



Dr. Thomas Gaitano Altavilla

May 20, 1927 - August 3, 2021

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What does a golfer do on his day off? Putter around. Just one of the many bad jokes we will truly miss from Dr. Thomas G. Altavilla who passed on August 3, 2021, at the age of 94. A loving husband, father, grandfather, brother and friend, Thomas will be truly missed and will always be remembered for his wit and kindness.

Thomas and his twin brother Peter were born on May 20, 1927, in Passaic, New Jersey. He grew up with his four brothers and one sister in New Jersey. One of his fondest childhood memories was winning the state baseball championship with his twin brother Peter. During WWII, he served in the US Navy and after the war he joined the US Air Force. He then used the GI Bill for schooling to become a Doctor of Medicine.

During this time, he met the love of his life, Esther Tinklepaugh. They were married on June 14, 1958, and moved to Rochester, NY where he did his residency at Highland Hospital. They soon started a family and had three boys.

He moved the family to Goleta, CA in 1969 and started his practice in medicine as a General Practitioner. Thomas was an old school doctor who carried a little black bag and made house calls. As a family doctor, he cared for many generations of local families at his practice and at the Goleta Valley Hospital.

It is impossible to convey the many stories of all the people he helped, healed and saved as a Doctor. One of the last times he saved a person's life was 20 years after he retired. While out playing golf, a man in the foursome in front of him collapsed with a heart attack. Thomas quickly ran over and started performing CPR while directing another man to call 911. He continued CPR until the paramedics arrived and in doing so saved the man's life. He wondered why older gentlemen always wanted him in their foursome. After that day, he realized why.

Thomas had the life that most people dream of living. He had a long, happy and healthy life and loved healing people as a doctor. He was married to the beautiful Esther, the woman he adored, for 63 years and was an amazing father to his three sons. Esther was by his side holding his hand and telling him how much she loved him on the day he passed. He is now in heaven rejoicing with his parents (Atillia and Samuel), his brothers Pete and George, and niece Annie. He is survived by his wife Esther, sons: Alex, Thomas and Brad, grandchildren: Amber, Rachel, and Jacob, Siblings: Alex, Robert and Mildred, and daughter-in-law: Valerie.

Our family would like to thank Nurse Kelli Tennis of Central Coast Hospice and the staff at GranVida Senior Living for all the care and kindness they gave Thomas and Esther.

In lieu of flowers please donate to the amazing people at Central Coast Hospice. Only checks can be accepted. Please remember to write "Dr. Thomas Altavilla" in the memo line of your check and mail your donation to Central Coast Hospice, 253 Granada Drive, Suite D, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401.

Cemetery Details

Calvary Cemetery

199 North Hope Ave
Santa Barbara, CA 93110
(805) 687-8811
http://www.archdiocese.la/directories/cemeteries/info.php?cemetery_id=3