



## **Thomas O. Metz**

08/24/1929 - 01/13/2022

Thomas Metz passed away peacefully at the age of 92 on January 13, 2022, on the Metz-Wiesner family farm in Winneconne, Wisconsin. He was preceded in death by the love of his life, Sharon Metz (nee Wiesner) on June 19, 2020. Tom was the final living member of the 681 Jefferson Street Metzses of Oshkosh, which included his parents Gwen and Rudolph Metz, together with his brothers Jim Metz (Violet) and Ron Metz (Rose).

Tom is survived by sons Michael (Janet Benson) of Sun City West, AZ, Mark (Diana) of Wauwatosa, Mitchell (Rosemary) of Oconomowoc, and Matthew (Aleathea Johnson) of Minneapolis. Also by adoring grandchildren Casey (Tommasina Miller), Logan, Trevor, Emma, Fletcher, Ellie, Henry, Charlie and Alaina, precious great-grandson Robin, as well as special friends Hannah Goreta, Oliver and Ava Schlegel, and Sarah Binder.

Tom's sense of humor remained intact until his passing. When asked how he wanted this obituary to read he quipped: "If you knew him, you knew what he did. If you didn't know him, it's none of your business." We could end the obituary there, but we are proud of his exemplary life so we'll pretend we heard: "If you didn't know him, here's what you missed."

After graduating from Oshkosh High School, Tom served honorably in the United States Army. He was wounded in Korea in 1952, earning the Purple Heart. He finished his service in Hot Springs, Arkansas where he and his new bride, Sharon Metz, gave birth to their first of four boys.

After leaving the service, Tom earned his teaching certificate (by then a father of three) and began a career working with students in Appleton and Green Bay. He spent most of his career at Tank Elementary School in Green Bay, guiding an underserved population of students who thrived under his care. In 2012 Tom and Sharon were recognized as Educators of the Year by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Baseball was one of Tom's passions -- whether playing, coaching or cheering for his Philadelphia Phillies. His four children and nine grandchildren refer to him as Coach, as did the hundreds of youth for whom Tom invested his summers. He coached for more than 25 years. In addition to coaching baseball, Tom played fast-pitch softball well into his fifties.

Tom and Sharon shared a passion for social justice. In Green Bay they helped develop Co-Care, an organization dedicated to revitalizing the near West Side while providing families and children healthy community-based opportunities to grow and thrive. Later they founded HONOR (Honor Our Neighbors Origins and Rights), a Native American rights organization with the mission of supporting indigenous tribes in their quest for sovereignty, observation of treaty rights and cultural respect. Tom worked side-by-side

with Sharon on HONOR matters, developing his own specialty and recognition as a trusted source of authentic and educational Native-themed literature.

Woven through this tapestry of service and vitality was the time Tom cherished with family and friends. He was a storyteller, a jokester and a lover of puns. Tom found joy in watching his children and grandchildren compete in baseball, football, swimming, tennis, track, basketball, volleyball, rugby, and wrestling. Likewise, he found pleasure in the quiet conversations with the many, many friends who would stop by the house for a chat or to receive some words of wisdom.

Shortly before he passed, Tom was told it was almost time to go and that Sharon was waiting for him. "Not if she meets Elvis first," he said without missing a beat. Tom's passion, wit, dedication and love will be missed by all.

A public visitation will be held at Mueller Funeral Home in Winneconne on January 29, 2022, from 2:30 pm to 4:00 pm with a prayer service to follow. Due to COVID, facemasks and social distancing will apply. In lieu of flowers or memorials, the family suggests donations in Tom's name to the Sharon and Thomas Metz Scholarship Fund at the University of Wisconsin Green Bay. [University of Wisconsin Green Bay \(qgiv.com\)](http://qgiv.com)

If you wish please submit online condolences to [muellerfh.net](http://muellerfh.net).