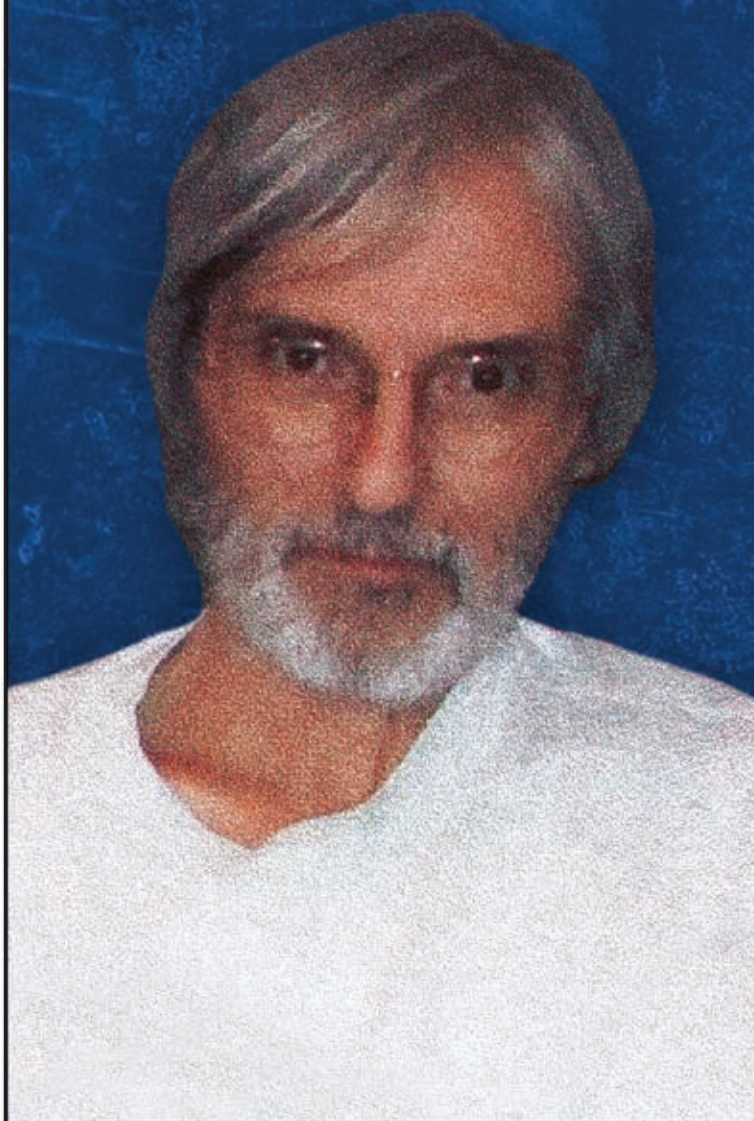


Thomas **Askelson**

March 1, 1955 - March 7, 2013





Thomas's Life Story

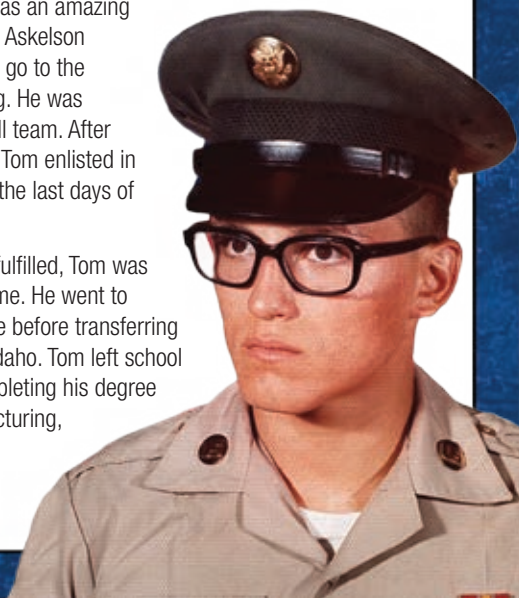
Equipped with a quiet strength and an insatiable zest for life, Thomas Askelson made the most of each and every day that he was given. His life was not without times of trial, yet he never let these challenges take the wind out of his sails, his devotion to working hard to provide his children with a good life unmatched. Tom's love for his children was easy to see, and his true joy was found in watching his family tree blossom to include the grandchildren he adored. He would have loved nothing more than to live it up on the beach in Jimmy Buffet style, yet his journey was cut short well before this dream could become a reality. Tom's memory will remain forever near and dear to the hearts of those he leaves behind.



