



Thomas Alan Cook

May 13, 1933 - April 9, 2025

Our dearest dad, Thomas Alan Cook Sr, will be greatly missed by many family and friends. He passed away peacefully after battling cancer on Wednesday, April 9, 2025 surrounded by all four of his children (Jo McKnight, Terri Cook, Thomas Cook Jr and Jennifer Roberts) in his home that he shared with Terri in Socorro, NM.

He was born in Shanghai, China on May 13, 1933 to Jesse Strother Cook, Jr, a general in the Marine Corps and Betty Rosenberg Cook. Tom was raised in the Berkley, CA area but graduated from Washington Lee High School in Arlington, VA in 1951. Tom went to the army from 1952-1954 and served in Alaska during the Korean War. After discharge from the army he lived in the Washington DC area working as a draftsman, where he met the love of his life, Beulah Ruth Shook.

Tom and Ruth married May 9, 1955 in Maryland and then moved to Cambridge, MA to continue his education at M. I. T. in mechanical engineering. Their first child, Jo, was born in November 1956 while still living in student housing.

After graduation he moved the family to Pasadena, CA to start his career at Lawrence Livermore Labs to be close to his grandmother, Enid Aline Rosenberg. They decided, however, to return to Massachusetts before Terri was born in Beverly in 1963. Subsequently, Tommy in 1965 and Jen in 1968 were also born in Beverly, MA.

In 1970, Tom moved the entire family to Mt Pleasant, SC where he bought a

printing company with his brother. After selling the company in 1978, they moved to Siloam Springs, Arkansas, Ruth's hometown, leaving Jo behind to follow in his footsteps in the printing business.

In Arkansas he went back to school and graduated from the University of Arkansas with a Master's degree in Mechanical Engineering. He worked various jobs while building a house and eventually continuing on to receive his doctorate from Oklahoma State University.

After receiving his doctorate he accepted a position teaching at Mercer University in Macon, GA where he and Ruth spent the next 10 years. He retired from Mercer in 1998 and they moved to Keller, TX, then Possum Kingdom, TX where he and Ruth became licensed surveyors.

While living in Texas they bought property in Datil, NM near Terri, going back and forth while building a cabin there. Eventually moving to Datil full time in 2011. In 2015 Ruth was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease and Tom took over the caregiver role with patience and grace until Ruth's death in 2019.

In 2022, Tom and Terri moved together to Socorro, NM as housemates. Tom's final retirement was at age 89 from writing solutions manuals for mechanical engineering textbooks.

An early friendship with David McGrath at M.I.T. bore an entrepreneurial beginning and lasting friendship. They formed an engineering firm they called The Associated Designers or TAD (which really stood for Tom and Dave) but Tom sold his share to David early on and moved on to other adventures. They remained friends until David's death.

Tom made many more friends over the years including John Schafer who he met and worked with at Mercer University when they worked together on a solar car project. They accompanied their students who raced that car from Texas to Minnesota in an event called the SunRace. Tom and John remained friends (and neighbors in NM for a time) for 35 years until John's death in Dec, 2024. He was also well loved by the music community Terri was a part of in Socorro and was her #1 fan. He became a member of the Socorro Library book club and was revered by all.

Both he and Ruth had a great love of reading. He also loved projects and building things as he specialized in machine design as an M.E.. He also played the piano and loved to sing.

He is survived by his 2 sisters, Marilyn Womack and Kathleen Muni plus his four children, one son-in-law Jeff Roberts, 9 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his brother Jesse Strother Cook III, and his beloved wife of 64 years, Ruth.

There will be a memorial/celebration of life for Tom on Saturday, June 7th at 11AM in Siloam Springs, Arkansas at Wasson Funeral Home. His ashes will be buried near his betrothed, at Weddington Cemetery. The Celebration will be livestreamed on Wasson Funeral Home's Facebook page. The stream will start just prior to the start of the service. <https://www.facebook.com/wassonfuneralhome>

Cemetery Details

Weddington Cemetery

19445 Weddington Church Road
Wedington, AR 72704

Previous Events

Celebration of Life Service

JUN 7. 11:00 AM (CT)

Wasson Funeral Home
441 U.S. 412
Siloam Springs, AR 72761
(479) 524-5131
wasson@wassonfuneralhome.com
<https://www.wassonfuneralhome.com>

Burial

JUN 7 (CT)

Weddington Cemetery
19445 Weddington Church Road
Wedington, AR 72704

Tribute Wall

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“ *The Children of Gordon & Wanda Shook purchased the Bountiful European Dish Garden for the family of Thomas Alan Cook.*



The Children of Gordon & Wanda Shook - May 27, 2025 at 01:34 PM

LM

“ *LeGrande Mcknight purchased the Plants-A-Plenty for the family of Thomas Alan Cook.*



LeGrande Mcknight - April 25, 2025 at 05:56 PM