

Thomas Lillibridge

B. Tuesday, November 13, 1945 D. Saturday, August 26, 2017



Thomas Louis Lillibridge was born November 13, 1945 to Lowell Louis and Doris Lillibridge at Burke, SD. While attending the Burke School System Tom was chosen as the Boys State representative by the American Legion. He also lettered in football, basketball and track all four years. After graduating in 1963 he attended Sioux Falls College, The University of the Seven Seas, and The University of South Dakota before graduating with a B.S. degree in Business Administration from Sioux Falls College in 1967. Postgraduate education includes graduation from the Iowa State Agricultural School of Banking and the University of Wisconsin Graduate School of Banking. The University of the Seven Seas experience was a 108-day semester on a ship, traveling around the world, with stops in fourteen countries.

Following graduation Tom returned to Burke and went into the banking business with his father and brother, John. In 1972 he became the manager of the Bonesteel Branch where he served until 1977. At that time Tom moved back to the home office in Burke. He was elected President of the First Fidelity Bank in 1982 and held that office until January of 2001 when he was elected Co-Chairman, a position that he held until his death.

In 1974 Tom was united in marriage to Dr. Cynthia J. Thoene. Cindy and Tom have lived in Bonesteel since that time. They have traveled extensively around the world including seventeen hunting safaris in various African Countries, and additionally safaris in Australia, New Zealand, New Caledonia, Spain, Argentina, Scotland, England, Sweden and Mexico, along with hunting trips in several Canadian Provinces and many states in the U.S. Having earned the Safari Club International's Crowning Achievement Award placed Tom among the elite big game hunters in the world.

While in Bonesteel Tom has served as the Mayor of the City, President of the Commercial Club, and President of the Bonesteel Area Development Corporation where he served as a board member until the time of his death. He was also the Treasurer of the Gregory County Pumped Storage Site Water Corporation.

Tom served as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the University of Sioux Falls. He also chaired the National Music Museum Board at USD where he and Cindy funded the Lillibridge Guitar Gallery. He was a past President of the South Dakota Heritage Fund Board. He served on the University of South Dakota Foundation Board and both he and Cindy were currently serving on the Onward Campaign Committee. Tom was also a member of the board of the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Foundation and a former board member of the South Dakota Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Preserve South Dakota, and the Great Lakes of South Dakota Association.

While serving on the Board of Directors of the South Dakota Heritage Fund, Tom was instrumental in leading the efforts of the Fund to raise \$2.5 million to complete the installation of Phases II and III of the South Dakota Experience and during his tenure the Heritage Fund Board oversaw the installation of all three permanent galleries in the museum of the South Dakota State Historical Society. The Heritage fund raised an additional \$2.5 million to fund outreach projects by the South Dakota State Historical Society, including the establishment of the South Dakota Historical Society Press, the development of traveling exhibits and suitcase education kits for classrooms, and upgrading the accessibility of the resources of the State Archives. The South Dakota Heritage Fund established an endowment fund to provide future income to continue the legacy of enriching the programs of the South Dakota State Historical Society. Tom and his wife, Cindy, have contributed generously to the annual and capital giving programs of the Fund.

Tom and his brother John completed over 45 years of combined service on the Board of Trustees and the USF Foundation Board. Tom co-chaired "The Greatest Gift Campaign" which raised over \$31,000,000 for USF making it the largest capital campaign in University history. Tom served as the Chairman of the USF Foundation Board from 2008-2011 both giving and encouraging others to support student scholarship endowments. He also served as chairman of the USF Board of Trustees through 2016.

Tom's influence and investment at the University of Sioux Falls and in the state of South Dakota took a giant leap forward when he and his wife, Cindy, established the Tom and Cindy Lillibridge Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership and Innovation (CELI). Tom knew that his investment was a long-term strategy that he would not fully realize during his lifetime. It was that kind of forward thinking and vision that made Tom such a great leader and influencer of other people.

The USD School of Business honored Tom and Cindy as South Dakotans of the year. They were honored as South Dakota Philanthropists of the year on National Philanthropy Day in 2001 and received the Inman Award from the University of South Dakota Foundation in 2011. In the year 2000 the University of Sioux Falls honored the Lillibridge Family with the Perisho Award. The South Dakota State Historical Society presented its highest recognition, the Robinson Award to Tom in 2005. He was inducted into the South Dakota Hall of Fame in 2013 for all of his leadership and achievements along with his generosity and service to the State of South Dakota.

In addition to banking, Tom enjoyed hunting, fishing, golf, and travel and was very much involved in a ranching operation raising Registered Angus cattle (Ponca Creek Cattle Company) until the time of his death. One of the accomplishments he is most proud of is establishing the Tom and Cindy Lillibridge Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership and Innovation at the University of Sioux Falls School of Business.

Tom is survived by his loving wife Cindy, his brother John (Linda) Lillibridge, mother-in-law Leone Thoene, brother-in-law Fred Thoene, sister-in-law Shelley (Keith) Gemar, 7 nieces and nephews, 9 great nieces and nephews, and 1 great great nephew, along with a host of friends.

Tom was preceded in death by his parents, Louis and Doris Lillibridge and his father-in-law, Logan Thoene.

Funeral services will be held on Friday, September 1, 2017 at 10:00 AM at the Civic Center in Burke, South Dakota. Burial will be in the Graceland Cemetery, Burke. There will be prayer service on Thursday, August 31, 2017 at 7:00 PM at the Union Baptist Church in Burke. Visitation will be prior to both of the services.