



Durwood Thomas

August 10, 1930 - October 28, 2011

The clipping in the Chico, CA newspaper read "On August 10, 1930 an embryo policeman was born to Police Officer C.G. Thomas and wife". Thus began Durwood Thomas' life & career in law enforcement.

Durwood moved with his family to Oregon City when he was young, and he lived his entire life here except for his military service. He graduated from Oregon City High School and attended Northwest Christian College & Portland State before becoming a deputy sheriff for Clackamas County in 1952.

Durwood was called to military service by the US Army in 1954. After basic training, he was sent to join occupation forces in Germany. He married Priscilla Hutchins during his leave, and she joined him there. Durwood & Priscilla lived with a German family. They traveled throughout Europe while living in Germany visiting 10 countries.

After his discharge, Durwood returned to the Clackamas County Sheriff's office, continuing with his education at Portland State. He became an investigator for the Clackamas County District Attorney's office. To expand his experience, Durwood became an attendance officer for the Clackamas County Schools. During this time, he received his AAS degree from Clark College. Durwood then attended Oregon College of Education in Monmouth, OR earning his Bachelor's & Master's Degrees in Corrections. Durwood then joined the staff at Clackamas Community College where he taught for 8 years, the last 4 serving as department chairman. Portland Community College then recruited him as the lead instructor in Law Enforcement for 11 years.

Durwood loved to travel and his teaching career allowed him the opportunity to travel each summer. While visiting foreign countries, Durwood learned & observed their law enforcement systems. He was very interested in geneology and he & Priscilla traced his family back to 1800. Durwood found and visited his first cousins in England & New Zealand.

After retiring in 1994, Durwood & Priscilla continued to travel, enjoying the friendships they made around the world. At home he loved boating with his family. Durwood had a love for airplanes and had his pilot's license. He was an avid gun collector and proud of his collection. He loved routing redwood signs many of which can still be seen in the Oregon City area. All that knew Durwood know that he loved to garden and grew extra vegetables to deliver to his friends, "goodie bags" as he called them. Durwood was known for his outgoing personality and sense of humor.

Durwood was proud to have served as an escort for John F. Kennedy when he visited Oregon in 1960. When visiting England, Durwood was part of the civilian police guard for Queen Elizabeth when she visited Southampton.

Durwood is survived by his wife & the love of his life, Priscilla whom he was married to for 57 years. His four children, Steven, Rebecca, Michelle, and Todd. Three grandchildren, Melissa, Ashley, and Luke. One great granddaughter, Kennedy Anne. His two sisters, Jean Fassler & Vernice Keuss.

He will be remembered for his integrity, sense of humor, love of family & friends, and love for his Lord.

An anonymous poet once wrote, "May your journey be long, and may it be good". Durwood's definitely was!

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Tribute Wall



“ I attended clackamas community college between 1978- 1981. Durwood always made sure that the young law enforcement officers acted like gentelman. There was a clackamas county deputy, that followed me between classes , came up behind me and slapped my bottom. Durwood immediately call him into his office and told Les that that was not the way you treat a woman. Durwood was always making me feel better about myself. I believe Durwood gave me faith regarding God, a go get them attitude. I truly love him like a brother in. Durwood was a great teacher. I want his children to know he made a big difference in my life and many others. He was a God sent.

shannon - June 28, 2025 at 10:43 PM



“ Durwood Thomas

January 28, 2023 at 02:51 PM



RACIST

Lawrence Smalley - January 23, 2024 at 11:27 AM

RM

“ I was a criminal justice student of Durwood's at Portland Community College in the 1980's. As I went on to pursue my career in law enforcement, Durwood's "stories" from his classes would come to mind every so often. I chuckled about them, but felt rich inside for having learned so much from him. I can still hear him in class talking about crime cases and telling us students to "do your homework", "go that extra mile" when you get into law enforcement. You are missed Sir.

Ron McHenry - January 24, 2012 at 12:00 AM

SM

“ I have thought of you so many time over the years. You were the one instructor that made the difference. In the mid 1970 very few woman were involved in law enforcement. You always encouraged me to go for it all. Thank you and your family for the dedication towards student. I love you

Shannon Millican - November 28, 2011 at 12:00 AM

BO

“ Sorry to hear about Durwood. I am one of his classmates and remember him well as being friendly outgoing and a great classmate. My condolences to the fammily.

Sincerely, Bonnie Hiett- Smith

bonnie - November 02, 2011 at 12:00 AM

JR

“Michelle has always spoken so fondly of her father that I know this loss must at times seem unbearable for all who were close to him. I pray you all find some comfort in the wonderful memories I know you must have and believing Durwood is finally at peace.

With my deepest sympathy...

Joyce

Joyce Riley - November 02, 2011 at 12:00 AM

KR

“Wonderful memories of my Uncle Durwood. My two brothers and I attended Clackamas High School I worked in the attendance office and he would show to check on attendance. And if one of us did not show up at school he was on the phone to our Mom. Kept us on our toes. Uncle Durwood was one of a kind. He will be missed.

Love to Aunt Priscilla and family.

Kathy Roach - November 01, 2011 at 12:00 AM

MP

“You have and always be in my heart. You were there when I needed you most and I will never forget you my very dear and not forgotten friend.

Maria Plunkett - November 01, 2011 at 12:00 AM

RP

“ Priscilla: This is the time to honor yourself as well for all you been and done for Durwood. Bless you SO much. Please know we are there in prayer and comfort. Please keep me posted; I sincerely mean that. Love to you, Ron Parrish

Ron Parrish - November 01, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ A sympathy card has been sent to the family of Durwood Thomas c/o Hillside Chapel funeral home.

November 01, 2011 at 12:00 AM

VG

“ I will miss you so much, dear sweet friend. Your joyful spirit will continue on and be with all who knew you, laughed with you, admired you, respected you and most especially, loved you. The world has lost one of the true "good guys" but may you always and forever be at peace with your Lord and Savior. May God bless your dearest Priscilla and entire family. I pray He will hold them close and give them strength in this time of sadness and loss.

Vickie Goodman - October 31, 2011 at 12:00 AM