



## Thomas Leo "Big Tom" Mesenbourg

November 20, 1918 - December 8, 2018

Thomas Leo Mesenbourg, Sr., a resident of Waldorf, Maryland, passed away on December 8, 2018. He was 100 and lived a spectacular and long life filled with laughter, joy and love.

Thomas "Big Tom" Mesenbourg was born in St. Paul, Minnesota on November 20, 1918. He was the middle son of Clementine and Frank Mesenbourg. He had two brothers, Jack and Jerry.

Big Tom attended the University of Minnesota and studied accounting. He enlisted in the military as a cadet in 1941. During a training mission in 1942, his military plane crashed into a mountain in New Mexico. He and the survivors of the crash called themselves "The Wolfpack" and flew 58 missions together during WWII. He survived three near-death experiences during the war.

After being honorably discharged from the U.S. Army in 1945, he married a gorgeous woman from Hollywood, California. Big Tom and Mary Derby Mesenbourg DeRocco were married for 35 years and had five children together, son Thomas Mesenbourg, Jr. of La Plata, Maryland; James Mesenbourg of Patchogue, New York; Mary Lou Lambert of Vero Beach, Florida; Susan Mesenbourg (deceased), and Timothy Mesenbourg of Charlestown, Rhode Island.

Big Tom spent his sales career working for U.S. Rubber (Uniroyal) until 1986, where he ran the footwear division and became the head of Sperry Topsider. He wore sperry topsiders until the day he died. He retired and moved to Vero Beach, Florida in 1986. That's where he met his second wife and companion of 26 years, Hope Mesenbourg. Big Tom lived and influenced many people while living in various cities across the United States, including Kansas City, Missouri, Huntington, New York, and Cheshire, Connecticut.

Those are the facts of his life, but they cannot convey the magnificence of Big Tom. He had a larger-than-life personality and lit up every room he walked into with his boldness and outrageous comments. He had an exquisite (and sometimes offending) sense of humor but offered no apologies for who he was. He was famous (in our family and beyond) for his audacious stories. He loved poetry and recited it throughout his life. "Oh Captain, My Captain" would move him to tears and he inspired his children and grandchildren to love poetry as well.

Big Tom loved to argue. He loved to talk. He loved scotch. He loved food. He loved women (a little too much!). He loved music, especially Frank Sinatra and Johnny Cash. He loved his family. He loved to reflect on his life and his choices. He loved sports. He loved to read. He loved to carve animals and boats out of wood.

He is survived by many relatives who loved him dearly: daughter-in-laws Faith Mesenbourg, Nancy Mesenbourg, and Rhonda Mesenbourg; grandchildren and their spouses Alina and Jamey Graydon, Erika Mesenbourg and Hector Velez, Bryan and Meghan Mesenbourg, Gregory and Pamela Lambert, and Nick and Emily Mesenbourg; great-grandchildren James Graydon, III, Alexandra Graydon, Cypress Mesenbourg and Noah Graydon.

Big Tom was surrounded by the love of his family when he left this earth. He said goodbye to his life here with Frank Sinatra playing in his ear and “Oh Captain, My Captain” being read to his soul. He was the Mesenbourg family’s Captain and our lives will be a little duller without him in it but we are forever grateful for the gift of his life and his impact on ours.

Memorial contributions may be sent to Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Church.

Funeral services will be private.

# Tribute Wall



“ Thomas Leo "Big Tom" Mesenbourg

October 08, 2023 at 10:45 PM



“ Thomas Leo "Big Tom" Mesenbourg

October 04, 2023 at 03:12 PM

RB

“ My name is Rhoda Blade-Charest and my little dog, Poncho, and I would visit Charleston Senior Community once a month as we are volunteers with Pets on Wheels. When I took Poncho in October 2018, we met Mr. Mesenbourg who told me that he was turning 100 in November and that he "wanted to have a drink with Poncho." I told him that Poncho didn't drink but I would be happy to have a drink during Happy Hour with him. I met him on his birthday, November 20, and we did have a Happy Hour drink just as I had promised. I was then invited to attend his official birthday celebration a couple of days later with his family. What a fabulous Celebration of Life it was. The love shown to Mr. Mesenbourg was overwhelming. The video the family made was fabulous. I laughed. I cried. I had tears of joy in my heart for all the kind words that were expressed at that party.

Unfortunately, I was very sad to hear just three weeks later when I took Poncho back to Charleston to visit with the residents that Mr. Mesenbourg had passed away. I didn't really know him but because of his kind family and his offer to have a drink with me on his birthday, I felt that I actually did know him. I am sorry that he is no longer here with us on earth as I would have liked to spend more time with him learning about his life and his family.

May he Rest in Peace and, maybe, one day, we will meet again in Heaven. I hope so!



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Rhoda Blade-Charest - December 27, 2018 at 05:39 PM