



Tommy Joe “Tom” Donathan

March 13, 1931 - December 15, 2014

Tommy Joe (Tom) Donathan went to be with his Lord in Tulsa Oklahoma on Monday morning, December 15, 2014 at the age of 83. Tom is survived by his wife of 59 years, Deleta Bullard Donathan of Broken Arrow; sister, Christine Donathan Jacobs; son, Terry and his wife Susan of St. Petersburg, Florida; son, Scott and his wife LaDonna of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma; grandchildren, Nicole Ahrens, Michael Donathan, Justin Donathan, Tara Sherin and Kent Donathan and an ever growing tribe of great grandchildren. He is preceded in death by his father, Otes Donathan; mother, Susy Donathan; brother, Murl Donathan; grandson, Evan Donathan; and great granddaughter Esther Donathan. Tom was born on March 13, 1931 in Wister, Oklahoma to Otes and Susy. He graduated from Wister High School in 1949 and enrolled in Poteau Jr. College. After the outbreak of the Korean War, Tom felt it was his duty to enlist in the Navy and was deployed in the Pacific on the aircraft carrier USS Bairoko and later served on the island of Guam until his service ended in 1954. He returned to southeast Oklahoma after the war and resumed college on the GI bill at Eastern Oklahoma A&M and Southeastern Oklahoma State University. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees from Southeastern and continued pursuing graduate education from Tulsa University, Oklahoma University and Northeastern State University. While at Eastern, he met the love of his life, Deleta Bullard. Tom and Deleta married in 1955 and continued with their college educations. In 1957, Tom and Deleta were blessed with their first son, Terry. Life was busy for Tom and Deleta as they divided their time between school and starting a family. They received teaching positions at Fanshawe and were eventually offered positions in the Wister School system. In 1961, they were given a second son, Scott. Tom and Deleta continued working in the Wister system until 1965, when they were offered positions in Broken Arrow and accepted. Tom worked as a sixth grade teacher for 1 year when he was offered the position of Principal at Haskell Elementary in Broken Arrow. He continued in that capacity until he was offered the position of Director of Elementary Education. After several years in that position he was asked to again take the position of Principal at Haskell and lead the transition of that school from elementary school to middle school. Tom loved to be in the school with the teachers, staff and students and poured himself into the daunting task of transition. For a period, Haskell consisted of two separate schools and had a large and ever growing

number of students enrolled. In 1991 Tom retired from the school system, having earned numerous awards in education and the respect of many in the system. Tom was known for his high standards and ability to delegate authority. He was known for a number of phrases such as, "handle it" and "the bottom line is" that reflected his effective management style. Tom was the son of a hard working coal miner, coming from humble beginnings and rising to be one of the most respected leaders in education and his community. He filled his retirement years with wood carving, caring for his property and pouring his life into his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. In 1970, Tom and Deleta purchased 7.5 acres in Broken Arrow and over the next 44 years turned a grassy horse pasture into a wooded home filled with hundreds of azaleas. He enjoyed gathering and laughing with dear friends at the mall, walking several miles there each day. Tom was a member of Arrow Heights Baptist church from 1965 until his passing. He was a devout believer, but chose to demonstrate his faith by his actions more than simply by words. The funeral is scheduled for 1:00 Thursday December 18 at Arrow Heights Baptist Church in Broken Arrow. Pastor Bob Green will officiate the ceremony. All are welcome to attend and celebrate Tom's life.

Comments



“ I only just saw this about Mr. Donathan. I was a student at Haskell when he was principal. An educator myself now, I appreciate the way he led with kindness. What a great example to young folks. A fine man.... Condolences to his family

Karen Hertel - January 10, 2015 at 07:46 PM



“ I never got passed calling him Mr. Donathan. He was my teacher in Jr. High at Fanshawe and then my principal in Broken Arrow. In fact, he gave me a good paddling when I was a 7th grader at Fanshawe. I put on lots of can cans before I went to school that day. I deserved that paddling too. LOL. In Broken Arrow, I could always hear him coming down the hall with the taps on his shoes. I looked up to him as a student and also as a teacher. He was a dear friend and a wonderful man and he will be greatly missed. With much, much love..Donnas Kay (Brannon) Mankin

Donnas Kay (Brannon) Mankin - December 23, 2014 at 12:55 PM



“ Lit a candle in memory of Tommy Joe "Tom" Donathan

Jerry & Carol Sue Willcutt - December 18, 2014 at 07:22 PM



“ I was a student at Haskell Middle School when he was a principal there in the early eighties. I remember he brought some of his wood carving to school and showed us how to learn and/or practice by carving a bar of soap. I was intrigued by his ability and love that he shared it with us.

Mitzi (Robinson) Holloway - December 18, 2014 at 07:16 PM



“ I am so sorry to hear of Mr. Donathan's passing. I was a brand new teacher when I started to work for him at Haskell Middle School, and he sure taught me a lot more than I ever learned in college. I still use that wisdom in my classroom today.

Laura Opper - December 17, 2014 at 07:59 PM