



# Thomas Anderson

MAR 20, 1943 - AUG 10, 2018



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**T**homas Ray Anderson, 75 of Tulsa, Oklahoma passed from this life on Friday, August 10, 2018 in a Tulsa Hospital. He was born March 20, 1943 in Dallas TX, son of John Walter Anderson and Dorothy Eva Anderson. Tommy was the 6th of seven brothers, having 3 sisters also. Tommy attended Adamson High School in Dallas. After HS Tommy moved to Tulsa where he eventually was hired by OG&E. Tommy worked a few odd jobs while looking for his “place” in the world of employment. Tommy, who all his friends knew or would come to know, was NOT mechanically inclined – at all – yet his first job at ONG (Oklahoma Natural Gas – and long before there was a OneOk sister company) was rebuilding residential gas meters at the service facility which was located for decades back then on East 15th Street between Yale and Sheridan. Tommy excelled at that mechanical rebuilding environment, as he did at all things in his life to which he put his mind and determination. That job started in 1969. By 1975 he was in the accounting department and he retired from OneOk in 2005 after 35+ years with the ONG/OneOK companies after steadily progressing up the ladder but still in accounting. Tommy was very well respected by his colleagues and peers, but also by those above and below him at ONG/OneOk for his integrity – and kindness. Tommy was a dedicated, capable and faithful employee for all those years. Being from Texas, Tommy had a slogan about treacherous weather driving in Tulsa – “in ice and snow Tom’s car don’t go.” When the streets were really slick, Tommy either got a ride with a friend or rode the bus. While Tommy did not pursue being published, probably because he didn’t want the attention, he was also a gifted poet. He wrote significant, personal poetry for many of his friends – each poem considered, written and delivered in love. One such example is in the History of Adair County (OK). Of course, what cannot be left out, was that while Tommy liked Oklahoma State football, and loved to see them when they occasionally beat OU, he



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was at heart a diehard Texas Longhorns football fan – and dearly loved to cheer them on – but it was best when they were beating OU. Of course, the Earl Campbell years were a string of his favorites. What most folks don't know is that through the mid to late 1970s and very early 1980s, Tommy also deer hunted every year in Eastern Oklahoma with two Tulsa families – the Orrs and the Millers – or he at least went camping with them. But hunting was probably a generous term as it was rumored among those families that Tommy never had to take the safety off his rifle – simply because he never actually loaded the gun. He loved to see the critters in the wild, but he was never about to cause harm to one of them. Tommy's kindness and gentle ways were extended beyond people and children and also to those creatures in the Eastern Oklahoma hills. While all of this is fun, the most important thing that happened to Tommy in Tulsa was in 1981 when he came to know the Lord Jesus as his personal savior. There was no change in Tommy bad to good so to speak, but there was a change from a very good person to an exceptionally loving and generous person with which most of us just could not hope to compete – simply because it was in his new nature. Of course, on the bowling front, from which most folks met or knew Tommy, he was also exceptional. He was a gifted and accomplished bowler when he came to Tulsa – and he got even better. He was a fierce competitor in any environment on the lanes, but the fierce was in the realm of mentally tough and committed and focused – and NEVER unkind and NEVER at the expense of anyone's dignity. If you beat Tommy, that was fine by him, but you were going to have to beat him because he was never going to beat himself. There were of course other more famous bowlers with some higher averages in the elite leagues, but those were always on softer conditions. On tough and/or dry lane conditions, where accuracy and consistency of release really mattered, Tommy was widely respected as one of the best tough lane condition bowlers in Eastern Oklahoma. He once led PBA Regional tournament after the second squad. In the highly competitive scratch leagues, like the Masters Traveling League on Friday nights (the "white shoe" boys as they were then known because a lot of them wore Linds – which were then only available in white), Tommy traditionally bowled only in the lead-off spot, a position that with each frame set the tone for the rest of the team. He was inspirational in the



