



Thomas "Tom" Abraham

JAN 23, 1940 - MAR 20, 2017



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Thomas "Tom" Abraham

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Mr. Thomas “Tom” Abraham, age 77, of Grand Haven passed away Monday, March 20, 2017 surrounded by his family. He was born January 23, 1940 in Grand Rapids, MI. to Patrick and Dorothy Abraham. He was graduated from Muskegon High School and went on to Grand Valley State University. He then attended Michigan State University where he earned his Master’s in Education. This led to his 30 year career with Grand Haven Public Schools where he touched the lives of many students. He married his best friend, Cynthia in 1980 in Spring Lake, MI.

Tom was very active throughout his life. He enjoyed traveling the world with his wife, tending to his home and yard which he loved and keeping busy with many home projects. Generous with his time and spirit he often worked with those less fortunate and was eager to lend a helping hand to anyone.

One of his greatest passions was his family. His grandchildren lovingly referred to him as “Papa” and enjoyed hearing his stories and jokes. Tom shared so much of himself with his children and grandchildren leading them by example and teaching them important life skills while instilling a strong work ethic.

He is survived by his wife, Cynthia; children, Mary VandenBosch, and Dr. Dirk (Rebecca) Bakker, Rebecca (Peter) Silva; grandchildren: Jacob and Grace VandenBosch, Ian and Alexandra Bakker; Sam, Luke and Andrew Silva; brother, Mike (Nancy) Abraham, sister, Patricia Grochowalski; many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his brother, Daniel Abraham. He will always be loved and will be greatly missed.

A memorial service will be held 11:00 AM Saturday, March 25, 2017 at The VanZantwick Chapel (620 Washington Ave.) with Rev. Richard Rhem officiating. Visitation will be 5-8 PM Friday, March 24, 2017 at the funeral home. Interment will take place in Lake Forest Cemetery. Memorial



Obituary

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contributions in memory of Tom may be given to Feeding America or Lake Hills School Activity Fund – Grand Haven Public Schools. Please sign the family's online guestbook at www.sytsemafz.com.




Events

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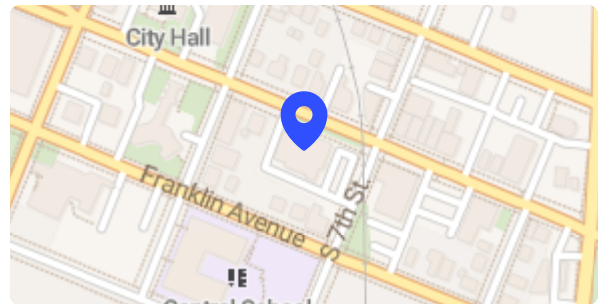
Visitation

 **Friday**, March 24, 2017

 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM ET

 **Sytsema Funeral & Cremation Services - The VanZantwick Chapel**

620 Washington, Grand Haven MI 49417



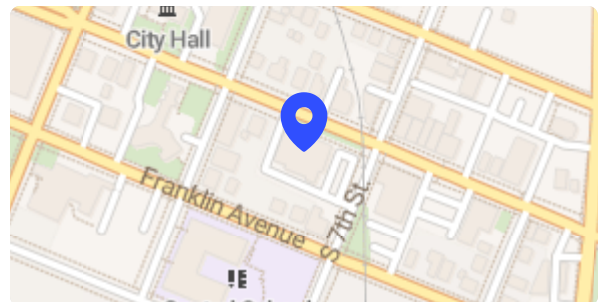
Memorial Service

 **Saturday**, March 25, 2017

 11:00 AM ET

 **Sytsema Funeral & Cremation Services - The VanZantwick Chapel**

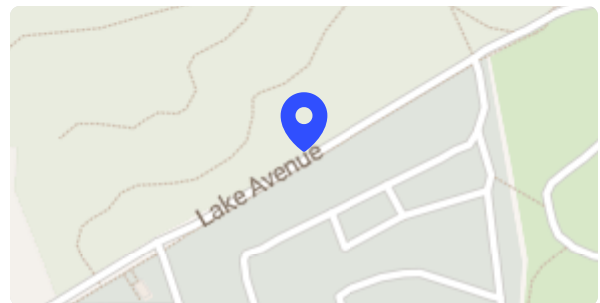
620 Washington, Grand Haven MI 49417



Cemetery Details

 **Lake Forest Cemetery**

1304 Lake Ave., Grand Haven MI 49417





Tribute Wall

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RD

Randall J Dekker posted:

Cindy:I was so saddened to read about Tom' death! Tom was always such a good neighbor to the folks. You are in our thoughts and prayers.Randy DekkerEdmond, Oklahoma

