



Mr. Thomas C. Witherspoon

OCT 12, 1921 - JAN 19, 2014



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Mr. Thomas C. Witherspoon

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Thomas C. Witherspoon, age 92 of East China Twp., formerly of Dearborn, died January 19, 2014. Thomas was born October 12, 1921 in Detroit to the late Thomas and Gabrielle Witherspoon. On July 6, 1946 he married Catherine Hubbard. Thomas graduated from the University of Detroit and was a teacher in the Dearborn School District for 30 years.

He is a former member of St. Alphonsus Church, Dearborn, where he served on the Ushers Club and was active with the Senior's Group.

Thomas was an avid fossil hunter. He would take the students of the East China School District on field trips fossil hunting to Arkona, Ontario.

He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Catherine Witherspoon, sons, Thomas Witherspoon and Timothy (Therese) Witherspoon, grandchildren, Tim, Mary and John Witherspoon and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by a sister, Gabrielle Hubbard.

A funeral mass will be conducted Wednesday January 22nd at 12:00 p.m. at Holy Cross Church, Our Lady on the River Parish, Marine City. Interment will be in Beechwood Cemetery, Forest, Ontario. Visiting hours are Tuesday 2:00 to 4:00 and 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. with praying of the rosary at 7:00 p.m. at Young Funeral Home, China Twp. Additional visiting hours Wednesday from 11:00 to 12:00 at the church prior to mass. Memorials may be made to the Alzheimer's Assoc.

To leave the family a message of comfort visit www.youngcolonial.com



Events

Mr. Thomas C. Witherspoon

OCT 12, 1921 - JAN 19, 2014

Visitation

Tuesday, January 21, 2014

2:00 PM - 4:00 PM ET

Young Colonial Chapel Funeral Home, Inc.
4061 Saint Clair Hwy, East China MI 48054



Visitation

Tuesday, January 21, 2014

6:00 PM - 9:00 PM ET

Young Colonial Chapel Funeral Home, Inc.
4061 Saint Clair Hwy, East China MI 48054

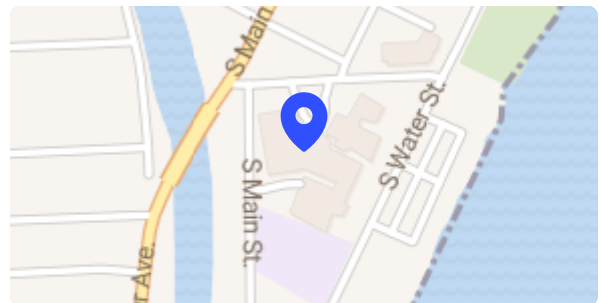


Service

Wednesday, January 22, 2014

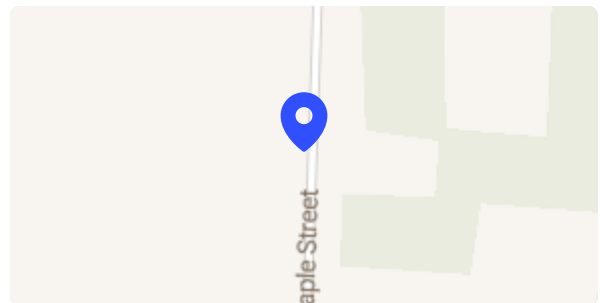
12:00 PM ET

Our Lady on the River Parish, Holy Cross Catholic Church
610 Water St., Marine City MI



Cemetery Details

Beechwood Cemetery
Beechwood Ave., Forest ON





Tribute Wall

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David Fiedor posted:

Tom and his wife helped out our family as my father, Ed, posted below. I was just a teenager but I watched this family (Tom leading the way) help out our Aunt Jo and want nothing in return. What a great example! Thank you for all that you did Tom.

