

1972 Thomas, 1974 Robert SOUMAS

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## Tom D. Soumas Sr., 79

Posted: Tuesday, December 28, 2010 3:17 pm

Tom D. SOUMAS Sr. passed away peacefully at Kootenai Health on Christmas morning. He was born June 21, 1931, in Mason City, Iowa, to Dionysios and Garifilia SOUMAS and was one of five children.

Tom grew up in the mid-west and upon graduating high school in Tulsa, Okla., worked various jobs before entering the United States Army where he served two years during the Korean War. It was in the Army where he met Mary PLATANIA who was serving as a nurse in Fort Hood, Texas. They married on Valetine's Day 1953, left the Army and moved to California to start a family. They had five children over the next seven years.

Tom initially worked for Safeway and Lester's as a produce manager, but found that working independently in sales was his true talent. He successfully sold life insurance for a number of years then accepted the first of many jewelry manufacturers' representative positions for various companies.

In 1968, seeing an opportunity to provide a better life for his family, Tom moved them to Coeur d'Alene, after accepting a new sales territory in the Pacific Northwest and Intermountain regions selling wholesale diamond and other jewelry lines. While traveling his territory, Tom was a predictable fixture in towns large and small as he wheeled his sample cases into local jewelry stores along with restaurants and churches as the insurance company required the jewelry could never be left alone.

Tom was a member of Saint Thomas parish for more than 35 years. He and Mary believed in helping others and provided that example to their children who recall that our home was always a place where others visited whether they were foreign exchange students attending school, priests recovering from illnesses acquired on over-seas missions or simply people Tom met in his travels. One of Tom's favorite sayings was "our door is always open."

In 1987 due to a family illness Tom retired from his life on the road. He and Mary moved back to California returning to Coeur d'Alene less than a year before Mary died in 1995. Shortly thereafter Tom relocated to both Worland, Wyo., and Billings, Mont. During that time, Tom met two special women, Dee AARPS and Dolores ORTIZ, both of whom helped Tom tremendously in dealing with the loss of Mary. In 2005, Tom relocated back to Coeur d'Alene where he became a resident at the Life Care Center until the time of his death.

When Tom wasn't traveling his sales territory, he enjoyed time with family, home cooking and a good game of cards. It was through numerous family trips that Tom introduced his children to a diverse world outside North Idaho.

Tom was preceded in death by his parents, an infant sister and wife Mary.

He is survived by his sisters, Pauline SCHREIBER of South San Francisco, Calif., Zoe Dress of Sun City West, Ariz., and brother James SOUMAS of Billings; five children and their spouses, Tom '72 Jr. (Barbara), Robert '74 (Dawn), Dan (Valerie), Lou (Teri) and Katherine Ann (Sister Mary Faustina, MC), eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.

Tom's family would like to thank the staff at Life Care Center, Kootenai Health and all those who visited Tom regularly for making Tom's final years as comfortable as possible. Memorials may be made in Tom's honor to Missionaries of Charity at 335 East 145th St., Bronx, NY 10451.

Visitation will be held from 3-6 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 30, 2010, with a Vigil at 6 p.m. at the English Funeral Chapel, 1133 N. Fourth St., Coeur d'Alene. The funeral Mass will be held at 11 a.m. Friday, Dec. 31, 2010, at St. Thomas Catholic Church, 919 Indiana Ave., Coeur d'Alene. Burial will be at St. Thomas Cemetery. English Funeral Chapel, Coeur d'Alene, is in charge of the arrangements.

Please sign Tom's guest registry and view his online memorial at [www.englishfuneralchapel.com](http://www.englishfuneralchapel.com).