March 28 at 12:28 PM

MD

Molly McGurk Dabney posted:

I can honestly say that I have Mr. Abraham to thank for my career. I became an educator because he instilled the love of learning in me and I loved coming to school everyday. In my career I have often reflected one things I did in his classroom; building toothpick bridges, designing his backyard fence and afternoon jolly rancher treats and I have hoped that my connections with students are like his. Every year that I have taught fourth and fifth grade I have read my class "Hatchet" which Mr. A read to us (it had recently been released back then) and tell the story how my favorite teacher read this to me and to this day it's still my favorite book. I can only hope to have the impact on my students that Mr. A had on all of us at Lake Hills. Two summers ago I was home with my family for Coast Guard Festival and was walking by his house after the parade to see him sitting on his porch. I was shocked that he still knew me some 25 years later. I had to opportunity to let him know what a great impact he had on my life and for that I am grateful. He will be missed but I know his legacy will live on with all those he has touched in his life.Molly McGurk Dabney

March 25 at 4:31 PM

JB

Jim & Ellen O'brien posted:

Tom was a spectacular friend, neighbor and confidant...!!! So sorry we were unable to attend the service today!!! Cindy, many thoughts and prayers for all concerned...!! I'm so sorry for your loss. Please call if you need anything...!! Peace and hugs!!! ❤️ Tom was a wonderful man. Jim & Ellen O'Brien

March 25 at 7:56 AM

SK

Sarah Klumpel posted:

Mr. Abraham will be dearly missed. I had both Mr. and Mrs. Abraham at Lake Hills, both amazing teachers. He taught us so many life lessons and made the classroom memorable through his stories. As I was dealing with any social/girl drama, he would respond, "Well...when I was a little girl, I used to.." I can look back at my time at Lake Hills with him and smile. Sarah (Kirby) Klumpel

March 25 at 3:46 AM



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SW

Steve Wilson posted:

I was privileged to have both Mr. and Mrs. Abraham as teachers at Lake Hills. In my own classroom I have tried to copy the teaching style Mr. Abraham used with us in 5th grade, because he made such an impact on me as a student. I remember when I first started teaching in the late 90's, I subbed in the other 5th grade classroom at Lake Hills. Most of the staff had changed since my time there in the late 80's, but Mr. Abraham was still there. I was so excited to see him, and when I walked into his room before school I said, "Hi, Mr. Abraham!" He told me that I wasn't his student anymore, I was his colleague, so I had to call him Tom. Needless to say, I struggled with that all day, as I had way too much respect for him and the impact he had on my life to call him by his first name. I hope that I have had even a fraction of the impact on my students as he had on me and everyone else who sat in his classroom. Thank you, Mr. Abraham, for all that you taught me and for being an inspiration for me in my teaching career.

March 24 at 6:00 PM

MS

Mary Stiphany posted:

Dear Cindy and Family, I taught with Tom at Lake Hills in the first few years of its existence. He helped all of us become closer as a team with his great humor and insight. I still remember the motors, mechanical gadgets, and tools that he brought into the classroom. Stuff everywhere. The kids loved it and him. The world was a better place because of him.

March 24 at 4:31 AM

MG

Marty Gravelyn posted:

Mr. Abraham was an amazing man. I was blessed enough to have him as a teacher for my fifth grade year, and he still remains as my most favorite teacher ever. While I learned much about the various subjects he taught us, he taught me so much more about life and the kind of person I wanted to be. He took time out for me often as I was struggling with my parents divorce, comforting and encouraging me. He stood up for me when I made some not so wise decisions and ended up in the principal's office. He challenged me to be a better friend. And yes, he knew exactly when I needed a piece of candy to brighten my day! All my love and prayers are with his family and friends. I'm so grateful for the time I had with him, he made such a huge positive impact in my life. Thank you so much Mr. Abraham.

March 24 at 4:17 AM



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Jani Ingersoll posted:

Cindy and family ,, Hugs and Blessings jani ingersoll

March 24 at 3:14 AM



Anonymous sent a Peaceful White Lilies Basket to the Abraham family.



March 23 at 5:40 PM



Anonymous sent a Vivid Recollections to the Abraham family.



March 23 at 11:59 AM



Suzanne Ashcraft Campbell posted:

Farewell dear friend. I will never forget you! You have been a dear and respected friend since you stole the ribbons out of my hair after a St. Mary's vs. St. Jean's basketball game in the 7th grade. In the hard times of growing up we were always there for each other. I treasure our last visit at my mom's Assisted Living facility in Grand Haven. Your sweet daughter Becky is my cousin so that was always another connection shared. Your friendship always meant the world to me. My sympathy to Cindy, Becky and all your family. I love you til we meet again.

