



Thomas Eugene Allen

July 1, 1948 - December 3, 2025

Thomas "Tom" Allen died December 3rd, 2025, in Royal Oak, Michigan.

Thomas Eugene Allen was born July 1, 1948, the third son of Gretchen Lehmann Allen and Eugene Donald Allen. He was preceded in death by his oldest brother, William, and is survived by his brother, Robert. Tom was born and raised in Grosse Pointe, Michigan, and graduated from Grosse Pointe High School in 1966.

He attended the University of Michigan, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Engineering, magna cum laude, in 1970, followed by a Master of Science in Engineering in 1972. Tom remained a lifelong supporter of the University of Michigan. He faithfully rooted for the Wolverines, regularly donated to the University of Michigan Scholarship Fund, and conducted interviews for undergraduate candidates to the engineering school.

Tom enjoyed a distinguished career as an engineer with a specialized focus in optical metrology. As an undergraduate, he interned with NASA, working with the Apollo group that processed radar data from the Lunar Module. After completing his master's degree, he worked for several years at General Motors before joining the Ford Scientific Research Laboratory, where he spent the majority of his career. While at Ford, he received the Henry Ford Technology Award, the company's highest engineering honor.

In retirement, Tom continued to share his talents and passions with his community. He frequently gave and organized technology talks at local libraries and served as Chairman of the Birmingham Senior Men's Club Computer Group. For many years, he was a member of the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, reviewing grant applications for the State of Michigan. He also served on the Royal Oak Citizens Traffic Committee.

Music was a lifelong joy for Tom. As a child, he sang in church choirs, and in college he took classical guitar lessons. His love of singing and guitar never waned. He especially enjoyed traditional folk music and contradance, frequently participating as both a guitarist and a caller. He was a founding member of the Oakland County Traditional Dance Society (OCTDS), co-founding it in 1991; it remains an active and vibrant community today. He played guitar for the Paint Creek Folklore Society and the Royal Oak Church of the Holy City with his friend, Jenni Burke, on violin, for several decades. He sang in several church choirs, including the St. Joseph Oratory Cantatio Men's Chorus, the Madison Chorale, and Langsford Men's Chorus, and especially enjoyed singing Latin Masses. As a cancer survivor, Tom was a member of Gilda's Club; he would bring his guitar to their monthly potluck and perform "This Little Light of Mine." In the summers, he played at farmers markets throughout the greater Detroit area. In the winter, he played to raise money for the Salvation Army. Through his music, Tom formed a wide and cherished circle of friends.

Tom remained deeply devoted to his family throughout his life. He made a point to stay connected with his extended family, sharing countless special moments with family during visits, holidays, and Christmas Eve gatherings. He took great pride in his family members' lives and accomplishments. He encouraged his niece, nephews, and cousins in their musical pursuits and enjoyed sharing musical experiences with them. He would fondly reminisce

about summers spent at his grandmother's lake house on Lake Fenton, where he enjoyed time by the water with cousins and friends. He was the keeper of many cherished family stories. He dearly loved his cat, Arni, whom he adopted in 2019, and was always quick to share funny and sweet anecdotes about him.

We lovingly remember those who preceded Tom in death: his parents, Gretchen and Eugene; his brother William; his cousins William Lehmann and Jim Marcus. He is lovingly remembered by family who survived him: his brother Robert, sister-in-law Thea Werner, niece Amy Werner-Allen, nephews Jonathan Werner-Allen and Geoffrey Challen; five great-nieces; cousins Jan Carey, Peggy Johnson, Judy Johnson, and Nancy Burgess.

His life was a blessing and his memory will be cherished.

Memorial visitation for Tom will be held on Saturday, January 10 from 10:00 a.m., until time of service, 11:00 a.m., at Wm. Sullivan & Son Funeral Directors, 705 W. Eleven Mile Rd. (four blocks east of Woodward), Royal Oak.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Oakland County Traditional Dance Society (OCTDS): <https://www.octds.org/donate>

Previous Events

Memorial Visitation

JAN 10. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

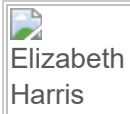
Wm. Sullivan and Son Funeral Directors-Royal Oak
705 W. Eleven Mile Road
Royal Oak, MI 48067

Memorial Service

JAN 10. 11:00 AM (ET)

Wm. Sullivan and Son Funeral Directors-Royal Oak
705 W. Eleven Mile Road
Royal Oak, MI 48067

Tribute Wall



“ I was always happy when Tom joined in any string-playing session. His warm personality, love of music and versatility lifted my spirits.

Elizabeth Harris, Troy

Elizabeth Harris - January 10 at 09:34 AM

A grey square profile picture containing the initials 'SG' in white.

“ I met Tom at a dance in 1986, and discovered that we worked in the same building at Ford, both in technical positions. We kept in touch throughout the years, with a similar interest in current events to make for lively conversation. When I realized that Tom's health was deteriorating, I checked in with him weekly. The last time I saw him was on Thanksgiving in the hospital, and the last time I spoke with him on the phone was the day before he passed away. Both times he seemed determined to work through his health challenges and resume pursuing his numerous interests. My condolences to all of his family, friends, and associates for your loss - Tom left us too soon ...

Sandra Giardini, Dearborn MI

Sandra Giardini - January 09 at 11:46 PM

“ Tom was around more often than most of our other relatives when we were growing up. At some point his washer or dryer broke, and for a while he came by to do his laundry at our house, and would often stay for dinner. I think he needed to get his laundry done, but we also enjoyed his company.

