



## Thomas W. Wathen

October 5, 1929 - June 20, 2016

"God loveth a cheerful giver" 2 Cor. 9:7

Beloved husband, son, brother, father, uncle, friend, business tycoon, pilot, benefactor and mentor, died peacefully on June 20th, 2016 in Montecito, CA., his wife Carol by his side.

Tom Wathen was born in Vincennes, Indiana on Oct. 5th, 1929, the son of William H. "Jack" Wathen and Dorothy M. Stumpp Wathen.

Tom spent his early years in Vincennes, attending St. Francis Xavier School, Lincoln High and Vincennes University where he was later honored with the title "Outstanding Alumni".

Tom was bitten by the aviation bug early. As a child in Vincennes, Indiana, he made and flew many model airplanes. While in high school, he pedaled his bike across the bridge over the Wabash River to O'Neals Airport, a turf strip on the Illinois side, and hung around watching the flying. As he became known and trusted, he was allowed to wash airplanes and sweep the hangar floor, and sometimes was rewarded by being given a plane ride. This ended when his mother found out that he was actually going aloft and put a stop to it.

Aviation was on Tom's mind when he went to college, enrolling in aeronautical

engineering at Purdue University. He delighted in telling how the dean of students summoned him to his office after the first semester and asked him why he wanted to be an aeronautical engineer. Tom explained his lifelong love of aviation, and his ambition to play a role in the design of the aircraft of the future. The dean replied that Tom's reasons were laudable, but suggested that he pursue another line of study and return to aero engineering as Tom would say, "When he learned how to add and subtract."

Tom enlisted in the United States Air Force, attending Officers Cadet School. Subsequently, he was stationed at the Pentagon, in Washington D.C.

Tom later attended Indiana University, majoring in police science. Here he met his wife, Margaret Gibson (Gabby) Corbin, who preceded him in death. Gabby was a true and valued partner and a profound influence in all aspects of Tom's early life and business.

In 1958, Tom came to California, working for North American Aviation as a project security officer. By now, he had become a licensed pilot and had purchased his first airplane. It was when he came to California, that he joined the fledgling Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA). Tom went on to serve on the EAA President's Council and as a Trustee of the EAA Foundation.

In 1964, Tom bought California Plant Protection (CPP), a small industrial security company consisting of only thirteen guards and four old police cruisers. So successful was CPP that two decades later it employed 23,000 people and had 130 offices in 38 states. CPP handled security for the 1984 Los Angeles Summer Olympics.

In 1998, CPP bought the famed Pinkerton Company who have the longest and most colorful history in the security field.

In 1999, Tom resolved to increase his already sizeable charitable endeavors and decided that the mission of the Thomas W. Wathen Foundation, now called the Tom Wathen Center, would be to use the magic of flight to inspire life-long learning especially by young people. Tom bought the historic Flabob Airport to be used as a campus for the Wathen Foundation's work. Flabob is the home of Chapter One of the EAA, first of some 900 chapters.

Under Tom's guidance, Flabob has become the home of an aviation-themed public charter secondary school, of a branch of Spartan College of Aeronautics and Technology, and of the headquarters of the world's oldest pilot fraternity. It has offered field trips, Air Academies, and aircraft restoration projects to thousands of young people from toddlers to high school students. Its at-risk intervention projects have diverted young gang members to useful lives in aviation. Dozens of young people have earned pilot and mechanic certificates, and have had their lives positively changed.

In 2011, Tom married Carol Scott Wathen in a joyful ceremony in front of his entire extended family and group of friends at a Wathen Family Reunion. Carol remained his best friend and constant companion.

Tom's special genius was that he never met a stranger. He was instantly and truly friends with everyone he met, without regard to their social standing, money or lack of it. He often drove his pilot friends nuts by his friendly chatter with busy air traffic controllers, but none of them ever spoke sharply to him, sensing his warmth and good will. He knew astounding numbers of his thousands of employees, not only by name, but by their family triumphs and struggles.

Tom was the most generous of humans. When it came to the needs of others, his pocketbook was open, as was his heart. Tom Wathen's life and business

acumen were anchored in his solid mid-west values, along with his love of God, family and country. He encouraged those of us who are left to mourn his passing to always do our best.

Tom Wathen was preceded in death by his parents, former wives Margaret Corbin Wathen and Janna Weaver Wathen. Also preceding him in death are brother Robert H. Wathen, sister Margaret Ann Marchino, brothers-in law John N. Marchino and Dr. John T. Quirk and sister-in-law, Margaret Corbin Lindner.

Tom is survived by his wife Carol, two sisters, Barbara Wathen (Tom) Quirk, and Mary Susan Wathen along with his sister-in-law Chieko (Robert) Wathen, sister-in-law Elizabeth McMillian, brother-in-law, Adrian McMillian, two sons of Carol Wathen, Manning and Scott Mann and grandson Manning J. Mann, two sons of Janna Weaver Wathen, Doug (Pia) Jensen, their sons Chase and Michael, and Michael (Diane) Jensen, their daughters, Addison, Gioia, and Janna.

Tom Wathen was a loving uncle to Mary (Wathen) Ahern and her husband Paul, their children Diane and John (Jack), to Mark Wathen, his children MacKenna and MacAllister, to Amy (Quirk) Weiss and her husband Dr. Eric Weiss and son Daniel, to Christopher Quirk and his wife Kimberly, with children Cuchulainn, Caitriona, Michael (Josiah) and Beatris (Tilly), to Matthew Quirk and his wife Peggy with their children Andrew and Michael, to Kathryn (Quirk) Panetti and her husband David, their children John (Tommy) and Sophie, to John Marchino and his wife Lori, their children John Lee and Curtis Lee, to C. Edward (Eddie) Marchino and his wife Rebecca (Becky), to Julia (Julie) Marchino, and to Marilyn (Marchino) Westfall and her husband Tom, their children Nathan and Margaret (Maggi). Also surviving are niece Lieutenant Colonial Retired Margaret (Lindner) Herring and her husband, Master Sergeant Retired Michael Herring, their children Max and Camilla.

Special family friends surviving are Linda Sue "Sugar" Alsop of New Harmony Indiana and Fr. Aloysius Michael of Aliso Viejo California.

A rosary will be recited at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, 1300 East Valley Road, Montecito, CA on Monday, June 27th at 7:00 pm. A Requiem Mass will be celebrated at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church on Tuesday, June 28th at 11:00 a.m. In lieu of flowers, donations in Tom's memory may be made to The Tom Wathen Center, Flabob Airport, 4130 Mennes Avenue, Jurupa Valley, California 92509.

# Previous Events

## Funeral Mass

JUN **28**. 11:00 AM (PT)

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church  
1300 East Valley Rd.  
Santa Barbara, CA 93108  
(805) 969-6868  
<http://www.olmc-montecito.com>

# Tribute Wall

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“ Please accept my family's heartfelt condolences on the loss of your dear loved one. May you find comfort in fond memories, and The Almighty God's promise in the Bible, to restore those asleep in death to perfect life on a paradise Earth.

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**Greene Family** - July 05, 2016 at 10:07 AM