March 23 at 11:16 AM



Becky Silva March 27 at 1:19 PM

Thank you, Sue-Sue. He loved you and your family. xo



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KV

Kory Vandyke posted:

Mr. Abraham went out of his way to ensure every one of his students didn't go unnoticed. He knew which students of his were falling behind and he helped to include them and make them feel apart of the class. He knew who the troublemakers were and he knew who would excel in his class, but he treated us all equally. He wasn't the most conventional person to look up to when you're eleven years old and he was a bit of a grump if you pushed his buttons enough, but the world needs more grumps like Mr. A; to put you in your place and to make sure you know you will amount to something in life. Thanks for believing in us, sir.

March 23 at 10:41 AM

NB

Nancy Brown posted:

Mr. Abraham was an amazing man! I had Ms. Baker as my teacher when he married her (1980) and after a break from school she came back as Mrs. Abraham, we were all so excited... and then I had the privilege of having Mr. Abraham for 5th grade! He was so wonderful! My dad also had a special friendship with him and called him "Abe-y Baby", Mr. Abraham even came to my dad's visitation when he passed, what an impact he made with his caring heart! My prayers and hugs go to his family and Mrs. Abraham! Godspeed!

March 23 at 4:32 AM

JL

Jack Leclair posted:

Jacob, Grace, Mrs. VandenBosch, and Mrs. Abraham- I want to express my deepest condolences for your loss. I only had the chance to meet Mr. Abraham a few times, most notably when he welcomed me into his home two summers ago when I visited Grand Haven, but it was clear to me what a kind and incredible man he was from the short time that I met him. My prayers are with your entire family.

March 23 at 4:31 AM

BH

Becky Weavers Huttenga posted:

What a huge personality Mr. Abraham had. He impacted so many lives. Godspeed. I will never forget him.

March 22 at 6:55 PM



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MM

Marsha Ashcraft Mahynski posted:

Tom and I go way back as he was my sister Suzanne Ashcraft Campbell's dear friend. I was just a little girl when I met Tom and he was always very kind to me. We shared a birth date (January 23rd) and was just a great man and loved, loved his dry sense of humor...my sympathies to his entire family....

March 22 at 5:17 PM

BS

Becky Silva March 27 at 1:21 PM

Thanks, Marsha. He loved you and the Ashcraft clan.

BT

Beth Thomas posted:

Mr. Abraham was my favorite teacher. It was a privledge to take him to the senior banquet in 1989. He always called me Ms. Kelly and made me feel like a million bucks. He also taught me several times about not talking in class! When I think of Lake Hills I always think of him. I will always be remember him with a smile on my face.

March 22 at 4:02 PM

BB

Barbara Brower posted:

Cindy I am so sorry for the loss of your husband, Tom. My prayers are with you. Barb Brower

March 22 at 2:26 PM



Anonymous sent a Beautiful in Blue to the Abraham family.



March 22 at 12:32 PM

AK

Angela Koeller posted:

Mr. A was my 5th grade teacher and one of my favorites! I still remember vividly being in his class and what a great educator he was. I always loved his jolly ranchers! I am so sorry for your loss. Mr. A made an impact on so many students lives and will be greatly missed.

March 22 at 9:27 AM



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CG

Cindy Guild posted:

Our thoughts are with Cindy and Dirk and Mary. We are glad to have known Tom and seen how he loved his family.

March 22 at 6:22 AM

LB

Laura Butcher posted:

He was my fifth grade teacher at Lake Hills back in '88. One of my very favorites! My deepest sympathy for your loss.

March 22 at 6:10 AM

RG

Rob German posted:

So sorry to hear of Tom's passing. I loved spending time with your family during Coast Guard. Tom had great stories. He obviously loved teaching and loved ya'll very much. Praying that you will find peace and comfort as you grieve your loss.

March 22 at 6:07 AM

CH

Carole Hawkins posted:

We are so very sorry to hear of Tom's death. Tom was a wonderful man and, for sure, a favorite teacher amongst all. He came off at first with a gruff demeanor but was really a puppy dog at heart. We were involved at Lake Hills School throughout the education of our two children who both loved Mr. Abraham. And the benches the kids built are cherished and remembered by all his students. He was kind and caring and generous and his students knew how much he cared. Yes, many did become educators because of Tom. Cindy, our heartfelt sympathy is extended to you and your family. Carole and Bruce Hawkins

March 22 at 2:44 AM

RB

Ruth Bush posted:

Dear Cindy, May God's love surround you during these difficult days. I will always remember our great trips together. Ruth Bush

March 21 at 7:09 PM



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RN

Rion North posted:

I think of Jolly Ranchers and March Madness. My favorite teacher.