It might have been over one of those meals that he talked my brother Jon, who played the violin, into playing music with him. I'm pretty sure he called it jamming, which sounded exciting, at least to my teenage self. I played the cello, but the violin was more compatible with the dance music that Tom enjoyed playing. I remember watching them play together and it looked like they were having fun. I think it was around that time that Mark O'Connor, Yo-Yo Ma, and Edgar Meyer released Appalachia Waltz, and I think Tom had a lot to do with our interest in that album and that kind of music. I'm listening to it as I type this and it remains beautiful.

Tom liked computers, and cats, and music, and manual transmissions, and complaining about his workplace. He was quiet, introverted, and maintained a curiosity about the world that made him very interesting. He used to regale us with stories about the ambient idiocy he had to contend with at Ford. I don't think I fully understood his stories at the time, but they were still funny. He maintained his interest in technology throughout his life. I remember him talking about software-defined radio during one of our more recent video chats, a fairly obscure tool for non-specialists. The last email I sent him was a link to an open-source oscilloscope, which I thought he might enjoy fiddling with. Tom liked fiddling.

As a kid, it's easy to regard your uncles as a bit strange. As an uncle now, I plan to try to live up to that expectation! But at a certain point in my life, I thought about Tom and realized that I'm quiet and introverted and like computers, cats, music, driving stick, stories about stupidity, and tinkering. I hope I can remain as curious as he did.

Geoffrey Challen - January 09 at 10:17 AM

KD

“ 1 file added to the album *Memories of Tom*



Karen Dunnam - January 08 at 12:14 PM

LE

“ We, from Oakland County Traditional Dance Society (OCTDS) will miss Tom Allen as a friend and colleague and all the devotion he spent to our community. In leau of flowers in Tom's memory please condider making a charitable donation to OCTDS. Address: OCTDS c/o L. Echeandia, 47254 Warwick Ct., Shelby Twp, MI 48315

Luis Echeandia - January 07 at 02:35 PM

JD

“ To the family of Thomas Allen, sending condolences for the loss of your loved one. May you find comfort from knowing that “God is close to the brokenhearted” as Psalms 34:18 says, and from the hope of the resurrection. (See John 11:23-25).

Julie D. - January 06 at 01:54 PM

DT

“ I know Tom from contra dancing in Troy. When I try to donate to octds.org, it appears that the website is down. Was he personally hosting it?

Daniel Turek - December 31, 2025 at 08:48 PM

EV

Thank you for wanting to donate to OCTDS. They're in the process of getting the website back up and it may take a couple more weeks.

Edward Vincent - January 06 at 11:46 AM

LE

Please consider a charitable donation to OCTDS, c/o L. Echeandia, 47254 Warwick Ct., Shelby Twp, MI 48315

Luis Echeandia - January 07 at 02:36 PM

JK

“ I had many pleasant hours with Tom at the Clawson Senior Center. We exercised together, we were in a Socrates Cafe discussion group together and we shared many meals with other seniors at the Center. I enjoyed his intellect and his caring for other seniors. He will be missed. Joyce Krause

Joyce Krause - December 14, 2025 at 05:46 AM

BL

“ Tom was also involved with amateur radio. He had been licensed for quite a while as he had an Advanced Class license. I believe he was WA8GIC. Tom had recently started attending our Hazel Park Amateur Radio Club meetings. Tom was a quiet guy but was well liked by those who got to know him. I knew him before he started attending as he was also attended Beacon Unitarian Universalist Congregation and was a member of the choir. Tom will be missed. - Bob L N8REL

Bob Lauer - December 12, 2025 at 01:16 PM

JB

“ I played fiddle with Tom for many years. Whether playing for dances, background music, farmers' markets, cider mills or church services, he was always eager to play. Tom was a solid guitarist; he never seemed to get bored playing dance music, but also enjoyed fingerpicking accompaniments for church or Starr House gigs, especially Civil War songs like Gentle Annie or The Vacant Chair. Your chair is vacant now, Tom, and we miss you.

Jenni Burke - December 12, 2025 at 10:27 AM

CM

“ Tom was always a lively presence at the Royal Oak Senior Center. He provided classes to teach seniors technology and always present at the Computer Club . We will remember him fondly .

carolyn marsh - December 10, 2025 at 12:37 PM

JC

“ I am so sorry to hear of his passing. He was a contra and square dance caller and our band, Joyous Noise, played for him for many years. I have fond memories of of those years.
Jim Coon.

James Coon - December 09, 2025 at 08:26 PM

DK

“ I am very glad to have gotten to know Tom in the contra dance community! There he was a well respected guitarist, caller, dancer, and organizer who made the community brighter! His loss will leave a gap for sure!

Donna Kolojeskie - December 09, 2025 at 06:55 PM

MW

Tom was a gentle soul who never missed an opportunity to invite me to a Michigan contra dance. I'm sorry it never worked out. Despite the obstacles that were placed in his way, I know it made him happy to connect with his brother Bill's children. Gone far too soon, may he rest in peace.

Mimi werner - January 10 at 02:34 PM

TS

I enjoyed played fiddle with Tom at numerous gigs over the past two decades - - cider mills, farmers markets, contra dances, private parties, Lions Club banquets, Macy's (Salavation Army fund-raising), at church services, and many other events. I always enjoyed having those opportunities to play music with Tom and also being able to talk to him about a wide variety of things including global climate change, electrical energy production, politics, car manufacturing and other engineering challenges, and many other topics, mainly when we shared the driving to and from music gigs. I will miss Tom. My heartfelt condolences to his family.

Talbert S Stein - January 10 at 07:32 PM