



Norbert Francis Thomas Jr.

MAR 16, 1947 - MAY 7, 2018



Scan to Visit



Steverson,
Hamlin & Hilbish
Funerals & Cremations

Table of Contents

| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Obituary | Page 3 |
| Events | Page 5 |
| Tribute Wall | Page 6 |
| Media | Page 10 |



Norbert Francis Thomas Jr.

MAR 16, 1947 - MAY 7, 2018

Norbert Francis Thomas, Jr., 71, of Tavares, FL, passed peacefully on May 7, 2018 at Cornerstone Hospice of Tavares.

Norb, as he was known to family and friends, was born in Chicago, Illinois on March 16, 1947 as the only child to the late Norbert Francis Thomas, Sr., and Isabella (Sherman) Thomas.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 25 years Debbie Thomas, his son, Brian Thomas and his wife Dianne of Raleigh, NC; his daughter, Natalie Thomas of Jacksonville, FL; and his daughter, Nicole Spears and her husband Steven Spears of High Springs, FL; and his grandchildren Owen Thomas, Dylan Miller, Aubrie Thomas, Holly Thomas, Lacie Spears, and Tyler Spears.

He also leaves behind his two adored Bichon Frises, Poochie and Jessie. How a former K-9 Police Officer and Police Chief ever became so attached to these two fluffy white lap dogs remains a mystery but they will miss him as intensely as all of us.

Norb graduated from Maine West High School in Des Plaines, Illinois in 1965. He went on to earn a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from the University of Florida (1977) and a master's degree in criminal justice from Rollins College (1981).

A dedicated and lifelong public servant, Norb served on the Gainesville (FL) Police Department from 1971 to 1993. He began his career with the GPD as a patrol officer and retired as a Captain and Commander of the Patrol Division, which at the time consisted of 125 sworn officers and 75 civilian personnel.

After retiring from the GPD he moved to Tavares, FL to become Police Chief, a position he held from 1993 to 1999. After serving as Tavares Police Chief he served on the Tavares City Council from 2000 to 2003, on the Tavares Police Pension Board from 2012 to 2017, and on the Tavares Planning and Zoning Board from 2011 until his death.

Norb's final law enforcement position was as Special Agent with the Florida State Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco from 1999 to 2006.



Obituary

Norbert Francis Thomas Jr.

MAR 16, 1947 - MAY 7, 2018

Over the years some of Norb's many civic engagements included serving on several City of Gainesville boards, the Lake County Safety Council, the Tavares Historical Society Board, and the Florida Police Chiefs Association Foundation Board. He was also an active member of Rotary International where he was a Paul Harris Fellow.

The family will receive visitors on Friday, May 11th from 5 to 8pm at Steverson, Hamlin, and Hilbish Funeral Home at 226 E. Burleigh Blvd, Tavares, FL 32778, (352) 508-1665. Funeral services will be held on Saturday, May 12 at 11am at the First United Methodist Church of Tavares at 600 West Ianthe Street, Tavares, FL. 32778, (352) 343-2761.

Donations may be made in Norb's memory to the Central Florida Concerns of Police Survivors (<http://www.centralfloridacops.org/index.html>), whose mission is to assist in rebuilding the shattered lives of the family members left behind by Law Enforcement Officers who have died or were killed in the line of duty. Donations may be made online or by mail to Central Florida Concerns of Police Survivors, P.O. Box 782385, Orlando, FL 32878-2385.

Condolences, memories and photos may be shared on the tribute wall.



Events


Norbert Francis Thomas Jr.

