



Thomas Yates

February 6, 1927 - November 29, 2025

Tom was born on February 6, 1927 in Seattle, Washington to Thomas R. and Anita (Leyba) Yates. He had an older sister, Lois Ray, who passed away in 1998. After living in the Seattle area, the family moved to Oakland, California in 1938, where Tom would eventually graduate from Oakland High School. Tom joined the U.S. Navy in January 1945 and held the rank of Electronic Technician Mate Third Class until being honorably discharged in July 1946. His Navy tour was exactly 18 months to the day which was fortunate because men who were discharged with less than 18 months of service were called back to duty during the Korean War.

Tom attended Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, earning a BA in Mathematics and subsequently earned his MS degree in Statistics from Oregon State University. While attending Willamette, he met JoAnne Estey who was also a student there. On Tom and JoAnne's first date they watched the movie 'From Here to Eternity' which was an indication of their lifelong future together. They were married on July 31, 1954 in Castle Rock, Washington. Tom and JoAnne's first home together was in Salem, they lived briefly in Seattle, back to Salem and finally to Corvallis in 1963. They also had one-year sojourns in St. Paul, Minnesota and Perth, Western Australia. Tom's working career began at the Oregon State Highway Department, followed by an information systems job at Boeing. He eventually returned to the Oregon State Highway Department where he became the State of Oregon's first computer programmer. Tom joined the Oregon State University

faculty in 1962 first with the statistics department and then joined the Computer Center where he was eventually appointed Director in 1976. He continued in that position until retirement as Professor Emeritus in 1985. Travel during retirement included trips to 19 states, 5 Canadian Provinces and a long overseas trip to England and Scotland. While in Scotland, Tom and JoAnne had the opportunity of a lifetime to play golf at The Old Course at St. Andrews. Closer to home Tom and JoAnne enjoyed vacationing at their timeshare condo at Eagle Crest Resort in Central Oregon, often inviting family and friends to join them.

Tom was an avid and highly accomplished golfer, including 3 aces, each of which were achieved at different golf courses. He wasn't the longest hitter but he could hit it straight and had an accurate short game. He played golf until the age of 90.

A lifelong passion was Tom's love for the game of baseball. He wasn't athletic enough to play the game, but he attended literally hundreds of ball games, did some press box work and wrote sports columns for the Willamette newspaper and later for the Salem Statesman newspaper. Tom enjoyed card games such as cribbage, poker and bridge as well as solving hard level crossword puzzles. He was also an accomplished cook, having taken over cooking duties after retiring. He authored numerous cookbooks for the family containing his favorite recipes.

Tom was a great man, husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather. He was the family patriarch and everyone in the family relied on him for his wisdom, advice and guidance. The family also enjoyed Tom's keen sense of humor. He will be sorely missed.

Tom's wife JoAnne died eight days prior to his passing. He is survived by his children, Linda Cohoon, Ken Yates, Carol Haskell and Dan Yates, grandchildren, Jillian Hall and Kevin Yates and great grandchild, Betty Hall. Memorial contributions should be directed to Class of 1950 Fund, Willamette University.

No funeral or services are planned at his request.

Tribute Wall



“ 10 files added to the album *Thomas Yates* ”



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