



Donald Lee Thomas Sr.

October 15, 1957 - May 12, 2024

Donald Lee Thomas (Sr) was born on October 15th, 1957, the son of the late Annette Pattlefoot and Jacob Strand, the 4th of their 8th children, in Chester, Pennsylvania.

Donald was affectionately called “Swan” by his childhood friends and he attended Chester Upland public schools, graduating with the Class of 1976.

After numerous odd jobs throughout his youth and early adulthood, he found employment at Dollar Rent-A-Car at the Philadelphia International Airport. He also was employed with the Philadelphia Navy Yard, as a supervisor on the Kitty Hawk. Thereafter, he was employed at DELCORA Waste Water Treatment Plant, for many years until subsequently transitioning into early retirement/disability. Donald also worked part time for Worldwide Flight Services in Cargo City while volunteering janitorial duties at night at Concord Day Care Center, where his wife worked and his son attended.

A staunch youth advocate, when he was physically able, he volunteered at Chester High School during his retirement as a chaperone for morning arrivals, senior class events and commencement exercises as needed.

His hobbies included traveling to state parks, lakes and amusement parks, playing pool (billiards), classic video games, chess, and card games. His musical interests included smooth jazz and old school R&B, with his favorite

artists being

Patti Labelle and Luther Vandross. He is a lifelong die-hard Miami Dolphins and Philadelphia 76ers/ Allen Iverson fan.

Donald absolutely loved being with his family and friends more than anything and he had a way about him that was simply approachable and engaging- from the 5-year-old little girl who lived two doors down, who yelled “HI NEIGHBOR” to him several times a day while he sat on the front porch; to the high school students that he mentored, stopping by after a snow day to clear off his walkway; the many students he allowed to practice driving his car in order to get their learners permits; to the senior citizens in the neighborhood who would stop by to engage him in friendly banter about last night’s game- he had a quick smile and a hearty laugh for just about everybody. “A big guy with an even BIGGER heart” just about sums up his personality.

He is survived by his Class of 1976 classmate and wife of 40 years, Darlene Tarice Thomas (Wainwright); a son, Dr. Donald Lee Thomas Jr; six sisters: Dolores Slaughter, and Geraldine, Wendy Ann, Ruth, Mary and Gloria Thomas; one sister-in-law, Valerie Thomas; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and more than a few close lifelong friends. In addition to his parents, he is predeceased by his two brothers: George Nock and Kenneth “Kenny” Thomas.

Cemetery Details

PRIVATE

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 1. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Earl I. Foster Funeral Home
1100 Kerlin Street
Chester, PA 19013
(610) 874-2877
fosterfh1@comcast.net

Tribute Wall

TF

“ *The Thomas Family purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Donald Lee Thomas Sr..*



The Thomas Family - July 01, 2024 at 09:56 PM

JY

“ *Jeanetta Essie and Cynthia Love you purchased the Blue Caribbean Bouquet for the family of Donald Lee Thomas Sr..*



Jeanetta Essie and Cynthia Love you - May 29, 2024 at 07:45 AM

CH

“ *RIP Uncle Donald! I'll never forget how funny and loving you were. That one summer we all went to the lake and had a ball is one of my favorite memories. You'll be missed* ❤️

Cee H - May 24, 2024 at 06:32 PM



“ To Mrs. Thomas and my precious former student, Dr. Donald Thomas. Truly my heart was saddened to learn of the transition of your dad!



I had the distinct pleasure of meeting Mr. Thomas at our PTO conference. What a joy it was to listen to his conversation of how much you meant to him!!! And, to be a guest at your graduation party on the Spirit of Philadelphia! Both parents beamed with pride upon God's blessing you to complete your Doctorate!

I pray you will be comforted by all your unique and precious memories!

Love you!

Mrs. Gwendolyn Foster-Williams

Gwendolyn Williams - May 24, 2024 at 03:19 PM

LK

“ That 5 year old was my baby girl !!! She loved her Neighbor and he loved her!! Never missing a special moment of hers !!! She'd often ask me if she could play on the porch NEIGHBOR would watch her. You could find him on the porch OFTEN or sitting in his car listening to music watching the block as I would say !!! Neighbor get your rest !!!! We will miss you !!

La'Netta Knox - May 24, 2024 at 07:31 AM