March 23 at 11:15 AM



Edward Fiedor posted:

Thought about Tom today and reluctantly searched the obituaries. Sadly I found his smiling face. Tom was a good a man as you will find anywhere. I was able to meet him later in life when he was in his late 70's. He stepped in and assisted my Aunt, who lived across the street on Miller Rd. He helped her for many years and never asked for anything in return. Tom told me he would be paid with interest in heaven. Thinking about him makes me want to help someone in need, the way he helped my Aunt Jo. I am sad that I did not keep in touch, but I am sending prayers his way as Easter 2018 approaches.....Ed Fiedor

March 23 at 8:11 AM



Kirk Lytwyn posted:

Mr Witherspoon just came to my mind....I hadnt seen nor heard from him in decades. I decided to google search him to see how he was doing. Sadly, that brought me here. He was the single most inspiring educator in my life. He was firm and compassionate, among many other positive personal attributes. A great great great man, who touched MANY lives over the years! I met the whirling wind (his paddle), on many occasions...lol I also ate a bunch of chocolate bars that I was supposed to sell for my 6th grade Washington trip! I wasnt supposed to go but Mr. Witherspoon gave me the encouragement and direction to get the job done, and I did. He believed in me, and because he believed in me, I believed in me. He taught me that anything can be accomplished as long as you stuck with it and put your mind into it. They are beliefs I carry and will continue to carry for the remainder of my life. I lived a couple of blocks away from his house on Miller road and would often stop by to see him on my way to Miller swamps. Over time, I moved away and lost track of Mr. Witherspoon, but his memories are burned in my mind and soul. The world lost a great one. He is dearly missed. Kirk Lytwyn 6th Grade class of 1980 In fact, I'm pretty sure that picture above is MY class! The left hand part of the picture is missing....thats where I was.

August 22 at 9:32 AM



Tribute Wall

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DB

Dann Boland posted:

I didn't know he'd passed, but am sorry to hear it. Mr. Witherspoon went to school with my mother, I believe K-12. He was a wonderful teacher, I recall he encouraged me when I expressed an interest in biology (dissection of a frog actually), and I can recall his ability to silence a too noisy cafeteria with a simple, yet LOUD Hey! He commanded respect, but he also shared so many great qualities. We collected coins together, we picked through rocks, and found countless trilobites and brachiopods in Sylvania, and I recall their Airstream, which always looked like a thermos to me! I disappointed him once though, as a young adult, and I'll always regret that. He was a great man, a great dad, and a great teacher, and while he will be missed, he's left a positive mark on everyone he ever met!

February 1 at 4:43 AM

VB

Victor Barkoski Dds posted:

Just learned of Tom's passing. I can truly say he was the biggest influence on my professional future. I also treasure the fossil digs in Sylvania, Ohio like so many others. Tom instilled in me an interest in the sciences that led me to a career in Dentistry. I was fortunate to rekindle our friendship by becoming his and Catherine's Dentist for 25 years. We should all be so fortunate to have a mentor and friend as Tom Witherspoon. My sympathy goes to his sons and their families. Dr. Victor Barkoski

September 6 at 5:30 PM

FS

Fred Seitz shared a photo to the **McDonald School Last DC Trip** album.



February 1 at 5:29 AM

FS

Fred Seitz posted:

I was saddened to hear of Tom's passing a couple of days ago. Tom was my mentor at McDonald School in Dearborn. He wanted me to continue the Washington DC trips after he retired. I will always remember his kind patience and unforgettable laugh. He & Cathy were a great match as I had the pleasure of knowing her on the last DC trip we made together. I last saw them three years ago at my retirement party. He was a devoted teacher and a great human being. Students were constantly returning and asking me about Tom and how he was doing. He was the heart of McDonald School. Every time I have gone down Miller Road, Tom & Cathy have come to my mind. I always looked for their camper in their yard. He was loved by many. He will be missed by many. May God bless & comfort you and your family, Cathy! Fred Seitz

February 1 at 5:02 AM



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Ethan Street posted:

I knew him as Uncle Tom. It is no exaggeration to say that he was a significant influence in leading me toward the academic and intellectual pursuits I engaged in later in life. In the summer of 1993, uncle Tom offered to take my childhood friend and I on a fossil hunting tour of some of the hills in Ontario. We dug up incredible, fascinating fossilized specimens of ancient animals, with Tom reciting their names, paleontological eras, and how to identify them. As a youngster, I was rather obsessed with geology, rocks, and fossils. His time and enthusiasm is something that to this day I look back upon with wonder and gratitude.

