



Judge Thomas Eugene Lee , Jr.

December 9, 1921 - December 5, 2011

Thomas E. Lee, Jr.

Thomas E. Lee, Jr., World War II veteran Bomber Pilot, lawyer, Senior Circuit Judge, and a founder of the University of Miami Sports Hall of Fame, was born December 9, 1921, in Screven County, Georgia, the oldest child of Thomas and Dorothy Lee. He was predeceased by his mother, father, and granddaughter, Bonnie.

A resident of Florida since 1932, he is survived by his loving wife of 61 years, Ruth Phelps Lee, and their five children: Lynn Cruse (David) of Stanley, NC; Tom Lee (Julia) of Orlando, FL; John Lee (Sara) of Roland, AR; David Lee (Ann) of Maitland, FL; and Jimmy Lee (Dawn) Tequesta, FL. And his son, Randy Lee (Ann) of San Jose, CA. He is also survived by his two sisters, Jeanette Goodrum (Midlothian, VA) and Inez Wells (Robert) of San Mateo, CA. He had 16 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.

A graduate of the University of Miami Law School, he was admitted to the bar in February 1951, and remained a member of the Bar Association for more than 50 years. He served as a Florida State Beverage Director, 1961-1963, Miami Circuit Judge, Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida, 1963-72, and Chief Circuit Judge from 1972-74. He retired from the Court in 1974 and practiced law in Miami and Jupiter, Florida. He retired from his law practice in 2002.

After graduation from Palm Beach High School, Mr. Lee joined the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1942 and entered WWII as a B-17 Bomber Pilot in the Eighth Air Force. He flew 30 missions over Europe – 25 of them prior to the invasion at Normandy. Later he served as a combat pilot instructor.

After serving as a combat pilot instructor he transferred to the Air Transport Command and was assigned to the Pacific Theatre when the war ended.

Upon returning to Florida, he earned the Juris Doctor degree at the University of the Miami Law School. Mr. Lee is also a graduate of Palm Beach Atlantic University, where he received a Bachelor of Science Degree

He was Chairman of the Florida Bar Committee on Major Civil Disturbances and wrote the master plan for Civil Disturbances. He served on the faculty of the National College of State Trial Judges of Reno, Nevada for eight years. He conducted legal and Judicial seminars on Judicial Discretion, Judicial Ethics, Court Administration, Sentencing and Procedure in Georgia, Louisiana, California, Nevada, North Carolina and Florida.

He served as National Chancellor of The Delta Theta Phi Law Fraternity, President of the Southwest Kiwanis Club; President of the Century Club of Coral Gables, President of the University of Miami Alumni Association, Trustee of the University of Miami, Trustee of the Americans Distress, Trustee of the Foundation for Self Help and, most recently, Trustee of the Palm Beach Atlantic University.

He joined the Masons, Scottish Rite, Shrine, Legion of Honor and Jesters and remained active throughout his life. He was a member of Jupiter-Tequesta Kiwanis, where he was awarded Man of the Year.

With all his career successes and accomplishments, Tom's greatest joy was his large and loving family.

A Funeral Service will be held at 10:30 AM, Friday, December 9, 2011 at the Taylor & Modeen Funeral Home, 250 Center St., Jupiter, FL. Friends are invited to meet with the family from 5-7 PM, Thursday, December 8th at the funeral home. Interment will follow at Riverside Memorial Park.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Palm Beach Atlantic University addressed to: Palm Beach Atlantic University, Development Office, 901 S. Flagler Drive, P.O. Box 24708, West Palm Beach, FL 33416-9893 or to the Kiwanis Club of Jupiter-Tequesta: P.O. Box 4144, Tequesta, FL 33469-4144.

For directions & online condolences, please visit www.taylorandmodeen.com.

Taylor & Modeen Funeral Home
Family Owned & Operated
561-744-2030

Tribute Wall

“ May you rest in peace Thomas E. Lee. My sincere condolences to Ruth, Jimmy, Tommy, Johnnie and Lynn if they are still around (I think I got the "kids" names right) I am probably a forgotten person in their past but they are not forgotten to me. I married, had 3 boys, now young men, and now divorced and retired. I may have been a boy at the time but the love and caring Tom and his family always showed me has never been forgotten. I am shedding some tears as I write, men can cry. I cry not of weakness, but of the love I felt for my Uncle Tom and his immediate family and now I find he is no longer in this plane of existence.

A person can touch the life of another and unknowingly leave a mark or memory of their loyal friendship, caring and loving actions. Tom was a good friend of my father. My father (Enrique Angel Vega...aka "Henry") told me they had met in Cuba quite a while before Fidel Castro overthrew the government and took over the island with his brother Raul with their host of radical revolutionaries and ruined the lives of generations (whether with good intentions or not the result was death, family separations, betrayals, prison, exodus and exile).

I was told by my father that Tom along with another man by the name of Frank Freeman had made a business partnership with him and his brother Delio Vega in Cuba. That's what I was told and believe.

My father was staunchly against Castro and his hordes. When my father came as a Cuban exile around April 1959, Tom and his family were among the first to welcome him into their own home and help him get adjusted and started in his new life situation. My father prospered here once again and had me in 1961.

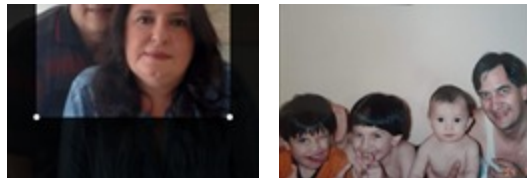
The person writing this always felt the love and warmth and good advice from Tom. To me, still to this day (and I am now 63) I remember him as "Uncle Tom", his wife as "Aunt Ruth". And their children I loved as my brothers and sister (of which I never had). I also remember a long haired white cat, a collie and a smaller dog they had at that time.

