



Thomas Birmingham

March 21, 1922 - January 8, 2015

Thomas W. Birmingham, a native of northern California, died at his home in Redding, California, on January 8, 2015. His passing was peaceful. Tom was born on March 21, 1922, to Thomas and Nell Birmingham, in Red Bluff, California. He spent his childhood in numerous small northern California towns, moving frequently with his family as his father, a California Highway Patrolman, was assigned to various posts. Tom's favorite childhood memories were of his time in Westwood, California, where he made many friends that lasted a lifetime.

Tom graduated from Clarksburg High School, now Delta High School, in 1940. His college was interrupted by World War II, during which he served as an aviator in the United States Navy. Tom was assigned to Bombing Squadron Nineteen, which flew off of the USS Lexington. During his service Tom was awarded an Air Medal and a Distinguished Flying Cross, for his actions on October 25, 1944, during the Battle of Leyte Gulf. Tom was extremely proud of the men with whom he served on board the Lexington.

Upon his discharge from the Navy, Tom enrolled in San Jose State College, from which he graduated in 1950 and from which he received a teaching credential in 1952. While at San Jose State, Tom met the only woman he ever loved, Lulu Archer. Tom and Lulu were married in December, 1951. They soon moved to Yreka, California, where they had three children, Kate, Thomas, and

John, and made a happy marriage until Lulu's death in 1987. Tom was employed as a teacher at Yreka High School from 1952 to 1983, when he retired to travel with Lulu and to care for her during the latter stages of the illness that took her life. Several years after Lulu's death, Tom moved to Redding, to be closer to his grandchildren.

Tom was truly a Renaissance man. He loved art and history, both of which he taught at Yreka High School. He marveled at science and technology. Tom was also a world-class athlete. While in college he was well known for his skills in the high hurdles and in the triple jump, then known as "the hop, skip, and jump," events that he won often at college track meets. While at Yreka High School, Tom coached track and basketball. He was also an avid skier, and was one of the first instructors at the Mt. Shasta Herald Ski School. His hobbies included hunting, fishing, and, in retirement, restoring old cars.

Tom was an extraordinary man, who lived a long and remarkable life. He cared deeply for people- his students, his neighbors, and people with whom he shared his many passions. His interest in them and their lives was genuine, and because of that he continued to forge real friendships to the end of his life. His character and the esteem in which he was held are evidenced by his many students and friends who often visited him up until his death. His family is incredibly grateful to the many people who continued their visits and for the care and concern they extended to him. It meant the world to Tom. His family would also like to express its gratitude to Christopher Bell and Redding Senior Care for the skillful assistance and cheerful company provided Tom in his later years.

Tom will be missed greatly by his three children, their spouses, W. Jaxon Baker, Wendy Birmingham, and Robin Birmingham, and his many friends. But he will be missed most by his grandchildren, who can find solace in knowing that, for the last twenty-five years of his life, they were his greatest joy.

At Tom's request, no services will be held.

Tribute Wall

NY

“ *My sincerest sympathy to you all on the passing of your Dad, Grandpa and great Grandpa. I hope your memories can make you smile and carry on some of his traditions. I loved both your Dad and Mom; working as a school nurse when she was at the county schools and he at YHS. We went round and round over hearing aids....and my memories of him can still make me chuckle. How he loved you kids! What a special man he was!! How fortunate we all were to have him around.*

Norma Young

Norma Young - January 27, 2015 at 08:51 PM

KG

“ *So admired you and your family. Prayers. Kathy Hosford gunter.Kagunter@surewest.net*

Kathy Hosford gunter - January 19, 2015 at 11:54 AM

RM

“ *My deepest sympathy for the death of your father. He was a gentleman and a gentle man. I always admired his quiet strength and quick wit.*

My love to you all, especially you, dear friend John.

Rory

Rory McNeil - January 15, 2015 at 09:41 PM

JR

“ *Mr. Birmingham was my driver's ed teacher in 1974. I remember he taught me to master the three point turn and parallel parking as well as knowing where your right front tire is on the road. He also told me to step on the gas and get up to speed with the flow of traffic the first time he took me out on the freeway. Good times. Rest in peace Mr. Birmingham and my condolences to his family.*

Janine Rowe - January 15, 2015 at 09:13 PM

MH

“ *Mr. Birmingham, your Dad was my Senior Advisor and also driving instructor. He was one of my really good memories from high school. He was truly a gem. Always such a neat sense of humor and caring. And by the way your Mom was a treasure also. Peace be with you. Maggie Harris*

Maggie Harris - January 15, 2015 at 08:56 PM

SB

“ *My condolences to Kate, Thomas, and John on the loss of your father, a very wonderful, interesting, and kind colleague at Yreka High. I always loved having prep periods with him. He was very welcoming the year I started at YHS, 1968. Tom was a real asset to our staff and I was proud to work with him. He and my husband Gene were buddies and, I am sure, shared many military stories. Your obituary was a beautiful tribute to this fine gentleman. Love and prayers to you all,
Suzanne Breceda*

Suzanne Breceda - January 14, 2015 at 08:24 PM



“ *A sympathy card was purchased for the family of Thomas Birmingham.*



January 13, 2015 at 08:56 PM



“ *Your father, grandfather was my freshman art teacher... He taught me angles, where a shadow should come from, he and Mr. Akana sparked my love of drawing!!! My condolences to your family.... He was a very sweet man..... Donna Kleaver Thimpson*

Donna Kleaver Thompson - January 13, 2015 at 08:43 PM