



Mr. Thomas Benjamin Davis, Jr.

May 2, 1915 - April 4, 2014

Thomas Benjamin Davis, Jr., was born almost 99 years ago into a long line of Davis' for whom a street in Sumter is named. His father, Dr. Thomas Benjamin Davis, Sr., moved Thomas, and his mother and two sisters--Camilla Jenkins (deceased) and Dr. Edna L. Davis (a resident of Sumter for many years)--to Tuskegee where Dr. Davis headed the Dental Program of the then new Veteran's Administration Hospital.

Young Thomas Jr., was an active, energetic, and independent youth who excelled in track, football, and tennis. After five years of college Thomas (known to friends and family as "TB") married Edwina Birch in Tuskegee. Thomas moved his wife and their infant son, Tomas B. Davis, III, to Little Rock, AR where Thomas managed a large munitions factory at the Pine Bluff Arsenal. (A football injury prevented Thomas from joining the Tuskegee Airmen.)

After the war, Thomas went to work for Dr. Percy L. Julian, a world famous African American chemist, in Chicago. Thomas and his small family lived in Chicago for many years until Dr. Julian sold his company to the Glidden Coporation. Glidden's holdings in Mexico City were on the brink of collapse and Thomas accepted the corporation's challenge to "fix it." In less than a year, the Mexico plant was back on line. Thomas remained there with his wife for another three years to make it one of Glidden's most successful operations.

Thomas and Edwina returned to Chicago in 1965 and Thomas accepted a job

with pharmaceutical giant Smith, Kline, and French in Philadelphia. Thomas remained employed there for twenty years, retiring at age 70.

Edwina died in 2000 after 65 years of marriage. Thomas spent the ensuing years with relatives, friends, and neighbors, regaling all with stories of the places he had lived; his lifetime of adventures, experiences, and careers and his wisdom covering everything from sports to politics. His memories were crystal clear to the end and he recited details about people, places, and dates with total recall.

Three heart attacks in 2014 weakened his body but not his mind and spirit. He passed away peacefully in his sleep on April 3, 2014. He is fondly loved and remembered by his son, Thomas B. Davis, III (and daughter in law, Linda Davis) of Oregon; his sister, Dr. Edna L. Davis of Sumter; granddaughter Suzanne Davis of Phoenix, AZ; granddaughter Sheri Slade of Silver Spring, MD; grandsons Christian, Chase and Chandler Slade; nephews Ed Burnley, Carol Jenkins and Clayton Jenkins; nieces Camilla Janey and Jean Dye; and a legion of friends. May he rest in peace and in the arms of his beloved wife.

Cemetery Details

Hillside Memorial Park

3001 Cains Mill Rd
Sumter, SC

Tribute Wall



“ *Mr. Thomas Benjamin Davis, Jr.*

October 04, 2023 at 11:33 AM



“ *Deepest sympathies to Dr. Edna Davis and the Davis family.
Dr. Jackie McKenzie & Marsha McKenzie
Matthews, N.C.*

*Leroy E. and Ruby McKenzie
Sumter, S.C.*

Marsha McKenzie - April 20, 2014 at 09:45 AM