The decade that is often referred to as the Nifty Fifties was one of the most colorful times in our nation's history. Televisions were becoming more commonplace, and with shows like *I Love Lucy* and *Father Knows Best* the way we viewed the American family was forever changed. Elvis Presley and Jerry Lee Lewis were becoming household names while Barbie dolls and hula hoops entertained our youth. Nestled within this colorful time was the year 1955 that boasted of great excitement for a young family from Lisbon, Iowa,

as they were pleased to announce the birth of their baby boy on March 1st in Cresco. Thomas John was the tenth of eleven children born to his parents, Leland Neil and Marjorie Fern (Peter) Askelson, raised in the family home alongside his siblings, Charles, Leland, Carol, Phyllis, Jeanette, Eldon, Jim, David, Robert, and Mark. He was a student at local schools in Lisbon, located in the eastern region of the state, including Lisbon High School. As a high school student Tom was an amazing athlete who became the first Askelson in the history of the family to go to the state tournament in wrestling. He was also a member of the football team. After graduating from high school Tom enlisted in the Army and served during the last days of the Vietnam War.

With his duty to his country fulfilled, Tom was discharged and returned home. He went to Kirkwood Community College before transferring to Boise State University in Idaho. Tom left school just a short time before completing his degree and went to work in manufacturing, quickly working into a supervisory position.





Not to be forgotten during this time was Tom's introduction to a woman who would change the course of his life forever. Her name was Susan Rowe, and together they were blessed with two children, Matt and Amy. Although the marriage would later end, Tom was forever grateful for the children they shared. He became a single parent, eager to provide a good home. He found love again with a woman named Donna Kesys, and with their marriage Tom was blessed with two more children, Disa and Tommy. Their marriage later came to an end as well, but Tom was again delighted with the blessings that his children brought into his life.



As a single parent to four children Tom worked hard both in and outside the home. He came to Portage, Michigan, after a decade in Rochester, New York following a career path that took him to Summit Polymers. From there he worked for I.I. Stanley before a final job change took him to Mann-Hummel as a manufacturing supervisor.

Family was always the most important thing in Tom's life, and he managed to raise four teenagers in a two-bedroom apartment. Although it was tight, it was home. After some time passed he was thrilled to purchase a home in Vicksburg. Tom loved having his own yard and really took to gardening. He had so much fun teaching

his grandchildren about growing fruits and vegetables last summer.

Although his family was always first and foremost in his life, Tom appreciated so many other things, too. He has been described as an adrenaline junkie who loved things like sky diving - or "jumping out of a perfectly good airplane" as his family calls it. When Matt and Amy both graduated from high school, he also coerced them to follow him

out of a perfectly good airplane. This single act led to almost a dozen jumps with Matt. Through the years Tom made numerous jumps. It comes as no surprise that he was also a NASCAR fan. For years his favorite driver was Dale Earnhardt, Sr., and Tom was deeply saddened when a horrific crash took his life during the Daytona 500 in 2001. With a love for the outdoors Tom was into astronomy, and he even had a star named after him. He loved singing and mastered the art of karaoke with some of his favorite singers and groups being Eric Clapton, Jimmy Buffett, and the Rolling Stones. He thought Jimmy Buffett had the life as he was into the Caribbean lifestyle. Tom would have loved to one day embrace the laid back, guitar playing, rum drinking lifestyle for himself. A true pirate at heart he was fascinated by parrots and even now if you listen closing you can hear him singing Jimmy Buffett "Mother, mother ocean, I have heard you call. Wanted to sail upon your waters since I was three feet tall. . ."





Life was drastically changed for Tom when he was blessed with his grandchildren; first a sweet little girl and then four rambunctious little boys made his world complete.

Tom and his loved ones were devastated when he was diagnosed with cancer just this past January. It proved to be an aggressive form, and his health quickly became compromised. His strong spirit didn't leave him and he fought back just as aggressively until the end.

Fun-loving, caring, and genuine are just some of the words that come to mind when reflecting on the life of Thomas Askelson. He worked hard to attain great things in life, his children the driving force behind his hard work. Tom did everything he could to keep his children together, providing them with a comfortable place to call home. He made keeping an even keel seem easy and lived a pretty relaxed life - except for when he was jumping out of a perfectly good airplane. Life will never be the same without Tom here, but the lives of his friends and loved ones will be forever changed because of his touch.

Thomas J. Askelson of Vicksburg died March 7, 2013, at his home. Tom's family includes his children, Matt (Amy) Askelson, Amy Sawyer, Disa Askelson and Tommy (Emily Vanravensway) Askelson; grandchildren, Kaleigh, Cole, Keller, Carter, and Jackson; siblings, Carol (Tom) Vorwald, Phyllis (Don) Greenlee, Jeanette (Dave) Hinman, Eldon (Ella) Askelson, Jim (Monica) Askelson, David (Maryanne) Askelson, Robert (Renee) Askelson, and Mark Askelson as well as many other relatives. Tom was preceded in death by his parents as well as his brothers, Charles & Leland Askelson.

Visit with his family and friends, view his life story film, and share light refreshments on Tuesday, March 12th from 4:00-7:00 at Life Story Funeral Home, Vicksburg; 409 S. Main St. (649-1697) where a memorial service will be held on Wednesday at 1:00 p.m. Please visit Tom's memory page at www.lifestorynet.com where you can archive a memory or photo or sign his memory book online.

Memorial donations may be made to the Multiple Sclerosis



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