



Thomas William Hughes

September 23, 1928 - December 16, 2020

Thomas William Hughes, 92, native Montanan and proud Irishman, lifted away from earth on his final flight into the heavens on December 16, 2020 in Hayden, ID. He and his wife Joan will be laid to rest at the Yellowstone National Cemetery in Laurel, MT.

Tom arrived on September 23, 1928 in Glendive, MT, the fourth of five children born to Michael John and Winifred Esther (Owens) Hughes. He was raised in Glendive, graduating with the DCHS class of 1946. During his upbringing, Tom learned to hunt and fish along the Yellowstone river, a passion that never left him. He was a multi-sport athlete for the Red Devils, playing basketball, football and track. After graduating high school, he worked odd jobs and attended the U of Montana before enlisting in the US Air Force in 1951 and being accepted into cadet flight training. It was during this time he met his future bride, Joan Kathleen Beres. They married on May 9, 1954 at Hamilton Air Force Base near San Francisco. Tom loved his time flying in B-29 bombers and various fighter jets, functioning as radar observer and navigator during the Cold War era for the Strategic Air Command. With the impending arrival of their first child, Tom resigned from the Air Force and he and Joan moved to Missoula so Tom could finish his business studies at "THE university", as he always called it. After graduating in spring 1956, Tom's family of three moved to Helena where he began his banking career with the FNB of Helena. During the next nine years, three more children would come their way and Tom would remain engaged in aviation, flying for the Montana Air National Guard and the USAF Reserves. In 1965, Tom secured an opportunity to work for the FNB of Glendive, so his aviation career concluded and the family moved to his hometown where he would remain for the next 23 years. Like his father decades earlier at FNB, Tom rose through the officer ranks before becoming President. He was a member of the bank's Board of Directors for nearly 30 years, and during his time there he obtained a graduate banking degree at the Stonier School of Banking, Rutgers University.

Tom loved Glendive and he was a force of nature via his numerous civic activities that benefitted Glendive businesses and citizens. He donated countless hours in board, trustee and leadership positions for entities such as the Chamber of Commerce, Glendive

Community Hospital, Dawson Community College, and Kiwanis, among others. His civic contributions went beyond Glendive. He served a term as State Senator, in various executive capacities for the YMCA (Helena), the UM Council of 50, the Yellowstone Council of Boy Scouts, The Montana Independent Bankers Assoc., and he spent several years on the Montana Supreme Court's Commission on Practices, during which he assisted the court in reviewing lawyers charged with questionable practices.

Business and civic contributions aside, Tom's passion was doting on his family and spending time on the Yellowstone river with family and friends. Education was important to him, and each of his kids was afforded an opportunity for a college education. Tom was a proud Grizzly alum who passionately supported UM, yet he took no offense to each of his kids being MSU Bobcats. For many years he hosted visitors to his riverside cabin north of Glendive, functioning as the self-annointed "Pope of the Badlands". He loved running his jet boat on the river, lazily floating his raft, and sitting round a campfire at the cabin telling stories and sharing wisdom. He hunted agates, deer and game birds along the irrigation ditches and the river. He played basketball well into his 50s with his gang of friends in the old man's league. Many may recall Tom as an astute businessman and a civic leader. His family and close friends know his true love was his family, close friends, and the bounty that nature provided to him in Glendive, loves that never diminished. He was a humble man with modest needs, but he always took time for a friend or family member in need of wisdom, a joke, or just a funny story.

After negotiating the sale of FNB in 1986, Tom retired and he and Joan moved to Billings in 1988 to be near their children and a growing flock of grandkids. The subsequent thirty years included many floating trips on the Yellowstone and other Montana rivers, travel to many locations including Ireland, and countless family gatherings at 819 Poly Drive. He loved telling stories of his exploits, pulling pranks, keeping an eye out for invading Russian bombers, and enjoying an occasional Old Crow. Tom lived a long, healthy and active life, finally succumbing to the ravages of Father Time and dementia in his final years. His family and friends are blessed to have spent so much time with him.

Preceding Tom in death is his wife Joan (2018), brother Michael John, sisters Jeanne Malone and Mary Oliver, his parents Mack and Esther, and numerous life-long friends. Survivors include younger sister Anne (Dan) Sullivan of Dyer, IN; children Michael (Marlene) Hughes of Plano, TX, Brian (Kerry) Hughes of Post Falls, ID, Deborah (Tim) Crennen of St. Cloud, MN, Tracey (Dave) Sand of Belfield, ND; grandchildren Sean Hughes, Kevin (Jessica) Hughes, Tyler (Brooke) Crennen, Amanda Crennen, Andrea Browning, Monica (Marcus) Shimmin, Madison Hughes, and eleven great-grandchildren.

The Hughes family is very grateful for the compassionate support provided by Wellspring Meadows and Auburn Crest Hospice. A family service will be held at a later date in conjunction with his burial. Those wanting to contribute in his memory are encouraged to support the Greater Glendive Community Foundation.

Comments



“ Condolences to the Hughes family and complements to the author(s) of Tom's very well-written obituary. He lived a very full life and I'm sure he will be missed by countless family and friends from many places.

Don Grundhauser - December 30, 2020 at 10:02 PM



“ Mike, I'm so sorry to hear of the loss of your dad. My sympathies to you and the rest of the family. I see you're an orphan now. We've still got our Mom, and I dread the day we lose her. Thinking of you.

Jo Anne Jonutis Herem - December 24, 2020 at 11:26 PM



“ Diane Crockett lit a candle in memory of Thomas William Hughes



Diane Crockett - December 24, 2020 at 06:33 PM