



Thomas M. Dykstra

JUL 31, 1941 - SEP 2, 2024



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Celebrating the life of Thomas Melvin Dykstra, 83, of Palm Harbor, FL. Tom was born on July 31st, 1941 in Hammond, IN and passed away on September 2nd, 2024 at Mease Countryside Hospital. Predeceased by his parents Thomas and Lorraine Dykstra, siblings Daniel Dykstra and Joy Ewing and survived by sister Linda Hylander. Tom was a devoted husband to Lonnie Jean Dykstra until her passing in 2004, and a loving father to Stephen (Katie), Jason (Yi), and Karen (Todd), his children from his marriage to Lonnie.

Tom married Marjorie Marie Dykstra in 2006 and remained very happily married until his passing. He dearly loved his step-children Sue (Carl), Paul (Jackie), Dave (Shawn), and Kathy (Chris). He is also survived by 20 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren that gave him immeasurable joy.

While growing up Tom was a constant companion of his grandfather Menno and enjoyed working on his farm, picking produce for the market. During his teen years Tom worked after school as an auto mechanic at Ridgeway Motor Sales where he proudly purchased his first car as a teenager. Tom loved sports while in high school and was very accomplished while competing in wrestling and basketball.

Awarded an academic scholarship, Tom became the first in his family to attend college. He graduated from Hope College in Holland, MI with a dual degree in Mathematics and Physics and later earned an MBA from the University of Chicago. Tom wanted to serve his country, so he took time off from college and enlisted in the Army, serving as a Green Beret. He was stationed in Okinawa and eventually served extensively in Vietnam as part of the revered MIKE Force A-Team of the 5th Special Forces group. To honor the military service of others, Tom volunteered to provide a variety of assistance to combat special forces vets after their service, something dear to his heart.



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Tom had an extraordinary career, starting his first job after graduating with his MBA as a junior executive at AO Smith. Tom soon decided that entrepreneurship was his calling and he founded his own company Effective Management Systems in 1978. Through his hard work and perseverance, Tom and his partner grew their company from a 2-man operation, where their only assets were a card table and two chairs, to a company with sales around the world. Their software was used in the construction of the space shuttle booster rockets. Eventually their success led to a public offering on NASDAQ in 1994 and appearance on the INC 500 of the fastest growing companies twice at 28th and 37th. Shunning retirement, Tom continued working in some capacity until close to his passing.

Tom served on the Board of Directors at Synergex International, a software firm, from 1995–2023, something he thoroughly enjoyed. He was a Fellow of the American Production and Inventory Control Society and gave speeches throughout the country. Later in his career Tom used his extensive knowledge and experience to help many other entrepreneurs create and successfully run their own businesses. Throughout his extensive career and many accomplishments Tom maintained that it was the people that mattered the most to him, that he was driven to be successful to ensure they could all enjoy success together.

Tom was also an advocate for education. He was elected to the Mequon-Thiensville school board, on the academic advisory board at Marquette University MBA program, and an adjunct professor at Arizona State University and Grand Canyon University in the business and MBA programs. He loved teaching and mentoring throughout his life.

Tom's true passion was spending time with his wife Marjorie, traveling to see their family, friends, and visiting many places throughout the US. He loved hearing from his children and grandchildren about their accomplishments and life adventures, which always brought out his contagious smile and laughter and made everything seem even more special. Those that knew him well were amazed by his incredible wit and humor, extraordinary inner strength, courageous actions, impeccably honorable values, and peaceful demeanor. Tom will be dearly missed by his family and all who knew and loved him.

A memorial service celebrating Toms amazing life will be held at a later date.



Memories only last if you share them

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



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