



## Thomas Clark

March 5, 1929 - March 4, 2021

Thomas James Clark passed away on March 4, 2021. He was preceded in death by Gloria Patricia Distefano, his wife of 38 years and mother of his three sons, and by Judy his second wife of 8 years. He was also preceded in death by his parents William J. Clark of Boston, Massachusetts and Rosalie Marie Boussicaud of Cruguel, France as well as his older brother Joseph and sister Mary Ann. Tom is survived by his three sons: Tim (Maryann), Mike (Christine) and Tom (Amy), his granddaughter Kathryn, his younger brother George, many nieces and nephews, and dozens of close friends.

He was born on March 5, 1929 in Detroit, Michigan. Tom attended Jesuit schools, completing Sts. Peter and Paul grade school in 1943 and graduating from Annunciation High School in 1947. He worked various jobs during the summer, including on a Great Lakes ore carrier in the summer of 1945. He enrolled in night classes at the University of Detroit in 1954 and with hard work and dedication earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering in 1964.

Tom worked as a welder at Murray Corporation of America from 1949-1951 prior to enlisting in the armed services. He served in the US Army from May 1951 - May 1953, training as a radio operator at Camp Chaffee, Arkansas and for radio maintenance at Fort Sill, Oklahoma prior to deploying for Korea aboard the USNS Joe P. Martinez. He spent one year of his service time

overseas in the Korean War.

After being honorably discharged from the army, he went back to work as a civilian. His career started in the building industry at Ceco Steel before taking a position as a Plan Examiner for the City of Dearborn Building and Safety Division. Following his graduation from U of D, he took a position as a structural engineer at O'Dell, Hewlett and Luckenbach in Birmingham. A year later he moved to the consulting firm McWilliam and Keckonen as a structural engineer. During this time, his project work included the Maynard Street carport in Ann Arbor.

His career in the telecommunications field began as a project engineer in the Building Engineers group at Michigan Bell in the early 1970s and he stuck with that industry for the balance of his career. In the latter part of the 1980s Tom completed the structural design of the largest concrete building of his career at the University of Michigan hospital complex. He retired in 2009 at age 80.

Tom earned his license as a Professional Engineer in 1972 and was very active in the Michigan Society of Professional Engineers (MSPE) for the remainder of his career. In 1988 he was awarded the Outstanding Engineer in Construction by the MSPE. In 1997 he received the President's Citation Award from the MSPE. Tom became a Fellow in the MSPE in 2004, an honor he considered to be the highlight of his career.

He had a lasting appreciation for the engineering involved in bridge construction. Shortly after the Mackinac Bridge opened in 1957, Tom put his mother Rosalie, his wife Gloria and infant son Tim into the car and drove up to see it in person. He was complimentary of the Zilwaukee Bridge reconstruction in spite of all the media criticism. He marveled at the engineering of the I-94 overpass at Telegraph Road and even on the day

before he died was praising the new bridge construction concepts at I-75 and 14 Mile and Big Beaver Roads.

After retirement, Tom stayed very busy with projects around his house as well as helping many friends with their handyman needs. He kept his mind sharp through daily interaction with technology, particularly utilizing Excel as an analytical and tracking tool for his own purposes as well as for many of his friends. These activities likely were a major contributor to him being able to live on his own, independent and self-sufficient until the last month of his life.

His Catholic faith was extremely important to him. Tom served as an altar boy in his youth and as an usher throughout his adult life.

While he was always a hard worker, he also enjoyed socializing and having fun. His trademark whistling, whether at work or play, let you know he was in the room or nearby. A good meal, a glass or two (or more) of wine, and a limerick or two shared with friends was a favorite way to spend an evening. Tom enjoyed attending musicals at the Fisher Theatre, with Les Miserables being one of his most favorite shows. His favorite mode of travel was aboard a cruise ship. Among his trips included Alaska in 1994, the Caribbean a couple of times with his brother Joe and then again in 2015 with Tim, Maryann and Kathryn. In 2014 he traveled for the first time to Europe, cruising the Mediterranean with his brother George and sister-in-law Paulette and his good friend Josephine.