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lead-off position, and the only time he didn't bowl in that spot was when their anchor bowler was out, and Tommy would move to anchor – because he could be counted on to hit the whole with a chance to strike when it mattered most. When everyone else was throwing expensive major name brand bowling balls, Tommy loved to throw inexpensive Target and JC Penney balls he bought on sale for a song – and beat the guys throwing the expensive stuff. Even after his prime years in the premier scratch leagues, Tommy bowled in very competitive handi-cap leagues – still in the lead-off position unless he was the anchor. One such example was in 1996, with Tommy blowing lead-off, he struck on the 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th balls in one of the games, inspiring the other 4 teammates to do the same. It was a handi-cap league, but that team shot 3555 scratch that night for 5 guys – and that was a lot of wood in those days. Tommy was also human and he occasionally did have a bad or challenging night on the lanes. In the late 1970s, he showed up at Tiffany Bowl in the late squad for the Masters Traveling Leagues that night, after bowling an early mixed handi-cap league at Rose Bowl. Several people came up to Tommy and asked him how did he get 3 pins on the last ball? Tommy had no idea what they were talking about because he didn't get 3 pins on any last ball. They told him they heard he had shot 293 early at Rose Bowl that night – and Tommy had to explain to them that for a 3-game set – and not 1 game. In 2012 Tommy was inducted into the Tulsa Bowling Association Hall of Fame, but his real legacy in the countless number of people, and in particular, kids and young people he helped on the bowling lanes and in life. Tommy was a member of Gracemont Baptist Church in Tulsa and was active in the singles group for many years. He was a best friend to so many people. He was one of the most thoughtful and generous persons on God's earth. He is survived by two brothers, John and Leroy and a sister, Dorothy. A memorial service will be held at Woodland Acres Baptist Church in Tulsa at 10:00am on Wednesday, August 22, 2018. In lieu of flowers friends can donate to a youth bowling tourney in Tommy's name.



## Tribute Wall

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WM

**W. Scott Moyer** posted:

Tommy –we met in the mid-1980's in FL and then you started coming to visit me and my family near Philadelphia, PA! We always enjoyed your visits as we would go to Atlantic City, NJ and also up to the PA mountains. Your generosity and kindness is something that we always wanted to emulate. I enjoyed visiting you in Tulsa a couple of times including a surprise visit at the bowling alley in 2013!! You almost dropped the ball on your foot when you saw me walk in that Sat. night! Enjoy the beauty of Jesus and Heaven and I will see you again someday.

October 15 at 6:08 PM

RN

**Richard Neal** posted:

I didn't hear about Tommy's departure until last night. I've bowled against him and with him and I found him to be the most genial, delightful person. His knowledge and skill were enormous and his personality warm. I will miss him at Andy B's.

August 30 at 3:50 PM

SU

**S A U L** posted:

Tommy Was ALWAYS such an inspiration at work ..He will surely be missed and ALWAYS rememberedGOD Bless you and your Family

August 22 at 9:22 AM

GP

**Gary Pendergraft** posted:

Tommy . We had alot of laughs over 18 years. You were one of my inner cycle friends. We could talk and cut up together. When it came to bowling no one knew more. You were my mentor. I have an empty spot now that will never be filled. Our lost, will be heavens gain.

August 17 at 1:09 PM

AS

**Anita Stinnett** posted:

My family has known Tommy for many years. He was always a very kind friend.

August 17 at 7:56 AM



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DY

**Danny Young** posted:

Tommy was such a great guy. We had so many laughs together at the bowling alley. He will be missed by so many, young and old. Until we meet again my friend.

August 17 at 6:01 AM

AG

**Andre Grizzle** posted:

Tommy was truly an amazing guy. Loved his humor and friendship. Thank you for being a part of our bowling team many seasons. My kids have learned so much from you and will miss you dearly. You touched a lot of lives here down here. We will re-unite one day again my friend.

August 16 at 5:42 PM

ZW

**Zelda Wing** posted:

Thank you Tommy, for your forever faithful friendship over the last 55 years! Bowling will never be the same without you!

August 12 at 5:02 PM

ZW

**Zelda Wing** posted:

Thank you Tommy for being such a dear faithful friend over the years. Bowling will never be the same without you!

August 12 at 4:44 PM

PS

**Patti A. Spencer** posted:

I loved Tommy so much and bowling at andy b's will never be the same without him. Everyone who knew Tommy loved him, he touched so many lives. I am so thankful for the conversation we had on Wednesday and I know I will see him again in Heaven and that gives me so much comfort. ??

August 11 at 2:28 PM



# **Memories only last if you share them**

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



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