

# THOMPSON

William "Bill" T. Thompson



William Theodore Thompson was born March 28, 1926 in Tustin, California to Guy Isaac and Marguerite Talcott Scott. He passed

away on Saturday, February 6th, at home in Upshur county, surrounded by his children, grandchildren, friends and relatives.

Mr. Thompson and his parents returned to Gridley, Kansas in early 1927 where the family resided until he and his father went to Dawson Creek, British Columbia to work on the Alcan Highway, later called the Alaska Highway. He was a day laborer at 16, and a "Catskinner" D-8 Caterpillar operator at 17. He enlisted early in the Navy, and reported for duty shortly after his 18th birthday. He served in the Pacific Theatre aboard the U.S.S. Gen. William F. Hase and later on the U.S.S. Glynn. He met Margaret Sue Katherine Rodgers in Booker, Texas and they were married on May 14, 1949. Mr. Thompson moved his family to El Paso, Texas in 1959 and began a 45 year journalism career, despite being told by his first Managing Editor, Mr. Bill Latham, that he wouldn't make it in this business. He began at The El Paso Times with his own aviation column "Wing Tips". After several years at the morning paper, he moved over to the El Paso Herald Post, Texas' largest afternoon daily newspaper. He continued writing his aviation column, but soon became an all-purpose reporter and chief photographer. During his long career, he took photographs of 9 presidents, went on the inaugural Air France flight out of Houston in 1962 to Paris, was invited by the Navy to do an in-depth story aboard the U.S.S. Constellation in the 80's, covered the 1966 Texas Western Miners basketball season, and had his official photo of the Championship team displayed at the college for many, many years. He covered the Christmas lighting contest every year, the Sun Bowl Parties, the Coronations, the parades, the football games, the Amigo Air Shows, the El Paso Sun Kings, and Diablos, the high school football games and all the day to day news in and around El Paso. He covered the news at Fort Bliss, El Paso Intl. Airport, Biggs Field, the Space

Shuttle landing at White Sands Missile Base, had a story in Alaska Magazine, photos in Time Magazine, and hung upside down out of airplanes, many times to get those aerial shots of El Paso. He made his first solo flight in 1961, and he flew with and became an honorary Blue Angel in 1959 and an honorary Thunderbird in 1965. He flew in the Space Shuttle simulator jets, and applied in 1986 to become NASA's First Journalist in Space. He knew everyone in town, including the Mayor, bank presidents, judges, business and military leaders by their first names. He also knew the cooks and waitresses at his favorite downtown Mexican restaurant, and the janitors and night watchmen too. He had award winning stories and photos, and he wrote stories about sick children who needed life saving operations. He called friends in aviation, banking and medical fields and got those children those flights, and those surgeries. Not content with retirement, Mr. Thompson worked in East Texas for several local newspapers, including The Longview News Journal, The Gilmer Mirror, The Daingerfield Bee, and the Pittsburg Gazette until his late 70's. Mr. Thompson was preceded in death by Margaret, his loving wife of 59 years, his parents, his brother, Walter and sister, Patty. He is survived by his daughters Kathy and Dave Tyler, Post, Texas, Patty and Danny Ratcliff, and Mary and Doug Thompson of Ore City, Suzy and Jerry Simmons of Longview and son, Mike and Linda Thompson, also of Ore City, sister Rosalyn Rivers of Cameron, Arkansas, sisters-in-law, Jean Cloud and Helen Rodgers, sixteen grandchildren, seventeen great-grandchildren, seven nieces, four nephews, cousins, and many, many old friends. Pall bearers will be grandsons James Snow, John Snow, Rick Grigsby, Jason Grigsby, Doug Thompson, and Alan Thompson. Honorary pall bearers will be Danny Ratcliff, Jerry Simmons, Doug Thompson, Dave Tyler Andy Tyler, Charles Tyler, Bill King, Cami Rawlings, Brian Glendenning, Robert Rivers, L.G. Rivers, Larry Winters, Kim Organ, Ron Leggett, Jack Phillips, and Charles Edgren. Services will be Wednesday, February 10th at 2:00 p.m. at Grubbs-Loyd Funeral home in Diana, Texas with interment at Ore City Cemetery. Visitation with the family will be Tuesday from 6 - 8 p.m.

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