



Jay Thompson

April 25, 1923 - March 12, 2008

VIEW VIDEO TRIBUTE Jay Richards Thompson was born April 25, 1923 in Clayton, Texas and died March 12, 2008 in Jacksboro, Texas. His father, William Levi Thompson was a farmer and dealer in Watkins Products; his mother, Tex Emma Richards was a homemaker. Jay attended schools in Clayton, Gary and Terrell, Texas; joined the US Marine Corps in July 1941, did recruit training and sea school in San Diego; transferred to Marine Barracks, Honolulu, TH and then to Marine Detachment USS San Francisco on December 4, 1941 just prior to the sneak attack by the Japanese on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. He served aboard the USS San Francisco for 2 and a half years and earned eleven battle stars on the Asiatic-Pacific Theater Ribbon and other decorations. Jay was able to attend the 50th Anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor with Helen and the 60th and 65th anniversaries with his daughters. He was a member of PHSA, DAV, the USS San Francisco Association, ATPE, TEPSA and several other organizations. The Richard Bard Chapter of the DAR also honored him by awarding him their Medal of Honor, their highest award. Medically discharged in January 1945, Jay met his future wife, Helen Ritchie, while he was a patient and she was a nurse at the VA Hospital in McKinney. They married on June 2, 1951, and were married almost 51 years at the time of her death in 2002. He is survived by their three children; Jean and husband Jerry Henderson of Jacksboro, Texas; John of Las Vegas, NV and Paula and husband Roger Koehler of Spring, Texas; and five grandchildren: Ben of Waco, Texas, Hannah of Lubbock, Texas and Pete,

Emily and Michael of Spring, Texas; and five nieces: Kathy Rockenfeller of Amarillo, Texas, Susan Diggs of McAllen, Texas, Margaret Phoebe Haney of East Aurora, NY, Terry Stewart of California and Phyllis Stringfellow of Houston; and two nephews: Jay Clem of Santa Rosa, CA and Tommy Thompson of Bakersfield, CA. He is also survived by his sister-in-law Ethel Zybczynski of Hamburg, NY. After earning his BS (on the GI Bill) and MA degrees at NTSU in Denton, Texas, Jay began his teaching career in Nocona, Texas then at Denton Jr. High and then attended Episcopal Seminary in Austin. He returned to education in 1960 in Mesquite, Texas until his retirement in 1985. The last 19 years he was principal of C. A. Tosch Elementary. One year after retirement, the MISD School Board honored him by voting to name a future school for him. The Jay R. Thompson Elementary at 2525 Helen Lane opened in 1995. Jay and Helen enjoyed many happy times camping with friends and playing dominoes and cards with the grandkids. In 2004 Jay was proud to take his daughters and grandkids to Washington D.C. to see the newly completed World War II Memorial. Jay was a faithful member of St. Thomas Anglican Church in Jacksboro, Texas. Mass of Christian Burial was held at St. Thomas Anglican Church, Jacksboro, Texas on Saturday, March 15 at 2:00 pm. A memorial service will be held at Thompson Elementary School at 2525 Helen Lane in Mesquite, Texas on Saturday April 5, 2008 at 2pm. Inurnment will be at DFW National Cemetery on Friday April 4, 2008 at 3:00 pm. Please no flowers but memorials may be sent to your favorite charity or to Gladys Johnson Ritchie Public Library, 626 West College Street in Jacksboro, Texas 76458 or to Concerned Citizens at 400 East Pine Street in Jacksboro, Texas 76458.

Tribute Wall



“ *Mr. Thompson was a great principal at Tosch. In 85 when we had a tornado in Mesquite we lived across the street from Tosch and my mother was standing at our front door looking out and the front storm door scattered in on her. He called to check on her to make sure she was ok. He is missed very much.RIP.❤️🙏*

Shawna Stovall - August 11, 2025 at 03:16 PM



“ *Jay Thompson*

October 09, 2023 at 04:16 AM



“ *Jay Thompson*

January 28, 2023 at 12:10 PM

TT

“ Mr. Thompson was my principal at C.A. Tosch from the Fall of 1972 through the Spring of 1978. My mother, Nancy Thompson, was always active in and frequently an officer for the PTA there, thus worked with Mr. Thompson on many projects. She often spoke of him with great respect. She appreciated how willingly and actively he engaged in whatever undertaking the PTA might dream up to support the school and it's students. I was the youngest of three boys, and had met Mr. Thompson while in-tow with my mother on PTA and scouting projects for my brothers; so by the time I arrived at C.A. Tosch, I already knew him as the gentle giant who ran the school, and who was to be given my respect and attention. I only recall one time that I was sent to the office for discipline, to get 'licks' for thumping peas and carrots at a classmate in the cafeteria. At the time, I remember feeling the worst about how I had disappointed Mr. Thompson.

