



C. Thomas Thompson, MD

FEB 2, 1925 - JUN 17, 2022



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Table of Contents

Obituary	Page 3
Tribute Wall	Page 8



C. Thomas Thompson, MD

FEB 2, 1925 - JUN 17, 2022

C Thomas Thompson, MD Obituary

• C. Thomas Thompson, M.D. FACS (“C.T.” or “Tommy”) passed away in his home on June 17, 2022 at age 97.

A foundational pillar of the medical community and a towering figure in the world of surgery, Dr. C.T. Thompson transformed the provision of trauma care in America while personally caring for tens of thousands of patients, saving countless lives, and training generations of young physicians. In both his professional and personal lives, Tommy Thompson always exhibited genuine kindness, down-to-earth congeniality, and natural gentle humor that left an imprint on the hearts of everyone who had the joy of knowing him. His absence will be acutely felt by his profession, his colleagues, his many friends, and his adoring family.

Tommy Thompson was born in Brookhaven, Mississippi on February 2, 1925 to C. Tatman and Margaret (Johnson) Thompson, both educators, and enjoyed a bucolic childhood in Estherwood, Acadia Parrish, Louisiana. He graduated from Estherwood High School in 1941 then briefly attended Louisiana Normal College on a baseball scholarship before enlisting in the United States Navy, in which he served for eighteen months as a hospital corpsman. Upon his return to civilian life, he attended the University of Mississippi then Harvard Medical School, from which he graduated at the top of the class of 1948.

After medical school, C.T. completed a surgery residency under Dr. Alton Ochsner at Charity Hospital in New Orleans. During that time he also served as a flight surgeon with the Second Bomb Wing of the United States Air Force’s Strategic Air Command at various Royal Air Force



Obituary

C. Thomas Thompson, MD

FEB 2, 1925 - JUN 17, 2022

bases in England. He then served in the Korean War as a surgeon with a United States Marine Corps mobile combat hospital operating on wounded soldiers near the front lines, where he was a member of the 38th Parallel Medical Society of Korea.

In 1956, C.T. moved to Tulsa and began a busy private general surgery practice. When construction began on Saint Francis Hospital, its founder, W.K. Warren, tasked C.T. with identifying numerous medical programs of which Tulsa was in need and which would serve as the nucleus of a modern medical center, recruiting prominent specialists from across the country, and organizing various Medical Programs of Excellence for that hospital, a commission C.T. undertook with zeal. In 1966, C.T. founded a surgical group, Surgical Associates of Tulsa, which dedicated its practice to and played a defining role in the enormous progress of Saint Francis Hospital. C.T. served both as Chairman of the Saint Francis Medical Executive Committee overseeing the hospital's medical staff and on the Board of Directors' Executive Committee for over a quarter century. After retiring from surgery in 1996, C.T. was appointed Interim Chief Executive Officer of Saint Francis Hospital, a position he held for a number of years until a permanent CEO was located and retained. He then served as Chief Medical Officer of the newly-created Saint Francis Health System.

Throughout his medical career, C.T.'s true passion was trauma care, a field in which he achieved national distinction. In 1966, C.T. was appointed Chairman of the Oklahoma Committee on Trauma, a member organization of the American College of Surgeons' National Committee on Trauma (he was made a Fellow of the College, or FACS, in 1958), a position he held until 1974. One of his many accomplishments in that role was to organize and implement the first burn treatment center in Oklahoma at Hillcrest Medical Center. He also spearheaded the organization and creation of Tulsa's first city-wide ambulance service and a training program for first responders.

In 1978, C.T. was appointed National Chairman of the American College of Surgeons' Committee on Trauma, a position he held for four years. He is the only practicing community surgeon ever



Obituary

C. Thomas Thompson, MD

FEB 2, 1925 - JUN 17, 2022

to serve in that role. His transformative tenure saw the development of the national system of trauma care -- designated Level I, II, and III trauma centers surveyed and verified by the Committee -- still in operation throughout the United States today, as well as documented optimal care policies which continue to influence trauma systems worldwide. In recognition of his leadership, the American College of Surgeons awarded C.T. its highest honor: the American College of Surgeons Distinguished Service Award. He is the only Oklahoman ever to receive that award.

A clinical professor of Surgery for the University of Oklahoma Tulsa Medical College, C.T. helped establish and served on the Board of Directors of the Tulsa Medical Education Foundation, which coordinates Tulsa's residency training programs for physicians. He also served as a Visiting Professor of Surgery at the University of Tennessee School of Medicine in Knoxville.

C.T. was honored to deliver the Robert H. Kennedy Lecture in Emergency Medicine for the University Association for Emergency Medicine and the Scudder Oration for the American College of Surgeons at its Clinical Congress. He received the Surgeons' Award for Distinguished Service to Safety awarded jointly by the American College of Surgeons, the American Association for the Surgery of Trauma, and the National Safety Council.

