



Thomas R. Schilli

June 3, 1946 - April 13, 2021

Thomas Raymond Schilli, age 74, of Bonita Springs, Florida passed away Tuesday, April 13th at his home in Bonita Springs with his family. Thomas died from a rare form of cancer he had fought for over 13 years. Thomas was born on June 3, 1946 in St. Louis, MO to Laura Catherine and Bernard Raymond Schilli. Thomas grew up in St. Genevieve, MO until he was in middle school when his family relocated to St. Louis, MO. Thomas graduated from St. Louis University High School in 1964. He attended Marquette University and St. Louis University as well as served in the Marine Corps.

In 1961, his father, Bernard founded Schilli Motor Lines, Inc.; Thomas purchased Schilli Motor Lines and relocated to Delphi, IN in 1969. Schilli began his career operating 6 tractors and a small group of owner operators that were leased to Schilli Motor Lines, Inc. The company quickly grew and was relocated in 1973 to Remington, IN due to the ease of Interstate 65 between Indianapolis and Chicago. In 1972, a relationship was forged between United States Gypsum and Schilli Motor Lines which led to the first terminal in Shoals, IN. As Thomas began to purchase more tractors and reduced owner operators, the difficulty of hiring professional truck drivers became abundantly clear, but his niche was to give drivers something other companies did not provide, being home with their families on the weekends. After deregulation, Schilli began the development of a flatbed trailer that would allow load capacity of 56,000 pounds vs. the standard of 48,000 pounds. In

the late 90's, Schilli began a new company, Schilli Distribution Services, a warehousing operation that provided from assembly line to delivery to retailers worldwide operation. In early 2017, Thomas felt that a merger with Daeske, Inc. would result in the bright future for the companies he had built and a continuation of his legacy. In May of 2017, a merger was completed between Daeske, Inc. and Schilli Transportation Services, Inc., Schilli Distribution Services, Schilli National Lease, and Schilli Specialized which included 365 tractors with a combination of 750 flatbeds and vans. In 2018, Thomas won the Truck Fleet Innovators award for what he had contributed over his career of 50 years from ultralight trailers, to the concept of home on the weekends for drivers, and his "tiered" program for training the next generation of technicians with Schilli National Lease.

With over 50 years in transportation, Schilli was a member and served within the Indiana Motor Truck Association, Indiana Carrier Advisory Board, American Trucking Association as well as the Truckload Carriers Association. The Truckload Carriers Association was where Thomas funneled endless hours of service over his lifetime including being 1988-1989 chairman of the organization. Schilli Motor Lines/Schilli Transportation Services was a 2010 Ambassador recipient due to their 50 years of commitment to the Truckload Carriers Association. The pursuit of an education was a principal Thomas held dear and he was intricately involved in the development of the Truckload Carriers Association Scholarship Fund. Member carriers of the TCA are encouraged to have their employee's children and grandchildren apply for scholarships to help them pursue higher education.

As an avid fan of Purdue sports Thomas began his membership in 1970 in the John Purdue Club. Thomas was extremely involved in Purdue Men's Basketball in the 1980's and 90's and would regularly fly to out of town games at night and on the weekends to support these young players as well as his longtime friend, Gene Keady. He may have changed the location of his seats

at Mackey Arena but even thru the 2020-2021 season Thomas could be found cheering on the Boilermaker's. Thomas had just completed his 50th year of membership in the John Purdue Club.

Thomas attended St. Mary's Cathedral in Lafayette, IN as well as St. John's the Evangelist Catholic Church in Naples, FL. He believed strongly in the value of an education and was a supporter of the Lafayette Catholic Schools as well as St. Louis University High School in St. Louis, MO. He was a member of Knights of Columbus.

His love for his hometown of St. Louis never ceased; he continued his membership with the Missouri Athletic Club years after he had left St. Louis. Thomas loved to drive thru SLUH, eat his meals on the Hill, watch Cardinals baseball at every opportunity. On April 1st, 2021, Thomas and his family celebrated opening day with all the fanfare possible. One of his final projects was the establishment of the Thomas R. Schilli Foundation which will continue his legacy of the importance of education and charity to his hometown of St. Louis. The foundation will focus on providing St. Louis area students the financial funding needed to pursue higher learning to equip them with skills to end the cycle of poverty.

