

Celebrating Life

Thomas Carr

July 15, 1945—December 1, 2020

By Holly Baxter

Thomas will always be remembered for his big heart for our community and our country. He made friends everywhere he went, greeting ladies with “Hi, sweetie!” and gents with a salute. When asked how he was doing, his favorite reply was, “Just peachy” because he felt that way in the presence of friends. He expressed his love for people by serving them, always willing to lend a hand no matter the inconvenience. He was quick to run an errand for a local business, hold open a door for a stranger, and share produce from his vegetable garden.



Prior to the COVID-19 shutdown in March, Thomas visited The Ladder Community Center nearly every day, playing pool, eating lunch, and volunteering. Thomas took his volunteer duties at The Ladder seriously, greeting members and ensuring the proper raising and lowering of the U.S. flag located at the front entrance. Vilene Rodgers befriended Thomas at The Ladder shortly after it opened in 2016. “It was like a second home to him,” she said.

Thomas made sure to be last through The Ladder’s lunch line, often standing at attention until

everyone had gotten their meals. He even helped serve those who were unable to carry their own tray. Ladder staff member Michelle Deuling commented, “I remember when he took burgers to Shirley because he wanted to make sure she was getting enough to eat, and the many times he held the door open because, he insisted, ‘That’s my job!’”

Thomas served our country proudly in the U.S. ARMY in the Vietnam War, from 1965 to 1967, earning the Vietnam Service Medal with two Bronze Service Stars. Thomas returned home with an undying love for our nation, respect for the flag, and reverence for the brave men and women who fought and died for our freedom.

Ladder staff member Cathy Zoulek recalled, “He didn’t complain about or dwell on the things he didn’t have. He was able to adapt to different situations and make the most of the life he had, even when life was difficult.”

When it was time for him to leave, Thomas would straighten up, give a salute, and say, “Carry on.” So that’s what we’re going to do. We’ll miss you, Thomas. You were definitely one of a kind!

A full-length version of this article was published Dec. 31 in Oceana’s Herald-Journal. It is also available on our website: www.theladdercommunitycenter.com/news/celebrating-the-life-of-thomas-carr.

Dale Thebo

September 4, 1938—December 23, 2020

By Holly Baxter

Dale grew up in Shelby. His 30-year military career began in 1956 when he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, where he maintained and repaired Aerospace Ground Equipment. While in the Air Force, he lived all over the U.S. and Southeast Asia. He retired in 1988 as a Master Sergeant. Upon his return to Shelby, he worked at Tanner Plumbing and Heating for several years.

Upon his retirement, Dale enjoyed spending time with the locals he had known in his younger years, especially former classmates. He loved sharing stories of the past.

Dale was deeply committed to his family. He faithfully visited his son, Scott, who resides in an assisted living center. When his first wife, Louise, became terminally ill, he cared for her in their home until her death. Paulette Zoulek, a close friend of Dale’s, said, “He was a man of strong moral values, very honest and kind.”

Paulette and her husband Tony frequently accompanied Dale and his second wife Pat to dinner-and-movie outings, as well as Shelby high school basketball games. He was an avid cribbage player and also enjoyed dominoes and Skip-bo.

Dale was an active member of the Honor Guard for the Gordon Bates American Legion Post No. 30 in Shelby, participating in the funeral detail for local veterans and erecting flags honoring fallen veterans at the Benona and Stony Lake cemeteries. Kevin Van Dyke, who is in charge of the funeral detail for Post No. 30, said Dale participated in the 21-Gun Salute for many years. Dale and Pat also cleaned the legion building regularly. Kevin originally met Dale years ago when he worked at Tanner’s. “He was easy to talk to and always very friendly,” said Kevin. “Nothing ever got him too worked up.”

Dale and Pat came to The Ladder every week for the past few years to catch up with friends over coffee and play cribbage. Ladder staffer Michelle remembered Dale as a kind and gentle soul who brightened her day whenever she saw him. She recalled the time he and Pat came in with hand-made pegs for the cribbage boards. “I’m sure they spent many hours as they hand-painted each little piece,” said Michelle. “I am so grateful for the time God gave me to meet this precious couple. Dale will be greatly missed.”



At the family’s request, memorial donations can be sent to The Ladder.

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"Celebrating Life" - Continued

Ron Cooper

February 28, 1939—January 6, 2021

By Anne Byl

We will always be grateful for the many ways Ron touched people's lives at The Ladder. He served as a youth mentor from September 2019 to March 2020. Ron was adored by our youth due to the individual interest he showed that made them feel special. Adults loved him for his friendship and giftedness in music. Prior to the shutdown in March 2020, Ron ate lunch almost every day at The Ladder, playing the piano during lunchtime for other members before he ate his own meal.

Ladder staff member, Nancy Falkner, was a close friend to Ron. "I will forever appreciate Ron," said Nancy. "He always had a song in his heart and kind words from the Lord."

Thomas Carr, who passed away in December, referred to Ron as "Maestro." Thomas and Ron enjoyed playing pool together at The Ladder. Ron even delivered meals to Thomas last year when Thomas could not pick them up himself.

Kim Crowder, Ron's daughter, said that her father loved The Ladder. "After my mom died, he had a very difficult time," said Kim. "By attending and serving at The Ladder, he was able to find his way again."

Ron desired others to have a personal relationship with Jesus. He and his wife served many years in tent ministry, sharing the gospel of Jesus in the United States and Mexico. He also served at several area churches each week until his passing. We know Ron would want us to take every opportunity to share with you what he devoted his entire life to: the gospel of Jesus Christ and His power to transform lives.

John 3:16-18

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.



Ron loved playing piano for others.

If you would like to know more about how you can grow your relationship with Jesus, please see Brian or one of the other staff members of The Ladder. †

Give Generously

WISH LIST

Item Requests:

- Postage Stamps
- Bingo Prizes
- Clear Liquid Hand Soap Refills
- #6 Peel & Seal Envelopes
- #10 Peel & Seal Envelopes
- 150-300 Piece Lego Sets (New)
- Reams of 8.5x11 Copy Paper

Monetary Investment Requests:

- Cost of Grounds Maintenance (any amount)
- Cost of Printer Ink (\$118 - \$136 each)

Contact the Oceana County Community Foundation (231-861-8335) to fund these items for The Ladder:

- Gifts of Gratitude: \$450-\$200 (**\$250 FUNDED!**)
- Building a Legacy of Love: \$1,450
- Air Hockey Table: \$3,300 **FUNDED!**

A HUGE THANK YOU

to the folks who have provided the following items we needed in November & December:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| • Postage Stamps | 220 |
| • Wesco Refill Cups | 40 |
| • Bingo Prizes | 30 |
| • Disinfectant Wipes | 1 |
| • Quart Ziploc Bags | 19 |
| • Gallon Ziploc Bags | 19 |
| • Monetary Gifts - Nov. | \$2,788 |
| • Monetary Gifts - Dec. | \$44,130 |

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Call:
231-259-0211

OR

Email:
anne@theladdercommunitycenter.com

If you do not wish to receive future newsletters, you may opt out any time by contacting us using the methods above.