



Theodore M. Thorsen

July 29, 1938 - January 22, 2024

Westerleigh resident Theodore (Ted) Thorsen, 85, passed away unexpectedly on January 22, 2024 at Staten Island University Hospital surrounded by his loving family.

Although his parents were recent residents of Staten Island, Ted was born on July 29, 1938 at Methodist Hospital in Brooklyn to the late Thoralf and Ellen Thorsen. Despite the little glitch of being born across the harbor, Ted considered himself a native Islander and was very proud of it. In his later years he particularly enjoyed both reading and contributing to the Facebook Page - Staten Island NY in Days Gone By, etc. He loved to be able to enjoy and share his happy memories of the past. He also enjoyed participating in the Brooklyn/Norwegian Facebook page which also reconnected him to many people, places and memories.

Ted's early years were spent in Westerleigh. In 1946 his family moved to Castleton Corners and a beginning of friendships developed at PS29 that continued to flourish throughout his life. He was an alumnus of PS29 and Curtis High School and a proud member of the Curtis High School Alumni Association. He attended Wagner College and also joined the Coast Guard Reserve following in the footsteps of his father, Thoralf, who had been a member of the Norwegian Coast Guard prior to coming to this country. Ted was also very proud to have been sponsored by his father when he joined the

Masonic Order (Tompkins #471). Ted participated at Tompkins for as long as he could, but the three flights of stairs in their wonderful building got the best of him.

Amongst a series of odd jobs (which included being a pin boy at the former Victory Bowling Alley, grave digger at Fairview cemetery, carpenter helper for Audon Sorensen) during his high school years, he also worked part-time at the old Acme Supermarket on Victory Boulevard which developed into a full-time position following high school graduation leading to the position of Dairy Manager. He ended up leaving Acme to pursue a career as a carpenter when he joined his father's business - Partitions for Business.

In 1963, Ted and his good friend, the late Willy Paglia, enjoyed a two-month trip to Europe. They traveled to Norway by ship and Ted brought his car (a little Renault Dauphine) as the pair would be traveling between their family of origin countries (Norway and Italy) and visiting many other European countries in between. Its hard to believe it but they actually managed to do this trip on \$5 per day. They were joined for a short portion of their travels by Diane Sidler (later to become Mrs. Ronald Deutch) and Marion Karpinski (who later became Mrs. Willie Paglia). Memories of this trip would be repeated regularly when the 4 corners crowd held their get-togethers and Kumpe parties at the home of Martha and Dick Skeelee through the years. Until the past few years Ted was still able to get together with members of the old crowd thanks to the hospitality of Iris Mahoney and at the luncheons with the ROMEOS (Retired Old Men Eating Out) at the Staaten - Thank you Sandy Borello..

Ted family immigrated from Norway. His parents (particularly his father) were very involved in Nansen Lodge Sons of Norway and they instilled a deep interest in his heritage. Ted's membership at Nansen Lodge also lead to his introduction to his future wife (Christine Twaite) when she joined the lodge in

June of 1965. They were introduced to each other by their mothers and that was the beginning of their romance which was under the watchful eyes of the entire lodge. They married on May 6, 1967. Their daughter, Lise, was born the next year on Ted's birthday - July 29th. They shared their birthday celebrations for 55 years.

In 1971 Ted and Christine entered into a new experience when they joined Christine's family (parents - Lars and Torbjorg Twaite and sister - Sandra Twaite Bergstrom) in the operation of a Country Inn/Ski Lodge (the Nutmeg Inn) in Wilmington, Vermont. The Inn did well in large part to its reputation for outstanding Scandinavian Cuisine and the warmth and coziness of the renovated 1770 circa farmhouse and connected out buildings. June of 1973 saw the birth of son, David, who Ted could officially claim to be called a native of Vermonter. Ted worked full-time at the Inn during the ski season. As the resident carpenter he was also in charge of the maintenance and updating of the facility. He did freelance carpenter work in Vermont and he also traveled to Staten Island and did Local 20 Carpenter Union work to maintain his benefits. Christine managed the Inn during the Spring, Summer and Fall business at the Inn.

Having survived numerous issues beyond anyone's control (floods, the gasoline crisis, some years with limited amounts of natural snow (Mt. Snow did not have snow making capabilities in those days) after five years, a family decision was made to sell the business. The Inn was hardly on the market before it sold. The family maintained its connection to the town of Wilmington as Christine's parents had a small cottage that served as a Vermont vacation home to the family for almost thirty years.

