



Thomas Brashears

March 19, 1927 - November 20, 2023

Thomas Brashears of Santa Barbara, 1927 – 2023

We celebrate the life of Thomas Brashears a long time Santa Barbara resident, who passed away peacefully at the age of 96, with family in attendance, on November 20, 2023 in Cottage Hospital.

Tom was born on March 19, 1927 to Marcella and Gassaway Brashears in Glendale, CA. He spent his early years playing basketball at the Glendale YMCA honing his leadership skills as captain, his high school years at Hoover High and finding ways to earn money as a gardener, at a pottery factory and an auto dealership. He credited these work experiences with preparing him for his business career.

Tom graduated from USC after he was discharged from the Navy in 1946. In 1948 Tom married Barbara Jean Rife, from nearby Montrose, who he met while on spring break in Balboa, CA just before he enlisted in the Navy. He is known to say that marrying Barbara was the “best decision of his life.”

Between 1950 and 1966, Tom & Barbara hit the road, from Burbank, to Claremont, to Redlands and finally landing in Santa Barbara. During those 16 years, five children were born, Greg, Chris, Anne, Mike and Carol. Most of those years, while developing his communication and sales skills involving office products, saw Tom put into action a maxim he held dear: “The Harder One Works, The Luckier One Gets.”

Once in Santa Barbara, after purchasing a small office supply firm, Tom transformed the business into what became The Office Mart, eventually

employing more than 100. Tom invested much of his time to the United Way, Rotary Club and the Santa Barbara Chamber of Commerce as well as to his church. Tom served as an elder at both First Presbyterian Church and St. Andrews Presbyterian Church of Santa Barbara. He was an enthusiastic reader of business and economic publications, including Barron's, to understand new business trends and advise his family. He was also a devout Gaucho basketball supporter, avid skier and trout fisher, interspersed with wide travel interests that Barbara and Tom enjoyed. He also loved caring for his nearly 130 avocado trees and spending time with his large family. Tom cherished his five children, 20 grandchildren and 21 great grandchildren and his wife Barbara, recently celebrating their 75th wedding anniversary. He was preceded in death by his mother Marcella Shephard Brashears, father Gassaway Brashears, brother George Brashears and sister Betty Ann Turentine (Lawrence).

A Celebration of Life will be held at the Samarkand Mountain Room on December 1 at 2:00PM.

If you wish to honor his life with a donation, consider the United Way of Santa Barbara County or the Parkinson Foundation.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

DEC 1. 2:00 PM (PT)

Samarkand Mountain Room
2550 Treasure Drive
Santa Barbara, CA