March 21 at 7:04 PM

LW

Lara Wolf posted:

Mr. A was the best! One of my all time favorite teachers! I remember when we planted a small tree on earth day which fell on my birthday, and Mr. A called it the "Wolf" tree! He was the greatest!

March 21 at 6:43 PM

KW

Kara Althaus Wagoner posted:

I was blessed enough to have Mr. AND Mrs Abraham for teachers. Mr Abraham always made us laugh and I always came home with pearls of wisdom that Mr Abraham told us. I remember building our wooden stools which to this day sits in my hallway. I am a teacher now because of the wonderful teachers I had at GHPS and Mr. Abraham ranks up with the top of the top!

March 21 at 6:40 PM

DA

Diana Allen March 21 at 8:30 PM

I also had both of them!! I remember both teachers well all these years later. Mr. Abraham was/is my favorite teacher. You will be missed...

JL

Jennifer Lewis posted:

He was/is my favorite teacher. I will never forget him making us practice our signature because he said that he wanted us to be good at it just in case one of became famous.

March 21 at 6:21 PM

JL

Jennifer Lewis lit a candle in honor of Thomas.



March 21 at 6:16 PM



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GK

Gwyneth Kram posted:

Mr. A was everyone's favorite, even if they didn't have him as a homeroom teacher. He was funny! Every summer kids were open their letter from Lake Hills to see if they were given a coveted spot in Mr.As class.I'll never forget the benches everyone built and his sense of humor.My brother, Justin Kram, thrived in his class! Justin is a teacher today, in part, because of Mr.A! You touched thousands of kids lives- those in and out of your classroom. Thank you for making this world a better place! Thoughts and prayers to the entire family.

March 21 at 5:57 PM

LW

Lara Wolf March 21 at 6:41 PM

Mr. A was the best! One of my all time favorite teachers! I remember when we planted a small tree on earth day which fell on my birthday, and Mr. A called it the "Wolf" tree! He was the greatest!

EW

Earl Wolf posted:

Thank you Mr. A - for all you did for our kids...and your support of all of us out at Hoffmaster State Park. Great, Great teacher.,Earl Wolf

March 21 at 5:34 PM

NI

Noelle Mckenzie Itharat posted:

What a huge loss. I am sad to see this. Mr. Abraham was my teacher for fifth and sixth grade. He warmly welcomed me to a new school when I knew no one there. I still remember his voice. He was an outstanding teacher, honestly one in a million. Such a kind person. I remember that he would always tell us to do something to help someone instead of buying them something. He'd always beg us to wear our hats for recess (it was freezing, and no one would). He got us a huge load of saplings one year and helped us plant them in the woods surrounding the school. He taught us how to make ice cream the old fashioned way (during winter, outside). I remember building fancy bridges out of toothpicks and glue for a class engineering project he enjoyed (it turned out surprisingly well). He sent me to the spelling bee for our class (I lost). He came to my high school graduation party, and I know I have a card from my wedding from him. He was friends with my father. Such a lovely person. He will be missed greatly.

March 21 at 4:21 PM

LW

Lara Wolf March 21 at 6:52 PM

Such great memories Noelle! Hope you doing well! 🙏 -Lara Wolf



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PM

Pam Medendorp posted:

There are too many memories to share just one!!! This man not only had a BIG heart for all his students, but for his Dear family!!! He cared for them brought them on many adventures, and shared his insight and kind leadership! He was a very loved man by his children , his wife, and his grand-children! And very respected by me!!With love and sympathy to His family, Love, Pammy

March 21 at 3:55 PM

BM

Bonnie Mckenzie posted:

"Mr. A" was my fifth and sixth grade teacher. He was by far my favorite and most remembered. He would stand in class and clap his hands together making his rings clink. This was always followed up with "tell ya a true story." He showed us how to build benches and how a check was filled out. He brought real life useful things to light for his students. He referred to his house as the one that looks like a Reese's peanut butter cup. My family was fortunate enough to know him on a bit more personal level. My sister and brother had him for a teacher as well. We all loved him greatly. I remember so many stories he told and so much I learned from him. He was an extraordinary person. I'm so sad to see this news. Bonnie McKenzie

March 21 at 3:09 PM



Anonymous sent a Full Of Love Bouquet to the Abraham family.



March 21 at 11:21 AM

SG

Shirley Green posted:

Cynthia I am so sorry to hear about Tom passing. I think of you 2 often & remember our meeting on the riverboat cruise down the Mississippi. So enjoyed your company. Shirley GreenMuskegon

March 21 at 8:59 AM



Memories only last if you share them

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



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