



Thomas Russell McDonald

August 30, 1936 - February 15, 2023

Thomas Russell McDonald, 86, of Suisun City, California, passed away peacefully February 15, 2023, at Kaiser Foundation Hospital in Vacaville, California.

Tom had a long, full life. He was born August 30, 1936, in Selma, Alabama, to Robert Randolph McDonald and Margaret Marie Bice McDonald.

Tom's father was a career soldier who served on General Douglas MacArthur's staff in occupied Japan at the end of World War II. Tom had the opportunity to climb Mt. Fuji twice. He also visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki. At Hiroshima, he personally saw the shadows of individuals burned into cement surfaces by the atomic bomb.

In 1950, as a teenager, Tom received a Boy Scouts of America National Council Lifesaving Citation for risking his own life to save swimmers who were being pulled out into the Atlantic Ocean by a strong undertow.

In 1954, Tom graduated from Narimasu High School in Tokyo, Japan. He attended Brown University and Johns Hopkins University and received architectural design training through an American Institute of Architects apprenticeship.

In 1957, Tom enlisted in the U.S. Army and attended the Military Defense Language School Monterey, California, where he learned Polish. He received additional training in Basic Radio Traffic Analysis & Cryptography. He was given a top-secret security clearance and sent to Germany to work as part of a team that included officers from the U.S. Army and Air Force, British GCHQ and German Army communications intelligence agencies. He served three years and received an honorable discharge.

After his discharge, he was a store designer and planner for Hutzler's stores, in Baltimore, Maryland. He later worked for Schottenstein's stores in Columbus, Ohio. During his career, he was instrumental in the design and construction of more than four million square feet of retail floor space in several states.

Tom also had a varied career as an executive designer of interiors, decorative and functional hardware, furniture and cabinetry, graphic art and print media. In 1969, he was invited to and attended the GEC69 International Printing and Publishing Conference in Milan, Italy.

Tom was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He served in many positions, including in the Elders Quorum and High Priests Quorum, and as a ward missionary and home teacher.

In 1974, he earned a degree in Art and Design from Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. He then worked as a set designer for the BYU Motion Picture Studio in Provo. While living in Utah, he also served on the architectural team that designed the Washington, D.C. temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

In 1978, Tom went to work for Riviera Cabinets in Florida, developing European-style decorative and functional hardware. He also helped Grass America Company, North Carolina, to design the first successful European face frame hinge for American cabinetry, which was later adopted by other hardware companies around the world.

Tom won awards for his advertising designs for several national and international companies, including a 1969 Silver Medal Award from the Baltimore Art Directors Club and a 1983 Desi Award for a trademark design from Graphics Design USA. In 2000, he created the city logo for Lompoc, California.

In 1991, Tom turned to education, earning a California teaching credential. He worked for several years as a substitute teacher in the Lompoc Unified School District. He never lost his excitement for helping young people see and work toward their potential.

In 1996, he oversaw the construction of a mockup of the Lunar Excursion Module for the California Central Coast Space Week Lunar Landing Re-creation Event.

He never lost his creative edge. Shortly before his passing, he was working on a series of editorial cartoons mocking Russian President Vladimir Putin for his invasion of Ukraine.

Tom is survived by his loving family: wife Katherine Elinor Schwabeland McDonald son, Jonathan Robert McDonald and daughter-in-law, Eva Pitre McDonald, all of Suisun City, California, daughters Elizabeth Erin McDonald-Treece, of Stockton California, and Melanie

Anne McDonald of San Jose, California. Grandsons Anthony Tye Treece and his fiancée Lucero Magallanes, and Tomas Martinez, all of Stockton, California, and Andrew Steinmetz, of Beaverton, Oregon; great-grandson Joshua Magallanes, of Stockton, California; sister and brother-in-law, Margaret Trasatti and Rodolfo Fernandez, of Henderson, Nevada sisters-in-law Frances Virginia Schwabeland Donelan, of Gainesville, Florida, and Mary Lucille Anderson Schwabeland, of Baltimore, Maryland; and nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, February 25, at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2700 Camrose Avenue, Fairfield, California. His cremains will be interred in the family plot at Glen Haven Memorial Park, Glen Burnie, Maryland.

Tribute Wall

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“ *Kathy, I'm very sorry for your loss. Peace be with you and your family!* ”

Cris Oliver - April 20, 2023 at 10:05 AM



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Fairfield Funeral Home - February 21, 2023 at 03:04 PM