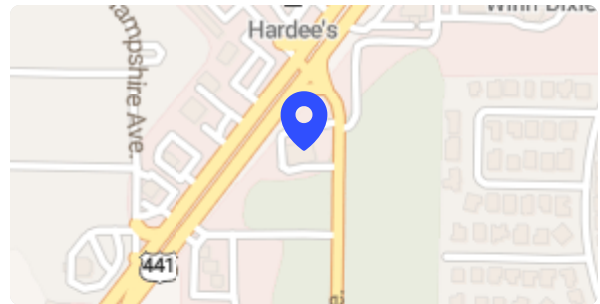
MAR 16, 1947 - MAY 7, 2018

Visitation


 **Friday**, May 11, 2018

 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM ET

 **Steverson - Hamlin & Hilbish Funeral Home**
226 E. Burleigh Boulevard, Tavares FL 32778

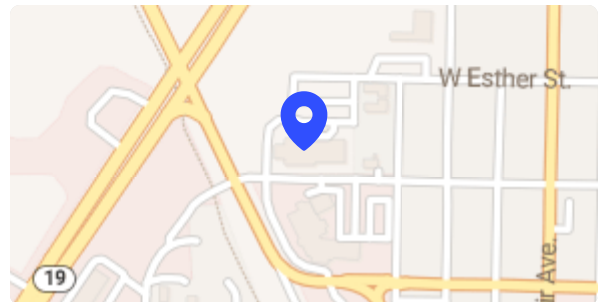


Funeral Service


 **Saturday**, May 12, 2018

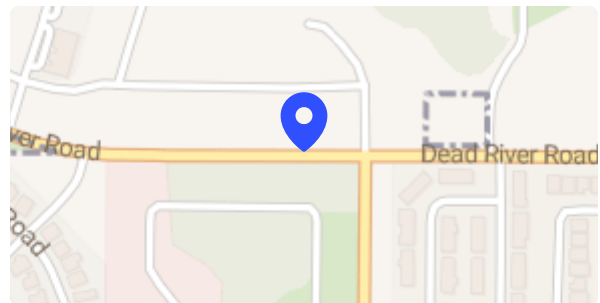
 11:00 AM ET

 **First United Methodist Church of Tavares**
600 W. Ianthe Street, Tavares FL 32778



Cemetery Details

 **Tavares Cemetery**
Dead River Road, Tavares FL 32778





Tribute Wall

Norbert Francis Thomas Jr.

MAR 16, 1947 - MAY 7, 2018



Steverson, Hamlin & Hilbish Funerals Andcremations shared a **Video**.



May 9 at 7:10 AM



Karen Ross May 10 at 3:39 AM

My condolences to the family. May God strengthen each of you during this most difficult time.



Janice Clements Arreola May 9 at 10:27 AM

This was a beautiful tribute! I love watching this! I am so glad you had 25 years together. Sending my love and prayers!



Pat Honour posted:

Condolences to the Thomas family. Norb was a good friend of my husband Ralph when they were both with GPD. Pat Honour and family.

May 29 at 11:30 AM



Lonnie Scott posted:

It was an honor to serve under Chief Thomas. He was my Patrol Captain at the Gainesville Police Department and I appreciate his words of wisdom and sense of humor. He set the example of what a Police Executive should be. I respected the way he presented himself and still remember his words of wisdom, "Lonnie, when a Captain suggests that you do something a certain way, its a good idea to do it that way, no other comments needed." Advice given with a smile. He was what you expected of a Police Captain and more. Debbie and family, take solace in the Lord's words; 8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God." May God comfort you all at this time of loss and may He grant this peacemaker his peace and external Grace and Mercy.

May 14 at 12:46 PM



Tribute Wall

Norbert Francis Thomas Jr.

MAR 16, 1947 - MAY 7, 2018

AM

Amy Mercer posted:

Chief Thomas was a beloved Life Member of the Florida Police Chiefs Association (FPCA) who served as a board member on our Foundation. We are grateful for Chief Thomas's years of dedicated service as a law enforcement leader. We are also grateful for the many years he served our Association and it's members. He even continued serving when faced with health issues, sometimes driving several hours for a two hour meeting. I was amazed at his commitment to the Foundation. I will personally remember Chief Thomas as a kind and gentle man that was always willing to help. He was a true public servant and I am forever grateful that I was able to know him. On behalf of the over 1000 members of the FPCA, I offer our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Chief Thomas. RIP Chief, you are gone but never forgotten. Amy Mercer, Executive Director of the Florida Police Chiefs Association

May 11 at 11:59 AM



Anonymous sent a Floor Plant for Sympathy to the Thomas family.



