



Thomas "Tommy" Charles Culligan

SEP 30, 1936 - FEB 27, 2026



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Thomas Charles Culligan, 89, of Howey-in-the-Hills, Florida, passed away on February 27, 2026 after a hard-fought battle with Acute Myeloid Leukemia. A native of Newark and resident of Little Falls, New Jersey, Tom was the youngest of eight children born to Joseph Culligan and Jane Ritchie Culligan.

Coming from humble beginnings in Newark, Tom was a founding member of the Aces Club along with his best friends, Bill Curran, Brian Gethard, and Buddy Hopkins (No girls allowed!). He was part of a close-knit group of kids from 11th Street who would hang around on "the stoop." Remarkably, they all continued to maintain contact with one another over the decades. Another member of the 11th Street gang was his soulmate and future wife Diane Curran. During these early years, Tom developed his keen carpentry, engineering, and mechanical skills by building soap box cars, a clubhouse for the Aces, and fixing up old cars.

Graduating from Barringer High School in the spring of 1955, he began his career with New Jersey Bell two days later. His forty-two-year stretch of working for Bell Telephone/AT&T was interrupted only by two years of service in the United States Army Signal Corps when he was drafted in 1960. During his time with the Army, he earned a Sharpshooter Badge, the National Defense Service Medal, and Good Conduct Medal before being honorably discharged.

Tom and Diane married after his discharge from the Army on July 21, 1962, and they bought their first house in Little Falls, New Jersey. Tom adored his Irish bride, and their marriage was an equal partnership from the very beginning. In 1972, they moved to Coral Springs Florida with their three children, Tom Jr., John, and Jennifer.

Over the years, Tom's ability to evaluate problems and develop solutions became apparent to management at the highest levels at the phone company (now AT&T). As a result, he earned numerous awards. If they needed someone to fix a difficult problem, he was the one they called in. When he retired in 1998, he was the leading expert in his division in fiber optic technology.



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In the 1990s, Tom helped Diane open and operate a successful travel agency in Coral Springs, with Diane managing the travel side of the business and Tom helping on the business side. After several successful years of selling travel, they sold the agency and moved to their dream home (of course which he designed himself) in Howey-in-the-Hills.

Tom always enjoyed building and fixing things. He never met a problem he couldn't solve, or a project too large for him to complete by himself or with a trusted helper (usually Diane). And he never stopped. In his 70s, Tom, along with Diane and their dear friends and travel buddies Eddy and Lorraine Leeden, put up a fence around their entire 18-acre property and built a 1200 square-foot barn. At eighty-one years old he removed the entire chimney from the roof of his house with only Diane as his assistant, and at 88 he built a butler's pantry using only pulleys and brain power to lift the heavy cabinets. At eighty-nine, he installed lighting on a fifteen-foot ceiling. Analytical, determined, and intrepid, he completed thousands of projects.

A world traveler, Tom enjoyed many trips with friends and family—specifically loving to cruise. He and Diane have visited all seven continents and sailed on hundreds of cruises. A map in their family room shows all the places he and Diane visited around the world. One summer they even

rented a house in Cong, Ireland, with the Leedens, the Currans, and the Lobsitzes; further extending the trip to Scotland where he was able to research his family history then cruise back across the Atlantic.

Tom had an impact on so many people in so many ways. For example, he received a New Jersey Bell citation in 1967 when a neighbor came running over with her choking infant child. The baby having ingested a deflated balloon, had turned blue and was in respiratory arrest. Tom attempted to clear the balloon and eventually performed mouth-to-mouth resuscitation until the EMS crew arrived, thereby saving the young boy's life.

Strangers needed only a few minutes to recognize how observant, intelligent, humble, and kind he was. Those of us who knew him well were the luckiest recipients of these fine qualities. Always a giver, Tom would show his love by making things better for those around him. Hearing him reminisce about his life, you would never know that he was the hero of most of his stories. But he was. He was a great husband, father, and friend. He will be missed every day by those who had the privilege of knowing him.



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He is survived by his wife of 63 years Diane, his son Tom (Staci) of Windermere, Florida; son John (Terri) of Cocoa Beach, Florida; daughter Jennifer of Clermont, Florida; grandson Tommy (Heather) of Tampa, Florida; grandson Nicholas of Fort Myers, Florida; grandson Kevin of Orlando, Florida; Brother-in-Law/Best Man Bill Curran of Lake Suzy, Florida; Sister-in-law Debbi (Rick) of Salem, Massachusetts; and many nieces and nephews. Tom was preceded in death by his parents, brothers, and sisters.

A celebration of life will take place on April 16th at 11:00AM under the pavilion at Griffin Park in Howey-In-The-Hills, Florida to be followed by a luncheon at Rodello's Italian Restaurant in Leesburg, Florida.

Griffin Park address: 105 S. Lakeshore Blvd., Howey-In-The-Hills, FL 34737

Rodello's Italian Restaurant: 26736 US Highway 27, Leesburg, FL 34748 (access from Highway 27)

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to the Leukemia Research Foundation (<https://leukemiarf.org>) in memory of Tom Culligan.




Events


Thomas "Tommy" Charles Culligan

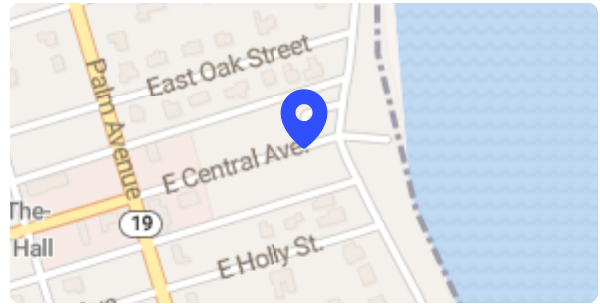
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Celebration of Life

 **Thursday**, April 16, 2026

 11:00 AM ET

 **Griffin Park**
105 S. Lakeshore Blvd., Howey-In-The-Hills FL
34737





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Thomas "Tommy" by
contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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