A memorial Mass will be held on Saturday, August 28, 2021 at 11:00 am at Christ Our Light Catholic Church, 3077 Gloucester Road, Troy, MI 48084.

We are compiling a comprehensive digital photo album documenting Tom's life and would love for any family and friends to add photos they may have of

him. The album can be accessed for you to view and to upload any photos you may like to share at: <<https://photos.app.goo.gl/tGcsQskgYkRfZndn8>>

In lieu of flowers, a donation to one of Tom's favorite charitable causes (for example the Capuchin Soup Kitchen [www.cskdetroit.org](http://www.cskdetroit.org) or the Cancer Research Institute [www.cancerresearch.org](http://www.cancerresearch.org)) would be preferred.

# Cemetery Details

## Holy Sepulchre Cemetery

25800 W. 10 Mile Road  
Southfield, MI 48033

# Previous Events

## Memorial Mass

AUG 28. 11:00 AM (ET)

Christ Our Light Catholic Church  
3077 Gloucester Road  
Troy, MI 48084

# Tribute Wall

AP

“ I am Patrick, from Paris France and I met Thomas at Notre Dame de Paris in the 70', invited by Pierre Cochereau the great organist holder in Notre Dame. I was there with my tape recorder and we shared. We had some delicious moments in Paris and I remember that he loved "Hippopotamus restaurants". One year later he invited my fiancée and I in his house in Detroit and I could discover the big organ which he was organ holder at that time. We met his wife and he helped us to discover America. I remember when he built the swimming pool in the garden and bought his grey Corvet. To day, I just had the idea to find something about him and discovered he passed away... All my empathy to his family, regards... patrick

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**AUGELET Patrick** - August 07, 2021 at 01:20 PM

JN

“ To all the family of Tom Clark, my deepest Empathy. Tom was a man to love and I was blessed to love him and share in his life. With all my family he shared his time and gave freely of all his knowledge (Engineering, Finances and Politics)  
My daughter Maria was so impressed with him, she loved to call him and pick his brains, which she did frequently. He always was invited to all are dinner parties. He was so happy for the invites. Didn't like to miss. Loved the Italian Food and Music.  
My family all loved him. He will be dearly missed at our dinner table. I have been so Blessed to be a part of his life. Rest in the Lord my Friend.

Love, Josephine Navetta

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**Josephine Navetta** - March 12, 2021 at 11:25 AM

TC

*Thank you, Josephine, for being such a great friend to dad and for including him as part of your family at so many get togethers. He enjoyed the companionship, the conversation, the wine, and your good cooking. Your assistance in taking care of him after he got home following past surgeries and after the last surgery he had is deeply appreciated by me and my brothers.*

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**Tim Clark** - March 12, 2021 at 01:05 PM

AS

“*Sorry to hear about the passing of Tom Clark. I work for him a number of years early in my career at Michigan Bell. He was a wonderfully unique, bigger than life person I can never forget. He could light up a room with his stories jokes, limericks, smile and laughter. He was proud of his work and was willing to share his knowledge with others. Just sitting here thinking about all the things I learned from him. Work related and otherwise. He loved and was passionate his work and it showed. I remember the first big project I worked with him on. Building a pedestrian bridge from the parking lot into the Pontiac CO. He was very meticulous about how he wanted things done. He spent hours explaining the design to me and would make me research various aspects of the project down to the smallest detail. He probably spent considerable amount of time on this project in an effort to help me understand construction. He wanted to make sure I understood what I was doing. Definitely left a huge impact on me.*

*Arthur D. Samuels*

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**Arthur D. Samuels** - March 11, 2021 at 11:04 AM

TC

*Thank you for sharing your memories of working with dad, Arthur! It is great to hear, from you and others, how willing he was to patiently work through things with people so they could learn from his expertise while he was making certain things were done to his standard of expectation.*

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**Tim Clark** - March 11, 2021 at 03:45 PM

MW

“ 2 files added to the album *Thomas J Clark Memories*



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**Marianne Webster** - March 10, 2021 at 08:06 PM

RC

“ Tom was a great person to celebrate life with. Here is something from his 75th birthday celebration.