C.T. also served as President of the Oklahoma Surgical Association, the Oklahoma Chapter of the American College of Surgeons, the Oklahoma Trauma Research Society, the Tulane Surgical Society, and the Alton Ochsner Surgical Society. He was a Fellow of the American Association for the Surgery of Trauma and the Southern Surgical Association, and a member of the American Trauma Society, the American Surgical Association, and the Société Internationale de Chirurgie.

C.T.'s commitment to trauma was deeply rooted in his appreciation of the complete vulnerability of its victims and the awesome responsibility of those who undertake to care for them, as was



Obituary

C. Thomas Thompson, MD

FEB 2, 1925 - JUN 17, 2022

reflected by his maxim: “We speak for those who are unable to speak for themselves.”

In his retirement, Tommy enjoyed love and laughter with family, traveling with friends, telling droll stories, and playing professional-level bridge on an amateur basis.

He was preceded in death by the love of his life and wife of 38 years, Anna Rebecca Parsons, and his sisters Margaret Holmes and Geraldine Melancon. He is survived by his children, Dr. Christopher Thompson (Lynne), Elizabeth Kennedy (Dr. Tom), John Thompson (Kathy Bogart), Jane Tillotson, and Steven Simcoe (Shannon); grandchildren Thomas Kennedy, Jr. (Hayden), Dr. Joseph Kennedy (Sarah), Joshua Speer (Nicole), Kyra Kennedy, Summer Thompson, and Nashua, Campbell, and Gage Tillotson; and great-grandchildren Graham, Brody, Julia, and Iris Kennedy. He is revered and beloved by them all.

A memorial service will take place at First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa at 709 S. Boston Avenue on July 16, 2022 at 11:00 a.m. The family requests that, in lieu of flowers, donations be made in his name to the charity of your choice.

Dr. C. T. Thompson: Surgeon and Hospital Administrator (voicesofoklahoma.com)

[CT Valedictorian Speech 1941 - YouTube](#)

[The Life and Times of Estherwood - YouTube](#)



Obituary

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To send flowers
to the family or plant a tree
in memory of C. Thomas Thompson, MD, please visit our floral store.

[Read More](#)



Tribute Wall

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SG

Sue Yoder Gunnarson, Rn posted:

A Memorial tree was ordered in memory of C. Thomas Thompson, MD by Sue Yoder Gunnarson, RN. Plant a TreeDr. Thompson was the "commander-in-charge" of all his patients. He taught, guided and instructed me on trauma care/ surgical patients. When he was finished I had to take my "smokin" shoes off. Sue Yoder Gunnarson, RN

April 22 at 7:34 AM



Anonymous posted:

A Memorial tree was ordered in memory of C. Thomas Thompson, MD. Plant a Tree

April 22 at 7:34 AM

JG

Jeff And Bonnie Glover posted:

Sincerest thoughts was purchased for the family of C. Thomas Thompson, MD by Jeff and Bonnie Glover . Send FlowersThinking Of you and your family during this time.Jeff and Bonnie GloverJeff and Bonnie Glover

April 22 at 7:34 AM

AS

Ausra Silkaitis posted:

A Memorial tree was ordered in memory of C. Thomas Thompson, MD by Ausra Silkaitis. Plant a TreeI'm so deeply sorry for this tremendous loss of a truly gifted and brilliant man, Dr. Thompson, father of my dearest friends, Chris and his wife Lynne Thompson. This man was truly a blessing to ALL.Ausra Silkaitis

April 22 at 7:34 AM

DS

Dr Michael E Sandlin And Norma Sandlin posted:

Palm plant was purchased for the family of C. Thomas Thompson, MD by Dr Michael E Sandlin and Norma Sandlin. Send FlowersWith loving memories of C. Thomas Thompson, MDDr Michael E Sandlin and Norma Sandlin

April 22 at 7:34 AM



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C. Thomas Thompson, MD

FEB 2, 1925 - JUN 17, 2022

JS

Jane Sharpe posted:

He set the standard for surgeons and for physician executives. Our city was so fortunate to have this world class leader, but to meet him you wouldn't know it because he was so kind and humble. He definitely had a presence. My sincere sympathies to you, Steve and to all the rest of the family. His memory will definitely live on and is one of many represented by that big pink building.

June 21 at 12:04 PM

BE

Betty posted:

I worked for Dr. Thompson for 17 plus years..Each day that he came to see patients he was always in a good mood. He loved his patients, he loved taking care of each and everyone of them. He always said one more doesn't matter, just add them to the schedule. At the end of his day he always thanked me and then went to the ladies on the front desk and thank. Dr, Thompson was a wonderful man to work for and with. When I went to work for him I was 5 feet 11 inches tall and he ran my legs off and now I am 5 feet 4 inches tall because I ran the halls so long with him. I have many fond memories of him.

June 19 at 11:59 AM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring C. by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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