



Robert Denzel Thomas

February 8, 1920 - January 9, 2011

Robert “Bob” Thomas, 90, went to be with his Savior Sunday morning, January 9, 2010 at his residence in Durant, OK. Bob was born in Okmulgee, OK, February 8, 1920 to Denny B. and Lula Idela Thomas. A two time all state football player at Okmulgee High School, he attended Tulsa University on a football scholarship in 1940 and in 1941 played in the Sun Bowl on the championship Tulsa squad before entering the U.S. Army in 1942. During his tenure with the Army, Bob landed at Omaha Beach on D-Day and later earned the Bronze Star and Purple Heart serving 28 months in combat in several campaigns throughout Europe. After the war Bob returned to Tulsa University playing an additional 2 years including the Sun Bowl in 1945 before graduating in 1947. Bob started his vocation as a teacher and coach in 1947 at Vinita as the head football coach eventually becoming the head coach for Okmulgee and then Elk City, OK. Bob was the first Oklahoma All State player to return and coach an all state team coaching the North all stars in 1949. Bob married Erma Shaffer in 1949 and they were married for a loving 61 years. In 1962 Bob arrived in Durant and became Southeastern’s head football coach as well as track coach for the next 10 years. In 1971 Bob became Dean of Men for SOSU retiring in 1985. It is estimated that Bob coached over 1000 athletes throughout his career, several of these players becoming coaches themselves. Many of his players kept in touch with “Coach” throughout his life. In 2001 Bob was inducted in the Tulsa University Hall of Fame as part of the 1941 Sun Bowl Championship team and was inducted into the Oklahoma

Coaches Hall of Fame in 1981. Bob was a faithful follower of his Savior Jesus Christ and he and wife Erma are long time members of the Community Christian Church of Durant, Bob serving as an Elder and Deacon over the years.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents and 1 sister Dorothy Holland.

He is survived by his wife Erma of the home, daughters Stefani Wright of Spokane, WA, Mary Angeline Dinwiddie of Dallas, son Robert and wife Karyn Thomas of Tulsa, sisters Helen Brock, Doralea Dooley, Leota Markham, Cleota Hofmeister and brothers Denny Thomas and Benny Thomas all of Okmulgee, OK as well as 8 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren.

Memorial Services will be 11:00 AM Saturday, January 15, 2011 at Community Christian Church with Pastor Jim Blevins officiating and Pastor Jim Hodson delivering the eulogy. Memorials can be sent to Community Christian Church or SOSU Foundation Athletic Dept. Condolences may be sent to www.brownsfuneralservice.com. Services are under the direction of Brown's Funeral Service Durant.

PDF Printable Version

Tribute Wall



“ *Robert Denzel Thomas*

January 08, 2023 at 11:32 PM



“ *Erma,*

My prayers are with you and your family.

Individually and as a couple you two inspired many to be better people. Sue

Sue Landtroop - January 19, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ *Keeping you in my thoughts and prayers.*

Pam Peratta Rass - January 18, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SD

“ Dear Aunt Erma and Family,

Our thoughts and prayers are with you during this time. We regret not being with you to honor Uncle Bob today. Dan always spoke very highly and with love about his dear uncle.

God bless and give you strength.

Love,

Dan's Family

Sue, Dana, Clint and StephenW

Sue Dooley - January 15, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ A sympathy card has been sent to the family of Robert Denzel Thomas c/o Browns Funeral Service funeral home.

January 14, 2011 at 12:00 AM

BW

“ Erma,

Bob was a wonderful person and always such a joy to be around. We'll miss him so much.

Betsy Wright

Betsy Wright - January 14, 2011 at 12:00 AM

TB

“ Erma Louise,

What a wonderful man! Reading the obituary told me things I never knew about him. Sabrina never met him and I was so young seeing him at family get-togethers. I am sorry we are unable to see you and express our sympathies in person. God bless you and your family during this time of sorrow.

Terry and Sabrina

Terry and Sabrina Butler - January 14, 2011 at 12:00 AM

PP

“ Dear Erma and Stefani... My deepest condolences to you and your family. Bob lived a full and rich life. I have no doubt you will have large void in your lives now, but always know he will welcome you to Heaven with open arms. Peace be with you...Pat(Barnett)Thomas Parks

Patsy Barnett Thomas Parks - January 14, 2011 at 12:00 AM

BB

“ Erma Louise,

We sure wish we could be there to give you our condolences in person, but we know you will be surrounded by much family and friends during this time of great loss. May God richly bless you with His comfort and Peace.

Bob and Cherie Butler

Bob and Cherie Butler - January 14, 2011 at 12:00 AM

PB

“ *Just wanted you to know my heart goes out to yall. I know the emptiness you feel now will soon pass. May your heart be comforted.*

In Christian Love.

Patty Bowen - January 14, 2011 at 12:00 AM

CP

“ Mrs. Thomas:

I am so very sorry to hear of the passing of Bob. He was my boss at SOSU Dean's of Men's office, my guidance for education from middle school throughout high school and college.

You were my typing teacher in high school. I would not have achieved the goals I had set for myself in 7th grade, without two caring people.

Everything I have achieved, accomplished, and do in life had started with two caring people. You saw what others had not seen. A desire to do more with my life.

Thank you for all you have done.

My thoughts and prayers are with you and the family during this time of loss.

Cindy(Brown) Peck

Class of 1977/1981

Rock Springs, Wy 82901

Cindy (Brown) Peck - January 14, 2011 at 12:00 AM

BB

“ *So sorry to here about uncle Bob he will be grately missed.*

Brenda Blaylock - January 14, 2011 at 12:00 AM