*There was an engineer named Tom Clark  
Who designed steel structures from the start  
And while drinking his wine  
And telling limericks he would shine  
And you knew that he had a big heart*

*He proposed a CTF for downtown  
But never spoke of it when ladies were around  
Now he had to be lit  
To talk processing shit  
Oh well let's have another round*

*Tom was always lots of fun  
So quick with a joke or a pun  
He would make you laugh  
While ordering another carafe  
And asking if you'd like some*

*Now Tom remembered lots of stuff  
And he played with contractors real rough  
But when business was done  
It was time for some fun  
And one glass was seldom enough*

*Now it wasn't that Tom liked to drink  
I suspect that it just helped him think  
For a man with a mind  
There is never enough time  
To design the best structural link*

*Now Tom has many friends  
But to ladies he really tends  
And after designing all day*

*In a very manly way  
Honorable intentions he sends*

*He spoke of bridge builder Pierre  
Who on his ass could not find a hair  
Or perhaps it was another joke  
With something about a stroke  
And finishing off in mid-air*

*Clean or dirty, Tom knew them all  
While most of them we cannot recall  
He really knew his rhymes  
And certainly his wines  
And even how mother nature calls*

*After 75 years he should have it down pat  
And readily know a tit from a tat  
A dirty old man  
Who always has a plan  
He is such a wily old cat*

*So this birthday wish for you  
May not be anything new  
But it's given with affection  
If not perfection  
With feelings that are true*

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**RAYMOND CZAJKA** - March 10, 2021 at 10:55 AM

MW

*So well written and true.....thank you Ray! I needed this laugh :)*

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**Marianne Webster** - March 10, 2021 at 11:32 AM

PJ

*awesome!!! that was Tom!!!*

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**Patricia Johns** - March 10, 2021 at 10:16 PM

TC

*Thanks for sharing this, Raymond. I know dad appreciated and enjoyed your rhyme, because he kept a printed copy of it in his home office.*

**Tim Clark** - March 12, 2021 at 09:14 AM

BC

“ *On behalf of the Capuchin brothers I offer my deepest sympathies on the passing of Thomas. It is truly humbling to receive memorial donations in honor of Thomas' life. Please be assured of the brother's prayers for the entire Clark family during this great time of grief. May perpetual light shine upon Thomas.*

**Br Nick Blattner Ofm Capuchin** - March 10, 2021 at 08:58 AM

TC

*On behalf of Tom's family, thank you Brother Nick for the condolences and prayers. And to all of dad's family and friends that have made a donation to the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, thank you! for contributing to this worthy cause that he supported.*

**Tim Clark** - March 12, 2021 at 09:16 AM

KC

“ *Kathryn Clark lit a candle in memory of Thomas Clark*



**Kathryn Clark** - March 09, 2021 at 07:37 PM

CM

“ Tom was there when I first started Michigan Bell Telephone in the 70’s. I was a mechanical engineer and worked with him a numerous projects. I always will remember Tom and Lucian discussing best ways to structurally design projects at work and would carry over to Mr. Mike’s. I’ll miss you Tom at our annual gathering around Xmas time and your great jokes. RIP buddy.