Thomas is survived by his wife, Cheryl Schilli of Bonita Springs, FL; his daughters, Laura Schilli Holcomb and husband Joseph of Crockett, TX and Joyce Schilli of Crockett, TX; granddaughter Ann Rodriguez and husband Michael of Nacogdoches, TX; grandson, William Holcomb and wife Graycie of Huntsville, TX; grandsons, Thomas and Steven Barclay of Crockett, TX; stepsons Nicolas and wife Jazmyn Wallace of Cleveland, TN and Christopher Wallace and son, Sother of Noblesville, IN; sister, Judith Stecher of St. Louis, MO; brother, Robert Schilli of St. Louis, MO; as well as numerous nieces and nephews. He is preceded in death by his parents, Bernard Raymond and

Laura Catherine Schilli and his niece, Anne Marie Stecher Skoff.

Thomas Raymond Schilli's Celebration of Life will be on Thursday, April 29th from 6-8 PM at Bob and Connie's Restaurant, 38 N. Railroad St., Remington, IN. Visitation will be held on Friday, April 30th from 6-8 PM at Bopp Chapel Funeral Home, 10610 Manchester Rd, Kirkwood, MO 63122. Memorial mass will be held on May 1, 2021 at 3 PM at St. Louis University High School Chapel, 4970 Oakland Ave., St. Louis, MO. A private burial will occur at Resurrection Cemetery, St. Louis, MO.

Memorials may be given to the Thomas R. Schilli Foundation, 326 Oak Tree Dr., St. Louis, MO 63119 or the TCA Scholarship Fund, Thomas Schilli Scholarship C/O Truckload Carriers Association, P O Box 76026, Baltimore, MD 21275-6036

To sign Thomas's guest register or to leave online condolences, please visit www.ShikanyFuneralHome.com.

Arrangements were handled by Shikany's Bonita Funeral Home, Family Owned and Operated since 1978.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

APR **29**. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Bob and Connie's Restaurant
38 N. Railroad Street
Remington, FL

Visitation

APR **30**. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Bopp Chapel Funeral Home
10610 Manchester Road
Kirkwood, FL 63122

Memorial Mass

MAY **1**. 3:00 PM (CT)

St. Louis University High School Chapel
4970 Oakland Avenue
St. Louis, MO

Tribute Wall



“ *Thomas R. Schilli*

October 09, 2023 at 03:40 AM

RM

“ On April 13, 2021, my wife, Betty and I were driving from Eufaula, AL to Tampa, FL. We came up on a Schilli Transportation Trailer on I-75 South. I had not seen a Schilli truck in a long time. My wife googled Tom and found out he lived in Bonita Springs, FL. When we followed up we found out he had gone home to Heaven, that very day. The Lord works in Mysterious Ways. Thank you, Lord for coming up on the the Schilli Equipment. I first met Tom in the Mid 70's when he called on The Celotex Corporation a division of the Jim Walter Corporation in Tampa, FL. When he came to Tampa and we went to lunch or dinner, lunch was always at Cafe' Pepe' on Kennedy Blvd., he loved the Black Beans and Rice and the special Palomillo Steak. If we went to dinner it was to Bern's Steakhouse or the Kapot Tree Restaurant in Clearwater, which is no longer in Business. In the 80's, I joined Boyd Bros. Trucking company in Clayton, AL. We were competitors for a number of years, with U S Gypsum being one of our mutual customers. In 1990, Tom flew my wife and myself to Remington for a job interview. We definitely toured Purdue and Lafayette. Our daughter was looking at Colleges and had I become a part of the Schilli Organization I know she would have gone to Purdue. My wife loved Lafayette. Having known Tom as a supplier and competitor, he was a Class man in every aspect. Every time I was with him, I learned something from him. He was a very knowledgeable person and if you listened, he taught you something. I remember when he showed me the new concept tire for trailers in order to reduce the weight so a trailer could haul 56,000 pounds. I know I am a better person for having known Tom Schilli. God be with your Family and May you Rest In Peace now that you are home with Mom and Dad and are no longer Suffering.

Thoughts and Prayers,
Betty and Rich Mest
Apollo Beach, FL

Rich Mest - April 25, 2021 at 03:46 PM