May 10 at 1:16 PM

JH

John Hunt posted:

Chief Norb Thomas was one of the good guys; a great chief and contributor to the Florida police Chiefs Association and the Foundation as well. I enjoyed sitting next to him at Foundation meetings and remembering earlier years of the FPCA. He will be sorely missed but always appreciated. John HuntHunt Insurance Group

May 10 at 11:54 AM

EE

E E Eunice posted:

My condolences to Debbie and family. Norb and I go back over 40 years, went to graduate school together at Rollins College in the 70's at night and weekends. We became great friends and colleagues at GPD and we both became Police Chiefs with wonderful careers in law enforcement RIP my friend you will be missed. E E Eunice

May 10 at 11:29 AM



Tribute Wall

Norbert Francis Thomas Jr.

MAR 16, 1947 - MAY 7, 2018



Ed Posey posted:

Chief Norb Thomas was a great friend and mentor to me when I was at the Gainesville Police Department under his command. I just spoke to Debbie and Norb a few weeks ago at a retiree get together and I will miss my friend. Thank you for all you did for me.

May 10 at 11:07 AM



Anthony Emelianchik Dpm posted:

I am saddened to hear of Norb's passing, I will miss talking Gators football with him. Please know you are in my prayers at this difficult time. Dr. Tony and Staff

May 10 at 9:36 AM



Flvs 5Th Grade Team And Sunshine Committee sent a Blue & White Sympathy Floor Basket to the Thomas family.



May 9 at 4:21 PM



Anonymous sent a White Standing Spray to the Thomas family.



May 9 at 3:51 PM



Laura, Steve, Scott, Ruth, And Spouses sent a Dish Garden with Fresh Cut Flowers to the Thomas family.



May 9 at 12:18 PM



Anonymous sent a sympathy card to the Thomas family.



May 9 at 10:41 AM



Tribute Wall

Norbert Francis Thomas Jr.

MAR 16, 1947 - MAY 7, 2018

DT

Diane Thomas posted:

My condolences to the family. I will miss Norb's laugh and remember sharing chocolate with him. Thoughts and prayers continue.

May 9 at 8:49 AM

RR

R. A. Robinson posted:

With Deepest Sympathy.R. A. Robinson / Ret. Deputy ChiefDeputy Sheriff Orange County Sheriffs Office

May 9 at 6:26 AM

DM

Diana Margis posted:

We only new him briefly in marrying our cuz Debbie a real Blessing to her life and will be deeply missed.Blessings,Diana Margis

May 9 at 12:38 AM

LF

Lew Foster posted:

IMiss my little "brother" and best friend. He meant the world to me. Donna and I will do anything to help Deb and other family membersLew

May 8 at 8:42 PM

EU

Earl And Sue Underwood sent a Classic Sympathy Dish Garden to the Thomas family.



May 8 at 8:42 PM

AF

Andrea Foster posted:

I am thankful to have known Norb for the majority of my life! He was like a 2nd father to me and my sister. I will miss his smile and laugh the most... I know my dad misses his dear friend. All my love and prayers to Debbie, Natalie, Nicole, and the rest of their families.

May 8 at 7:49 PM



Media

Norbert Francis Thomas Jr.

MAR 16, 1947 - MAY 7, 2018



Steverson, Hamlin & Hilbish Funerals Andcremations shared a **Video**.

May 9 at 7:10 AM



Karen Ross May 10 at 3:39 AM

My condolences to the family. May God strengthen each of you during this most difficult time.



Janice Clements Arreola May 9 at 10:27 AM

This was a beautiful tribute! I love watching this! I am so glad you had 25 years together. Sending my love and prayers!



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Norbert by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



Scan to Visit



Steverson,
Hamlin & Hilbish
Funerals & Cremations