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**Chester Mienaltowski** - March 09, 2021 at 05:00 PM

TC

*Thank you for sharing your memories of dad, Chester!*

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**Tim Clark** - March 12, 2021 at 09:17 AM

BG

“ Worked with Tom both as his client and as a workmate. He was tough but fair. He was great with younger staff teaching them and training them to be a thinker and solver. I have nothing but respect for Tom. Definitely one of a kind. And very funny

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**Bill Gillies** - March 09, 2021 at 03:53 PM

TC

*Thank you, Bill. I know dad would appreciate the description of him being tough but fair. He held himself and his work product to a high standard and expected the same of others as well, but at the same time was willing to take the time to share his knowledge with others.*

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**Tim Clark** - March 12, 2021 at 09:19 AM

RS

“ I worked with and for Tom in the mid 1980's at MBT in the Metro East planning group. Tom was brilliant and our staff meetings that he conducted are memorable!! He was like the "Sheldon" TV sitcom - He would fill the marker board with calculations, including present worth (PWE) calculations that would justify our project budgeting. We enjoyed a few vinos/wines at Mr. Mikes on Woodward and heard the many limericks Tom had in his vast memory. I have no idea how he could memorize all the equations and limericks!! We will miss you Tom and you will always be in my fond memories of the great MBT years we shared together!

God bless you!  
Bob & Lori Sellman

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**Robert Sellman** - March 09, 2021 at 03:44 PM

TC

Thank you Bob and Lori. The MBT years were full of memories and long lasting friendships for dad.

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**Tim Clark** - March 12, 2021 at 09:22 AM

SS

“ Tom was one of a kind. NEVER one word said against anyone. A friend to everyone a heart of gold. He loved good food, good wine and shared it all with friends and family. It was my pleasure and honor to be part of this wonderful and kind man life. Thomas a life well done. May you live in eternal peace with a smile and a whistle in your lips...you will be missed.

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**Susan Shetzler** - March 09, 2021 at 10:20 AM

TC

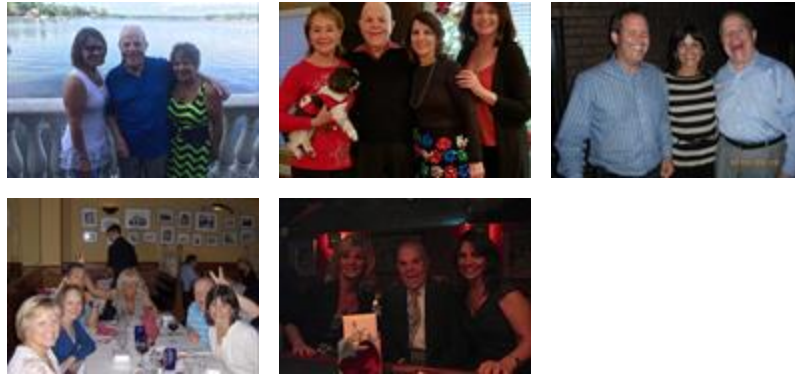
Thank you Susan. Dad truly cherished his friendship with you and greatly appreciated all the help you provided him around the house.

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**Tim Clark** - March 12, 2021 at 09:24 AM

MW

“ 9 files added to the album *Thomas J Clark Memories*



Marianne Webster - March 08, 2021 at 06:43 PM

PM

“ So sorry to hear of the passing of Tom, he was a gentle soul always with a smile, how are you and just a sweetheart of a man! I ushered with him at Christ Our Light and one fine evening my family saw him having dinner by himself at one of our favorite restaurant, we asked him to join us, he said he would after his meal, which he did, my daughters and their families immediately loved him, it was before his 90th birthday so we celebrated 🍷 his special day early! Every year thereafter my girls remembered Tom, wishing him a Happy Birthday unfortunately it was just one more birthday! He made a dash in their lives. He surely is making heaven a little brighter, he joins my brother who passed on Valentines Day 2/14/2021, I'm sure they are both smiling from ear to ear! RIP Tom! You were one special guy! You will be missed! ❤️

Patricia McKee - March 08, 2021 at 02:58 PM

TC

Thank you Patricia. Dad always enjoyed the ushering duties at 11am on Sundays and his bond with fellow ushers on that crew.

Tim Clark - March 12, 2021 at 09:26 AM

DR

“ I consider myself blessed to have been able to share a few times with Tom during the past few years. We met through Marianne Webster and I don't think I have known a kinder gentler person than Tom. He will definitely be missed and I think heaven is shining brighter having added his beautiful soul. My condolences to his family and friends during this difficult time.

