



## Richard Coker Thomas II

October 1, 1942 - April 17, 2023

Richard Coker Thomas II, 80 passed away on Monday, April 17, 2023. Graveside services will be held at Ashdown Cemetery, Ashdown, AR on May 24, 2023 at 1:00pm. No services are planned in the Kansas City area. Coker was born October 1, 1942 in Louisiana, Missouri to Richard Coker Thomas and Alphonse Cole Thomas and lived in Ashdown, AR until the age of 13. Upon the death of his father, the family moved to Texas. Coker graduated from Odessa Permian High School in 1960 and obtained a degree in Music from North Texas State University in 1970. In his early years, Coker made his living as a professional musician. He travelled Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana with the Jack Mellick Orchestra and taught private lessons to students of the Hurst-Euleless-Bedford school system. He was very proud that almost all his students made the all-state or all-region bands. Coker joined the US Marine Corps Reserves in 1962 and retired as a Chief Warrant Officer 04 (CW04) after 40 years. While serving in the Reserves, he spent twelve years on active duty, nine years of it in Kansas City, MO where he met and married Vicky (Scholz) Thomas and made Kansas City his home. While in Kansas City, he resumed his musical pursuits playing saxophone, clarinet, flute and piccolo for several big band jazz rehearsal bands and other small group bands. He was a member of the River City Jazz Orchestra and the Brian McCarty Polka Band whom he played with for several years. He is survived by his wife of 37 years, Vicky Thomas of Parkville, MO, his three children, Heather Thomas of Austin, TX, Hilary Thomas-Oliver and

husband Quentin of Maastricht Netherlands, Sean Thomas and wife Lisa of Bedford, TX; the children's mother Pamela Cooper Thomas of Ft Worth, TX; two grandchildren, Paige and Tori Thomas of Bedford, TX; his sister Ruth Thomas and husband Terry Philp of Ben Wheeler, TX; cousins Jan (Cole) Craig and husband Bob of Gilbert, AZ and Rob Peebles and wife Loreta of Dallas, TX.

The family would like to thank Ascend Hospice, Lee's Summit, MO and the staff at Anthology of Burlington Creek who treated Coker with compassion and respect and made his last days comfortable.

# Previous Events

## Graveside Service

MAY 24. 1:00 PM (CT)

Ashdown Cemetery  
Peyton Avenue  
Ashdown, AR 71822

# Tribute Wall

DP

“ I am so sorry to learn of this! Coker and I shared an apartment at NTSU during my sophomore year in 1964, along with a drummer named Toby. Since Coker was a little older than I was, he was a role model for me, and I looked to him for advice and encouragement. The 3 of us were all dedicated music students, and I eventually earned my Doctorate degree in Clarinet performance in 1981. I don't remember a time when at least one of us wasn't up at the music facilities practicing! I am happy to learn of Coker's continued success in the field he loved. I had a successful career as a professor of clarinet/woodwinds at Cameron University in Lawton, OK. My condolences to the family.

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David A Pickthorn - May 27 at 10:57 AM



“ Richard Coker Thomas II

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October 08, 2023 at 02:47 PM

DM

“ Richard Coker lived only a couple of blocks from me and my cousin William Miller so we got to hear Richard learn to play the sax. He would get on his front porch and play either taps or reveille , I never knew which. It would be a note then a couple of squeaks. He was a large part of my childhood and often wondered what became of him.  
Daniel Miller

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Daniel Miller - April 21, 2023 at 11:09 AM

DP

*Richard was a friend of mine. During our elementary school years in Ashdown. After he moved away to Texas I only remember seeing him one time when he came back for a visit. I've thought of him over the years. I remember many times walking by his house when he was practicing his music!. I'm so sorry to hear of his passing..  
Don Pope class of 1960*

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**Donald W. Pope** - May 02, 2023 at 11:30 AM