



Thomas James Hilgenberg

March 2, 1936 - June 1, 2012

Thomas James Hilgenberg – DOD 6/1/2012

Thomas James Hilgenberg passed away peacefully, at home in Newnan, GA on June 1, 2012, surrounded by family. Born March 2, 1936 in Oshkosh, WI to Jack and Dorothy Hilgenberg, he was the 2nd of 10. Tom grew up with 7 brothers and 2 sisters. A competitor, first and foremost, he always played sports, based on the season, and winning was the goal!

After high school, Tom attended the University of Wisconsin in Madison, WI and graduated with a degree in Geology. After college, he went into the Air Force and became a pilot who flew bombers to gain his hours to become a commercial pilot. Tom joined Delta Airlines in August 1963, going on to become a Captain, flying jumbo jets, nationally and internationally, for over 30 years. He met Charlene Huhn, now Hilgenberg, on a flight shortly after joining Delta and the rest is History. They married in 1964 and had a daughter, Heidi, in 1965. Son, Christopher Thomas, followed in 1971.

Charlene was already involved in horses and Tom dove right into that world. They established Great Oaks Morgans in Newnan, GA in 1965 and the farm went on to produce many regional and national champion Morgan Horses. Together, the family was instrumental in introducing Georgia and the SE region of the US to the Morgan Horse during the 60's, 70's and 80's. Tom and Charlene were also involved in the development of the GA Morgan Horse Club as well the Dixie Cup Horse show, both still in existence. In the late 80's,

Tom turned his competitive focus toward Competitive Carriage Driving, becoming an active participant as well as leader in the Driving community. His passion for the sport culminated with him being a member of the 1998 Silver Medal winning USET Single Horse Carriage Driving team in Ebbs, Austria with Georgia bred Morgan gelding, Gus, aka Who's Zooming Who. Additionally, he was the top finishing American out of 60 competitors. After retiring from competition, he continued as an active member in the Driving community as a judge, trainer and committee member for several years until ill health forced him to a less active life.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Jack and Dot, son, Christopher Thomas, and brother, Steve. He is survived by his wife, Charlene, daughter Heidi, her partner Anna, daughter in law, Cindy Bunn, grandchildren, Jessica, Alex and Christopher and his mother in law, Rita Huhn as well as brothers, Jack (Pat), Bob (Sharon), Dennis (Annie), Donnie (Barb), Frank (Fran), Rich (Terri), sisters, Hope (Carl), Marilyn (Joe) and sister in law, Mary, 16 nieces and nephews and their families and as well as his beloved dogs, horses and many lifelong friends.

A celebration of Tom's life will be held at Great Oaks Morgans, Newnan, GA on Sunday, June 10, 2012, starting at 4pm. Please email Heidi@citdone.com for directions. In lieu of flowers, please donate generously to the Alzheimer's or Cardiovascular charity of your choice.

McKoon Funeral Home & Crematory 770-253-4580

Cemetery Details

McKoon Funeral Home & Crematory

38 Jackson Street
Newnan, GA 30263
(770) 253-4580
care@mckoon.com
<http://www.mckoon.com>

Previous Events

Service

JUN 10. 4:00 PM.

family farm

Tribute Wall

TP

“ I really enjoyed flying with Tom in the early ' 70's. He introduced me to Morgan horses at a horse show in Maine on a layover. He was a gentleman and a good pilot. He will be missed.

Tom Peters - June 05, 2012 at 04:35 PM

AB

“ It was always a pleasure to fly with Tom. He was a great captain and a man of character. Deepest sympathy to all the family.

Allen Butcher - June 04, 2012 at 07:04 PM

JP

“ It was my good fortune to fly with Tom early in my career with Delta in the early '70s.. He was a fine gentleman and professional-one of the "good guys". May your grief be overcome by the good memories you have shared with him. Bless you, John

JOHN R PHILLIPS - June 04, 2012 at 06:28 PM

TP

“ Charlene, I am sorry to hear of Tom's passing. If I can be of any assistance please don't hesitate to call. TP

tpomahoney - June 04, 2012 at 06:20 PM