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**Dawn Rottermond** - March 08, 2021 at 02:41 PM

TC

*Thank you Dawn!*

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**Tim Clark** - March 12, 2021 at 09:27 AM

MW

“ No words can express the loss of a dear friend, Thomas J Clark. I met Tom in 1981 after returning back to Michigan Bell and worked in the Building Design/Real Estate Group. Tom was one of my managers. There are too many memories to share and those of you who knew Tom can surely understand. The photos I placed on this wall will exemplify how Tom lived his life!

*Tom was the most wonderful, thoughtful, generous, and kindhearted man. We will miss him dearly. Life is full of small moments....I will remember, appreciate and cherish all of the small moments my family, friends and I have had with Tom.*

*Tom made a difference in so many lives. With sincerely personal sorrow, we wish to extend our sincere condolences to your family.*

*Love and Peace,  
Marianne Webster and family*

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**Marianne Webster** - March 08, 2021 at 02:16 PM

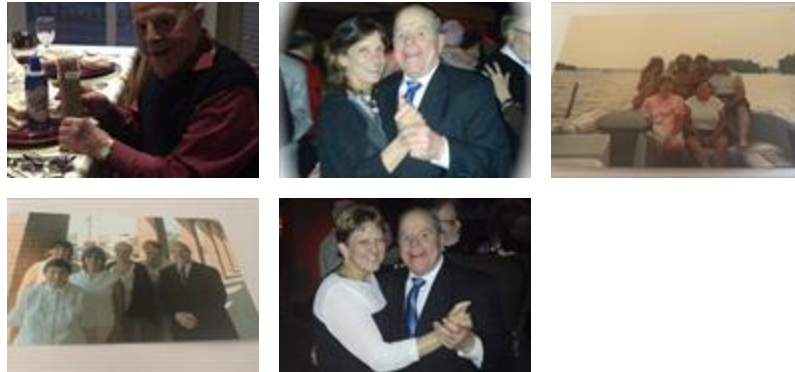
TC

*Thank you for the condolences, Marianne. And also thank you so much for sharing many pictures of dad enjoying himself in better times, the way we all want to remember him.*

**Tim Clark** - March 12, 2021 at 09:29 AM

MW

“ 22 files added to the album *Thomas J Clark Memories*



**Marianne Webster** - March 08, 2021 at 01:27 PM

PJ

“ *So honored to have met Tom through my sister, Marianne. They worked together at Michigan Bell back in the 70's.. I was invited numerous times for lunch or dinner when I was in town. He had many jokes that really made you laugh., he was a kind and generous man to all who knew him. I will cherish memories of our visits. Love and Blessings, Patti Johns. Fairhope, Alabama*



**patricia johns** - March 07, 2021 at 08:44 PM

TC

*Thanks Patti! Dad truly enjoyed those events (as evidenced in the pictures your twin sister has posted!)*

**Tim Clark** - March 11, 2021 at 03:48 PM

TB

“*Absolutely the nicest, kindest, most genuine person. He will be missed. Prayers for the family during this difficult time. Rest in peace Tom.*”

**Toby Booker** - March 07, 2021 at 07:41 PM

AN

*Tom was great person to know, our tough and pray to the family. God Bless Anna 🙏*

**anna nanovski** - March 08, 2021 at 07:52 AM

BD

*I stated a few weeks ahead of Tom at Michigan Bell and was still working when Tom retired. This was a span of over 30+ years. We worked on many projects together and had our ups and downs with each other. He was the best structural engineer we had and I can't ever remember any issues from his work. Take care Tom!*

**Bill Dumas** - March 09, 2021 at 08:06 PM

TC

*Thank you Toby, Anna and Bill. Your thoughts and prayers are appreciated by the family.*

**Tim Clark** - March 11, 2021 at 08:50 AM