After the Inn sold in 1976, the family returned to Staten Island , Ted entered into a long-term union carpentry job in Manhattan and Christine enjoyed to

once again resume the full-time position of Mom and housewife! Upon his return to Staten Island, Ted resumed his participation in the various Scandinavian activities as listed a little further down.

In 1981, having experienced various health issues that he assumed were related to the heavy work he had been performing for many years and after a series of falls, etc., following extensive tests Ted was diagnosed with a very rare neurological disease called Primary Lateral Sclerosis (which is the bottom half [waist and down] of Lou Gehrig's disease). This diagnosis forever changed Ted and his family's lives. Ted was 42 at the time of the diagnosis and it meant the end of his carpentry career. The only treatment for the disease (PLS) to this day is physical therapy and to always keep moving. Following medical advice Ted and Christine reversed places so Ted could take the necessary care of his physical situation. He also served as "Mr. Mom" to the kids' comforting Christine to know that there was always a parent available for the children.

Ted was amazing in regard to how he handled the various changes to his body over the years. He was fortunate to have been in general good health when first diagnosed which allowed him to slowly succumb to the ravages of the disease. The major problems started to affect him within the past 10 or 11 years. He was very brave and never complained about the various things he had to go through. The past three years were particularly difficult and with the loving care of his wife Christine and son David he was able to have a full life within the comforts of his home. He was also inspired to fight the good fight with the support of his daughter, Lise, and her family who visited from Maryland as often as possible and shared their multitude of experiences via the phone and the internet. He felt like he was never apart from his nearest and dearest.

The last four or five months were particularly difficult for Ted mainly due to

extreme weakness, etc., after a long hospital stay. Following his discharge on December 14th, Ted once again pulled himself together and was already regaining strength and was able to operate his power wheelchair when he had to return to the hospital for a relatively common medical procedure. Unfortunately, he entered the hospital prior to a holiday weekend and it seemed that Ted fell between the cracks. A few things occurred that were out of Ted's control which he finally was unable to overcome. We were blessed that Christine and David were at his bedside, and Lise, Ken, Annelise, Silje and Axel (via telephone) were with him to the very end and he was surrounded by the love of his family when he met the Lord.

In honor of Ted's courage and perseverance throughout the past 43 years and his spirit to continue to live as full and meaningful life as possible, the family wishes to share a little bit of his story and the activities he continued to participate in, as a way of perhaps giving a little bit of courage and strength to others who face medical adversities.

Nansen Lodge Sons of Norway: During Ted's 54 years as a member of Nansen Lodge, he served for decades on the Properties Board (many of those years as president). He served in many officer positions within the lodge itself – most notably as President of Nansen Lodge in 1985-86. He was very proud to be a part of the first father and son team to serve in the lodge's presidential position. At the time of his passing, he had been a member of Sons of Norway for 68 years.

As Ted's mobilities decreased, he shifted gears and became the Lodge cultural director. He threw himself into this position with, as always, Christine's full support. Ted coordinated many cultural events through the years and coordinated numerous Norwegian Craft Classes that included Norwegian Folk Art Painting (Rosemaling), Wood Carving and Hardanger Embroidery. He also

coordinated the Norwegian language classes that were so popular with the members.

He was very satisfied to have been responsible for gathering the pictures of all of the past presidents of Nansen Lodge and having them prominently displayed for all present and future members to remember the many people that came before who helped to make the lodge the success that it became. Ted's heart always remained true to Sons of Norway and the values that were instilled in him upon his installation in February of 1956.

Fredheim Lodge Sons of Norway: During his membership of Fredheim Lodge Sons of Norway, although more physically incapacitated at this point, he contributed by serving as installing officer, served on Fredheim's Gala 90th Anniversary Committee, participated as a delegate to the convention, etc. Ted was well versed in the Constitution and By-Laws of Sons of Norway (that he grew up with) and when asked was very willing to share his knowledge of the organization.

Faerde Singers: While serving as President of Nansen Lodge, Ted also participated in the Faerder Singer's Men's Chorus, which was directed by his cousin-in-law, Richard Feingold. This organization was hosted by Zone 1 - Faerder S/N Lodge. Ted was very impressed with the Annual Zone 1 Memorial Service (at which the chorus participated in) that was hosted by the lodge in Brooklyn each year and thought that it would be very meaningful for the Staten Island two lodges hold in remembrance of their deceased members. Based on the format followed by Zone 1, Ted coordinated the first of what would become an annual memorial service for Zone 5 (Which used to be only S.I. Lodges - Nansen and Fredheim.) Presently the S.I. lodges have joined together with various NJ & PA lodges in Zone 3.