At some point during my time there, a newspaper story recounting his experiences during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was written. I had never known why our giant master and protector moved so deliberately and with some apparent stiffness, until I read his story. From then on, his gentleness and caring attention to us students seemed all the more incredible to me.

He is an example from whom I often draw inspiration, with my own sons, with the kids I coach, and with those I lead in my job.

I will meet you at the flagpole, Mr. Thompson!

Todd Thompson - March 15, 2020 at 07:15 PM

JG

“ Jay Thompson was one of the 32 USS San Francisco CA-38 veterans I have interviewed in taped oral histories. He was a true gentleman, scholar and a overall great guy. His military service will never be forgotten as we now enjoy in the USA freedom and liberty because of veterans like Jay. I met Jay at the CA-38 reunions in San Antonio, TX and Quincy, MA, and his son and one of his daughters. As the heavy cruisers historian for the USS San Francisco Foundation we will continue to document his service and his shipmates at www.usssanfrancisco.org I am very sad to learn of Jay's passing but I am a better person for having met him and acquire some of his vast wisdom.

Jay will never be forgotten. Like other US Marines I have met, he really was a class act. Thank you Jay for your outstanding service and wonderful life.

John Garvey - March 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM

ED

“ We loved Jay and Helen. We were introduced to them throught Byron and Georgie Butler, and it was a lasting friendship.

We remember camping with Jay and Helen in 1967 when we went to Colorado with them and the Butlers. Remember, Paula? It was one of the best vacations we ever had.

We send our love and sympathy,

Ed & Uvonne

Ed and Uvonne Dewberry - March 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM

PT

“ *Mr. Thompson was always friendly and kind when he came to visit our school.*

We are going to miss his smiling face.

His life made an unbelievable difference for others. He has left a legacy that will last forever. I am very fortunate to have met this wonderful man. He will truly be missed. I know your family will find comfort in knowing he has made many friends through his life's journey.

Sincerley, Patti Tramel

J. R. Thompson Elementary

Secretary

Patti Tramel - March 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM

VN

“ *I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Thompson as a teacher at Jay R. Thompson Elementary in Mesquite. I was new to the district and had the priviledge of opening that new school as a 1st grade teacher. Mr. Thompson visited often and the children thought he was a treat to talk to. The education community has lost a jewel.*

Valerie Ludley Nelson - March 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM

RJ

“ Jay was loved by everyone at Concerned Citizens. I can still see Jay and Helen walking to and from the dining room each day holding hands. What a sweet couple.
He delivered meals on wheels as long as he was able. We had an ad needing volunteers and he came and said he would drive but wasn't able to get in and out. The minute Jean stopped teaching that is exactly what he did...drove her around while she got out with the meals!!
He encouraged and challenged others to donate so the center would have a walk in freezer. That was how he was --he saw a need and wanted to take care of it.
He will be missed.

Love,
Russonna Jones-Briscoe,
Director

Russonna Jones-Briscoe - March 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM

LM

“ Jay was always willing to assist my family and me with anything we needed. I remember Jay driving the streets of Mesquite putting out campaign signs for my grandfather, TH McDonald.

I served with him on several MEA committees and he loved students, teachers and MISD.

We have lost a champion for educators, but God has already put him to work

With love and fond memories....Linda McDonald Marshall

Linda Marshall - March 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM

AM

“ *The staff and students will greatly miss our regular visits and correspondence with Mr. Thompson. He was a very dear man to many people here and will be long remembered.*

Anjanette Murry - March 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM

KA

“ *Jay was one of the most honorable, respected Christian men I have ever known. He was a great inspiration to me and all of us here in our Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, North Central Texas Chapter Four. He served as our Chaplain for years. I will really miss him.*

Kenneth V. Adams - March 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM

BC

“ *Remember as a very tall and kind man. I grew up across the street from Tosch Elementary. Went to college at ETSU and knew Paula. Knew her for quite some time and did not know who her father was. Warm regards for family.*

Barry Crecelius - March 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM

AD

“ Mr. Thompson was my Principal during my years in elementary school. When I began my own teaching career, I worked with his daughter, Jean, teaching 5th grade at Floyd Elementary School in Mesquite, TX. Years later, I ran into Mr. Thompson as I was visiting another elementary school in Mesquite. We talked for a few minutes, and then he invited me to come out to his car to take a look at something. In the back seat of his car, he had the artist's rendering of the yet-to-be-built elementary school that would bear his name. He was very proud of Jay R. Thompson Elementary School. We were very fortunate to have such a wonderful educator in our school district. He will be greatly missed, but the contributions that he made will live on.