I came across this today because I Googled his name. He and his family were always welcomed in our home and we in theirs. Life

sometimes gets complicated and I had a somewhat interesting and challenging life that I later overcame successfully, but unforeseen events distanced us from Florida.

So, my deepest sympathy, however late and my warmest regards to the surviving family. Though no man but the Son of Man is fully good, Tom was a good man in my eyes and the eyes of many who met him. Hard working, dedicated, brave, a patriot (WW2 in a B17), a good lawyer, a good judge, a good loving and loyal friend. He blessed many, some he blessed maybe even unknowingly.

Once again, may he rest in peace and his family find peace, love and prosperity. And may any reader learn and remember that it is not what you say but what you do that counts most and to try to live a life in such a way that when it comes time to go you have few regrets, at least a handful of good friends and you have sown something worthwhile in yourself and others so that others may learn from you and reap the rewards. And to remember that not forgiving is burning a bridge you will someday need to walk across. Much love and memories. R.I.P. Uncle Tom.



Enrique J. Vega - May 24, 2025 at 11:54 PM



“ *Judge Thomas Eugene Lee , Jr.*

October 22, 2023 at 10:17 AM

RD

“ To Tom's family and friends:

The world has lost a lawyer's lawyer, a wonderful mentor and a great friend, and our loss is Heaven's gain. My thoughts and prayers are with you all as I reflect on what Tom meant to me since we met in 1975, and the legacy he leaves behind. May God bless you and keep you, and may He shine his countenance upon you in this, your time of grief and loss.

Rick Lord

Rick Lord - Indian Land, SC - Friend; Past Chancellor, DTP - January 05, 2012 at 12:00 AM

DC

“ *Dear Ruth and Lee Family, our sincere condolences. I'm sure most of you do not know us. We are distant cousins of Tom and we care very much for Tom and Ruth. Our Dad, Dewey Boykin, was Tom's first cousin (he had lots of funny stories of them growing up). My Dad and Mother always had a deep respect and pride for Tom and Ruth. My parents have gone on to be with the Lord and we miss them tremendously. As I know all your families have been so close with Tom, it's so hard to say goodbye to someone we love. We find comfort in knowing we will see them again in Heaven. Ruth thank you for your kindnesses. We always look forward to hearing from you and your newsletters. You will be in our prayers and thoughts. We Love You.*

Our deepest sympathies and prayers for all of you.

Diane Thomas, Gail Steeves and Kathy Keister

Diane Thomas - West Palm Beach, FL - cousin - December 16, 2011 at 12:00 AM

KG

“ Grandpa,

I think about you every day and miss you all the time. I hope you know how much you're loved! I'll never forget how you told me every time I saw you, "Karen Michelle, you are something special." Love you always!

PS - I hope you enjoyed watching down on us all singing last weekend at your house. You were probably more familiar with the songs that the "older folks" were singing, but you have to admit...the kids sounded better!

Karen Lee - granddaughter - December 15, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SF

“ *Please accept our condolences for the loss of your Husband, Dad and Grandfather. May you find peace and comfort in one another and in your many cherished memories.*

We send our love and pray that Thomas rests in eternal peace and God blesses you all.

Susan and Scott Munroe - Snellville, GA - Friends of the Cruse Family -
December 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

JF

“ *To Ruth and the Lee children--
It is hard to believe that after 36 years, Tom will no longer be in my life. From our first meeting in November 1975, when he chose me as his law associate, until the last time I saw him this past November, 36 years later, nobody has been more dominant in shaping my legal career than "Tall" Tom Lee.
He made me his law partner and mentored me throughout my legal and judicial career, including sponsoring me for admission to the US Supreme Court Bar.
He treated me as a son, officiated at my wedding and gave me fatherly advise throughout these many years.
Ruth, I would like you and the children to know that there is no one I thought more of than Tom--I will truly miss him.
May he rest in peace.*

Jack Martin Coe - Coral Gables, FL - former law partner and friend - December 11, 2011 at 12:00 AM

JS

“ *How fortunate I was to have Tom as my brother-in-law! He had many accomplishments, but one of the most important was keeping a loving and closely knit family. I have many fond memories of being with him, my sister and their wonderful family. A job well done, Tom.
Rest in peace!
Jan*

Janice Barzditis - Cuyahoga Falls, OH - sister-in-law - December 08, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SL

“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with you and and your whole family at this difficult time. Our love to all of you...*

Shaun and Laura Murray - Oviedo, FL - Friends of Jim Lee - December 08, 2011 at 12:00 AM

MF

“ *The Tree Frogs will be playing more songs in Memory of you, Mike C*

Mike W Chiello Sr. - Palm Bay, FL - Friend of the Family - December 08, 2011 at 12:00 AM

AF

“ *my thoughts and prayers are with each of you during this difficult time.*

andrew hyltin - orlando, FL - family friend - December 07, 2011 at 12:00 AM

LS

“ *Dear Judge Lee: You sure were a good guy. I was a Delta Theta Phi too. In court I had an admiralty case in front of you. I did all the research. I was really prepared. You knew more Admiralty law than I will ever know. I was a student when I appeared before you in court. You were a great teacher. May you rest in the arms of the Lord.
Larry*

Lawrence F. Kaine - Miami, FL - student - December 07, 2011 at 12:00 AM