January 27 at 12:24 PM



Bob Price posted:

A fine man and great teacher. Mr. Witherspoon was my 6th grade teacher in '71 or '72. Selling candy to pay for the DC trip, science (the marble gun), fossil hunting in Sylvania Ohio, coin collecting and the Safety Patrol. Many great memories. Than you sir. RIP. - Bob Price

January 25 at 6:01 PM



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KJ

Kevin Jackson posted:

Our sympathy to the Witherspoon family from our family. I hope you find some comfort in kind words that so many have for a great man. Mr. Witherspoon had a reputation as the McDonald school disciplinarian. Other kids would say "be careful if you do that you'll have to go see Mr. Witherspoon and he will paddle you with Mr. Witherspoon's Whirling Wind Paddle" (or something like that). Not sure I ever saw the paddle, with the holes drilled in it so it would whistle when he swung it. I also never knew any kid that was hit with it. So lots of kids were afraid of him (before they got to know him of course.) Anyhow, my earliest memory is in first grade I fell off the monkey bars and hit my head on to the hard asphalt. Mr. Witherspoon sat with me and took out his white pressed handkerchief and held it on my bleeding head while we waited for additional help. In fourth grade I responded to an invitation to join a coin club organized by Mr. Witherspoon. In that one meeting he inspired all of us to start looking through our change, our parents change and any change for old coins hoping to find the rare ones. That first week I found a 1910 Lincoln Penny in my mom's purse. I still have that penny and my original collection book. A few years later when I decided to get the the coin collecting merit badge, I did not need to study at all. It seems, Mr. Witherspoon had already taught me more than enough to meet the badge requirements. I went on several memorable and exciting fossil hunting trips with Mr. Witherspoon as did my siblings. I can still here his voice talking about trilobites and brachiopods. My brother and my dad went on one of the D.C. trips with him and returned with great pictures and memories. Years later, Mr. Witherspoon came to my dad's funeral and spoke with us all about our lives about the influence of my dad and of his appreciation of my dad. Mr. Witherspoon was a great enthusiastic teacher and a great person. We are all better for having known him. As former students we know how fortunate we were and remain a proud part of his huge legacy.

January 21 at 5:40 AM

DB

Dann Boland October 9 at 1:15 PM

My mother went to school with Mr. W, back in "thier day". My granddad was a stationary engineer at Fordson and Lowrey, among other schools. Since so many teachers and other staff knew him, it was hard to get away with much, but I somehow managed!

LC

Loretta Cox posted:

The Witherspoon family are in my thoughts and prayers. Mr Witherspoon was a awesome teacher. I had him for 6th grade in 1968. His trips for fossils and in science, he was just a great teacher. May god welcome him with open arms.Loretta (Lee) Cox

January 25 at 10:16 AM



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DA

Debra Austin posted:

The Witherspoon family is in my thoughts and prayers. May God comfort you during this time of grief. Mr. Witherspoon was one of Dearborn's greatest teachers as well a wonderful person. His love of life was evident no matter what he was talking about; his family, his beloved fossils, science in general, etc. Mr. Witherspoon was my 6th grade teacher at McDonald Elementary the school year of (I believe) 1969/70. Heaven has gained a great individual who we will meet again. God Bless* Debbie Austin

January 25 at 7:47 AM

MS

Martha (Miller) Sobolewski posted:

What a great teacher. Saw him several years backs at St. Al's church, I couldn't believe he remembered me Prayers to the Witherspoon family.

January 24 at 1:37 AM

BH

Barb Rumney-Hayes posted:

He was the best sixth grade teacher a kid could ask for. I will always remember the three trips I took to Washington DC. Also all of the fossil hunting trips that my dad and I went with him on many many years ago. My heart goes out to Mrs. Witherspoon and the rest of the family. Prayers for you. Barb Rumney-Hayes

January 23 at 6:26 PM

RA

Richard Austin posted:

I am extremely saddened to hear Mr. Witherspoon has passed. I was a part of the team-teaching experiment Dearborn / McDonald school tried in the middle 60's as a student in both his 5th and 6th grade classes he taught along with Laura Nebel. Would have been about 1962 - 1964, I was lucky enough to have him as a teacher for two years.He was a wonderful man and a fantastic teacher. Always wanted to go on a fossil hunt with him but my family just didn't have the finances to allow it. He and his family will be in our prayers. The world has lost a true role model, scientist, and humanitarian.Richard (Rick) Austin

