

The Celebration of a Life Well Lived



Thomas Washington Sumner, Jr.

“Tom”

Alpha

June 9, 1928

Omega

October 9, 2014

Service

Thursday, October 16, 2014 ~ 11:00 AM

White Rock Baptist Church

1101 Chandler Avenue

Linden, New Jersey

Rev. Robert C. Morris, Pastor

“Precious Memories”

Fill Not Your Hearts With Pain And Sorrow

*Fill not your hearts with pain and sorrow
But remember me in every tomorrow,
Remember the joy, and the smiles
I've only gone to rest a little while
Although my leaving causes pain and grief
My going has eased my hurt and given me relief.
So dry your eyes and remember me,
Not as I am now, but as I used to be.
Because I will remember you all
and look on with a smile.
Understand in your hearts,
I've only gone to rest a little while.
As long as I have the love of each of you
I can live my life in the hearts of all of you.*

Reflections of Life

Thomas Washington Sumner, Jr. was born in Roselle, New Jersey on June 9, 1928, son of the late Thomas, Sr. and Margaret Sumner. He graduated from Abraham Clark High School in Roselle Class of 1946. He was affectionately called “Tom” by his family, friends and acquaintances.

Upon graduation, Tom worked for several companies but took interest specifically in barbering. Having an entrepreneurial spirit, he started his own business, a barber shop called Hollywood Tonsorial in 1959. The location was a condemned building with a floor that was replaced and remodeled. Having a penchant for repairing and fixing things, Tom revamped and revised this condemned spot to a thriving, fully servicing barber shop. He decorated it with palm trees and painted the walls three shades of green. This theme emulated the most popular place in America at that time which was Hollywood, California. Tom gave serious thought to naming his barber shop.

During this era, the local barber served more than one purpose. Many patrons could not afford to see a doctor for skin ailments. Hence barbers such as Tom would often diagnose impetigo and ringworm and provide salves to cure them. This is known as tonsorial work – barbers who cut hair and performed minor medical duties relating to hair and scalp. From this, the name Hollywood Tonsorial Barber Shop was born.

His clientele expanded from Roselle to surrounding neighborhoods and towns. Tom was one of few barbers who mastered the art of doing eyebrows and moustaches with a straight razor. He has passed the reigns of Hollywood Tonsorial on to his son and grandson who now own and operate Hollywood II which is still in the same location. The original barber chairs and mirrors from 1959 are still there.

Being a man of many talents, and always expanding his horizons, Tom had a dual role to accompany his barbering business. He worked for the Roselle Board of Education from 1970-1987 as a Home School Liaison Officer which we now know as a Truant Officer. In this position Tom evaluated attendance records, held parent conferences and approved grades as a result of student’s attendance. Based upon this description, one would think that it would make Tom very unpopular with the students but it was quite the opposite. He was affectionately known as “Mr. S” to the students. They had great respect and admiration for him. Tom served all seven Roselle schools and his office was in Abraham Clark High School. He had a great rapport with the staff, the students and parents. Tom also owned a Trucking Business for a period of time called Sumner Transport. He named his rig “Big Red.”

Tom was actively involved in his community which he had a great desire to see prosper and flourish. He was a Roselle Committee Man. In this capacity he was a leader or “go to” person for the community.

Tom also served as a Roselle Volunteer Fireman and never hesitated to answer a fire call. His most vivid recollection of this time was when he was called in to assist Roselle Park Borough on a fire in the business district. He had to crawl on the floor in a smoke filled store to rescue people. As a result, many lives were saved that day. Tom received an award of honorable mention for his assistance to Roselle Park Fire Department.

Having completed so many diverse tasks, Tom retired and moved to Rocky Mount, North Carolina where he continued to cut hair for another 10 years. He retired from barbering but still had faithful customers that would come every week to his home for a cut.

Tom had many hobbies. He owned a boat where he enjoyed fishing, landscaping his own yard and grew a vegetable garden. He would cook a full meal every day and declared that the kitchen was his favorite spot in the house. Nobody could top his chicken wings! Tom was very much “Mr. Fix It”. He would work on anything – be it wooden, electrical or metal and had a fully equipped work bench. If it was broke, he would fix it. At the proud age of 86, he still was riding his Harley Davidson motorcycle.

On October 9, 2014, Thomas Washington Sumner, Jr. was called from his earthly home to his heavenly home at the age of 86.

He was predeceased by his son, Terrance J. Sumner; brother, Kenneth Sumner; and sisters: Camille McKenzie, Elizabeth Dixon and Diane Donald. He will sorely be missed.

Tom leaves to cherish his memory: his devoted wife, Brenda J. Sumner; three dear sons: Thomas R. Sumner (Reggie) of Parlin, NJ, Gary L. Sumner and wife, Joyce of Navarre, FL and Robert T. Sumner and wife, Gayle of Roselle, NJ; sisters: Brenda Alston and husband Rufus, Laverne Forbes and Shirley Jones; 11 grandchildren: Nicole, Reggie, Andre, Stephanie, Gary Jr., Brandon, Dahna, Bobby, Jared, Terrance Jr. and Desiree; 9 great-grandchildren: Adriana, Qiora, Myla, Giavanna, Andre Jr., Santana, Yahsin, Jada and Treyson; sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law: Gretchen and Willie Randolph of Franklin Lakes, NJ, Renee Hamilton of Santee, SC, Rhonda Baize of Brooklyn, NY, Eunice Foster of Linden, NJ and Russell Foster of Warwick, NY; nieces, nephews, goddaughter: Laura Mason-Graves; longtime friends: James Brazil, Milton Mason, Ernest “Bucky” Vaughan and George G. Woody, Jr.; and a host of other dear relatives and friends.

Tom had these Words To Live By: *Love God, Stay Busy, Keep Yourself Moving, Stay Healthy and Surround Yourself with Positive, Healthy Minded People – and most of all – Always Do The Right Thing.*

Lovingly submitted,
The Family

Pallbearers

Andre L. Sumner
Terrance J. Sumner
Jared T. Sumner

Reggie L. Sumner
Bobby J. Sumner
Brandon L. Sumner

Precious



Memories

A Life Fulfilled

*Born to love, to lead, to guide
God placed you in our midst
You shared your wisdom, character and pride
Gave us a trail to blaze, a blueprint to follow
You would not want us to mourn
I can hear you say, "Get up, Go on"
No time to waste, no time to cry
The world is waiting – give it a try.
For you were a steadfast rock
Worked hard, taught well, lived life
encouraged all of us – you would say, "Don't stop!"
Keep going, keep working, keep moving – no strife!
We are left with precious memories to hold
You were such a strong presence in our lives
We will miss you more than you could ever know
Husband, Father, Pop, Brother, Friend – well done.
Sorrowfully submitted,
The Family*

Acknowledgement

We, the family of **Thomas Washington Sumner, Jr.** wish to express gratitude and thanks for your prayers, calls, visits and other expressions of sympathy during our time of bereavement. We will remain forever grateful for your kindness, thoughtfulness and support. Thank you.