Alan Drake - March 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM

AU

“ Jean, John and Paula -

Its never easy when a loved one passes away and I did love my "Uncle Jay". Since we never had any relatives to spend time with, Jay and Helen filled that void with grace and charisma. If every child growing up had someone like your dad to look up to - the world would be a better place. The next time you think about your dad, think about how positive and wonderful he was & how he touched so many lives in his time in this world. Take care and know that even though we're many miles away - we still care. I wish that my parents were still here so that they could have been there for ya'll.

Andy Upton - March 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM

SC

“ *What a kind, loving, wonderful human being. Our entire family is blessed to have known such a gentleman. My children were privileged to have been students at Tosch, and I was honored to teach there during his leadership. Mr. Thompson influenced so many with his quiet, professional manner. I will always treasure the day Mr. Thompson drove all the way to Southlake to visit me and my class and share his stories with the children.*

Susie and Jim Cox - March 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM

DW

“ *I was so fortunate to begin my career in education under the leadership of Jay Thompson. He was well-respected and loved by all who worked for him. I fondly remember having lunch with him on a daily basis. He always had the best sandwiches made on homemade bread by his wife, Helen. He made such a positive impact on those who were afforded the opportunity to work with him.*

Don & Pinkie Webb - March 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM

DT

“ *JEAN AND FAMILY,*

I JUST LEARNED OF THE PASSING OF JAY. MY THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS ARE WITH YOU. JAY WAS SUCH A SWEET MAN AND I ALWAYS ENJOYED TALKING TO HIM WHEN I WAITED ON HIM AT THE FNB.

DEBRA TILLERY - March 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM

VP

“ *Mr. Thompson was one of my teachers at Mesquite High School. He was a great teacher and one who was there for the students. What a sweet man he was and is now strolling the streets of Heaven wearing a crown of jewels which he earned for all those years he spent dealing with students. Our prayer is that you, family, will feel God's loving, protective arms around each of you as you go through this difficult time.*

Vernell McGinnis Parkerson

Vernell McGinnis Parkerson - March 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM

AF

“ *What a great legacy Jay has left for others: his contribution to education, his examples and guidance to young students (my son Robert included), and the sharing of his experiences in World War II. He will be greatly missed. My condolences and prayers are with you.*

Ann Flowers - March 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM

DG

“ *Jay was a loyal and devoted member of the USS San Francisco Association. He led our work to establish a plaque honoring the ship and it's crew at the Admiral Nimitz Museum of the Pacific War and with Helen was a regular participant in annual reunions. He will be missed. A great MARINE.*

Donald & Ruby Gritz - March 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM

MM

“ Jay and Helen were one of our favorite couples at the various USS San Francisco reunions. Jay and I went ashore a lot together, but as couples??we became good friends after our Marine Corps duty was over.

We are very happy that we had the opportunity to see Jay and daughters at the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association 2006 National Convention in Hawaii.

We will never forget this kind gentle man who gave so much and demanded so little.

Mal Middlesworth - March 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM

KZ

“ We are both sharing this time with you. Jay most certainly lived well and died well. How wonderful to have his daughters with him as he parted this world and think of the unimaginable joy as he entered the other! To see his savior and be with Helen again, what a wonderful inheritance awaits us. I like to imagine Jay and Damon talking over things here and there, and it all makes me loosen my ties to this side and look forward to my time over there when that appointed time comes, halleluia.

I do wish I could be there today at 2pm, but my heart will be and my prayers and love are with you all.

The Lord's dearest Blessings to you all,

Kathryn and Luella

Kathryn Zehani - March 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM

CS

“ Please accept my deepest condolences.

Cliff Spencer - March 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM

BG

“ *Sincere sympathy. Mr. Thompson was an inspiration to all he touched.*

Betty & Don Grant - March 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM

MW

“ *Dear Jean and Paula,
Was so sorry to hear about your father, but know that he was ready. As you well know, he was very special to the Wallace's. Gilbert was his best man when your parents got married, (and I was a four months p.g. with Gil-Anne).
You and yours are in our prayers. We will try to be at the Memorial. Let us know.
Love,
Mary*

Mary Wallace - March 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM

DP

“ *Jay was a friendly, warm-hearted fellow. It was a pleasure to be around him. Since Luther was a WW2 vet too, we saw them at patriotic events. Helen was special too. They made a great team. They will both be missed;
Jay gave money for the chairs at the Concerned Citizens Center. He was very generous.*

Dorothy and Luther Prunty - March 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM

NL

“ I met Jay & Helen when Junior & I started going to the Center. We both liked them very much and enjoyed having chats with the two of them.

Jean, I didn't realize that you favored your dad so much. Paula favors your Mom. I know you have a brother too.

I just want to say that I know a good man will be missed by all. My prayers are with the family.

Nita Lyon - March 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM

JR

“ What a full and beautiful life your dad had! I know you are proud of his many tributes over his long life. Jim and I send you our love and sympathy in your loss.

Judy and Jim

Judith (Wintle) and James Reynolds - March 12, 2008 at 12:00 AM