January 23 at 4:01 PM



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Gurka Family posted:

We are so sorry to hear about his passing. He was a good friend to our dad for many years. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family at this time.The Gurka Family

January 23 at 5:58 AM



Andrew Hutchison posted:

I also was in Mr. Witherspoon's 6th grade class. The very next year I met his son Tom and we become lifelong friends. I have spent many hours with the Witherspoons, sat around many camp fires at their house in Dearborn, been on fossil hunting expeditions, snowmobiling with the extended family up in Marine city and so on.Mr. Witherspoon was one of my favorite personalities, always pleasant, ready to smile and joke and a very interesting man. He was a very good example to me in many ways. His love for his family and his generosity were always evident. I feel very fortunate to have known him.Mrs. Witherspoon,Tom,Tim and family, at times like this we can only trust in the promises from God. I know that he was a believer. "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" John 11:25-26So sorry for you loss, but praise God for his promise of eternal life to all who believe, for I know we shall see him again!Drew Hutchison

January 22 at 8:26 AM



Pam Del Giudice Messingham January 23 at 4:09 PM

I didn't know Mr. Witherspoon as a teacher, I just knew Tom. Tom, I want to give my condolences, I remember the hunt we went on...do take care and I am so terribly sorry for your loss.Pam Del Giudice (Messingham)



Scott Vergiels lit a candle in honor of Thomas.

"The Old Man" was a dear and treasured friend. He readily shared his enthusiasm and knowledge of fossil collecting with all his friends. His contributions to the fossil collecting community were innumerable. Our condolences to Catherine, Tim, Tom and all his family .Sincerely, Mr. and Mrs. R.Scott Vergiels Crawfordsville, Indiana

January 22 at 7:29 AM





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RM

Ruben Mauricio posted:

I was in Mr. Witherspoon's 6th grade class (from January - June 1973). (My family had just moved from Pennsylvania). I can still hear his voice reassuring me that I'd be able to sell enough candy to earn my place on the Washington, D.C. trip ! .. and .. I did ! Unfortunately, my asthma kept me home... and my brother, Valentino, took my place on the trip!... I don't think it's an accident that I became a Special Education teacher. Mr. Witherspoon's ability to reach and teach all of his students was definitely an inspiration !.. Thank you , Mr. Witherspoon, for showing me the way !! Ruben Mauricio (Ann Arbor, Michigan)

January 21 at 4:56 PM

DS

David Seeley posted:

Mr. Witherspoon's legacy is the impact that he made upon his students. I, too, was his student in the early 70's and also went on the fossil hunting trip. I was also lucky enough to go on the Washington D.C. trip twice. To remember a man so fondly after 40 some years is truly a testament. My deepest condolences to his family.

January 21 at 2:03 PM

DN

Diane Nunez posted:

My deepest sympathy to the family. I was in his sixth grade class in the early 70's. I also remember going on a fossil hunting trip with him. May he rest in peace.

January 21 at 10:07 AM

LS

Lynn And Jeff Street posted:

We are blessed with a wonderful memory of the last time we saw Uncle Tom. It was at a wedding this past year. He was sitting in his wheelchair pushed up close beside his bride of many years, Aunt Cathy. He reached over to pat Aunt Cathy's knee and gave her a big smile. As the music got loud and lively, the two of them started to clap their hands and sway in their wheelchairs with beautiful smiles on each of their faces. What a shining example of a lifetime of love between two people and living life fully to the very end. Love you both! Our condolences to Catherine. But we know the love will go on forever. You have set the standard for generations to come. Lynn and Jeff Street

January 21 at 6:11 AM



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Don Wixson posted:

Dear Mrs. Witherspoon; I was in Tom's 6th grade class in 1958. He was a teacher, disciplinarian and most of all mentor and friend. Please accept my condolences. We have all lost a very fine man with Tom's passing. Don Wixson

January 21 at 5:40 AM



Fred Seitz shared a photo to the **McDonald School Last DC Trip** album.

February 1 at 5:29 AM



Tom & Cathy Last DC Trip



Memories only last if you share them

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



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