved to Chico, California, to attend Chico State University. They married in 1963 in Redding and moved to Davis in 1964, where Tom conducted graduate research at the University of California. He was among the first users of the electron microscope and earned a master's degree in microbiology. While in Davis, Tom and Jan founded the Davis Ju-Do Kai, which continues to operate to this day.

Their first son, Christopher Alan, was born in 1968. In 1969, they started Sis-Q Ranch Camp in Scott Valley, CA-a summer camp offering both youth and martial arts programming. Their second son, Sharmon William, was born in 1973, and their third son, Jonathon Aaron, followed in 1975. A year earlier, the family had moved full-time to Scott Valley.

For the next 27 years, Tom served as a science teacher at Etna High School. Although he eventually retired in 2000 he remained a strong advocate for public education until his passing. Over the years, Tom and Jan hosted six exchange students, as well as many others who needed a place to stay. One of those individuals, Ed Rose (Dale), became like a fourth son. Tom and Jan generously opened their home to anyone who needed a place to rest, reset, or simply feel welcome.

Throughout his life, Tom was known for his charisma, courage, and relentless drive for excellence. He possessed a deep intellectual and spiritual curiosity, with an extraordinary memory-able to recall everything from the scientific names of plants and animals to kanji characters in Japanese scrolls. Tom was a teacher in every sense of the word: at home, in the classroom, and on the

mat. He believed that sharing knowledge was a way to leave a lasting impact that transcends the physical world. His legacy lives on in the lives of every student he taught, every lesson he gave, and every person he inspired.

Tom is survived by his beloved wife of 62 years, Jan Ball. His son, Christopher, preceded him in death in 2012. Tom is also survived by Sharmon Ball (Monika); Aaron Ball (Emily Newcomer), and their two children, Kyana Lindsey Newcomer-Ball and Sage Thomas Newcomer-Ball. He is also survived by his sister, Stephanie Louise Ball, as well as his cousins, Jocie Boyer (Mark), Jackie Carr (Phil), Rina Bengtsson, Wayne Barni, extended family members and countless friends, students, and colleagues whose lives he touched with his wisdom, humor, and generosity.

Sincere thanks to Madrone Hospice in Yreka. Donations could be sent to them or to a Scholarship in memory of Christopher via the AJJF. Go to: ajjf.org/scholarships.

Please join us in celebrating Tom's life on Sunday, June 29, 2025 from 12:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the Etna City Park, next to Etna High School. BBQ chicken, hot dogs, plates, utensils, water, and punch will be provided. Please bring a favorite dish to share-and your favorite memories. Laughter is welcome and encouraged; Tom will surely be laughing with us, as he always did (a gift he inherited from his mother, Dina!). Please: no alcohol. Kindly RSVP by June 25 with the number in your group by texting 530-340-1118.

Tribute Wall

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“ *We are deeply sorry for your loss ~ Girdner Funeral Chapel*

A Memorial Tree was planted for Thomas Paine Ball - June 23, 2025 at 12:00 AM