Norwegian 17th of May Parade Committee: In regard to his membership on the Norwegian 17th of May Parade Committee, Ted participated on the committee for well over 5 decades. For many of those years he served as the Sons of Norway Co-Chair to the parade. He prepared and yearly updated and mailed all of the parade information to the lodges within in the 3rd District - which includes all the states on the east coast from Maine to Florida. He followed up with phone calls to encourage lodges to participate in the parade. Prior to developing his health issue he proudly carried the banner for Nansen Lodge in the parade each year. When he could no longer participate physically in the parade, he stationed himself in a prominent place at the beginning of the parade route to distribute journals, give instructions to the Marshalls, etc., etc. Just prior to the beginning of the parade he would quickly drive to the end of the parade to take his place on the grandstand.

Danish Athletic Club:

In later years, while he was unable to do the carpentry he could one do he was able to direct and general contract the rehabilitation of the Danish Athletic Club. Between he and his son, David, running as his legs they were able to restore the Club to a point no one thought possible.

Zion Lutheran Church: Ted was an active member of Zion Lutheran Church. He helped to support the church through various activities. In earlier years he participated in work parties to help maintain the grounds. Until recent times, Ted enjoyed participating in the Men's Group that provides the Wednesday morning breakfasts at Zion. He was also very supportive of his wife's musical contributions to the Church.

In closing, Ted's interest in performing carpentry work never left him. Until two years ago, Ted was still bits of carpentry work (while in his wheelchair) in his

workshop in his home in the Poconos. His last projects were small hope chests for his two granddaughter – Annelise and Silje and a small “Seamen’s Chest” for grandson Axel!

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Ted was a loving and devoted husband and father. He was blessed with a beloved wife of 56 years, Christine Thorsen (nee Twaite), and two children, Lise and David, son-in-law – Kenneth Lorentzen, Grandchildren – Annelise, Silje and Axel. He also leaves behind his nieces – Abby Andersen Sparrow and Amy Andersen Carboni, Sister-in-laws – Astrid Twaite Hickey, Lynn Twaite Mathews and Sandra Twaite Bergstrom

Ted was predeceased by his parents, Thoralf and Ellen (nee Froyland) Thorsen, and his brother – Dr. Arthur T. Andersen.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Zion Lutheran Church, 505 Watchogue Road, Staten Island, NY 10314.

Visitation will be held on Sunday, January 28, 2024 from 3:00 to 7:00 pm at the John Vincent Scalia Home for Funerals, 28 Eltingville Blvd., Staten Island, NY 10312

Please note: There will also be a Celebration of Life service held in Ted’s memory at Zion Lutheran Church on Saturday, June 22, 2024. More information will be available as the date draws closer.

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 28. 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

John Vincent Scalia Home for Funerals, Inc.
28 Eltingville Blvd
Staten Island, NY 10312

Service

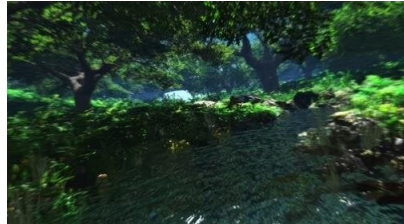
JAN 28. 5:30 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

John Vincent Scalia Home for Funerals, Inc.
28 Eltingville Blvd
Staten Island, NY 10312

Tribute Wall



“ John Vincent Scalia Home for Funerals Inc. created a Tribute Video in memory of Theodore M. Thorsen



John Vincent Scalia Home for Funerals Inc. - January 27, 2024 at 06:24 PM

JB

I am so deeply sorry for your loss. May God hold you close during your time of grief and may you find strength and solace in the memories you shared together.

Judy Byrnes - January 27, 2024 at 07:31 PM



“ John Vincent Scalia Home for Funerals Inc. created a Webcast in memory of Theodore M. Thorsen



John Vincent Scalia Home for Funerals Inc. - January 27, 2024 at 02:32 PM



“ 2 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



John Vincent Scalia Home for Funerals Inc. - January 28, 2024 at 11:34 AM



“ Our thoughts and prayers are with you all. God bless you and the family

Andrea Anderson Healy

a Healy - January 28, 2024 at 10:13 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Theodore M. Thorsen.



January 27, 2024 at 07:37 PM



“ 169 files added to the album *LifeTributes*



John Vincent Scalia Home for Funerals Inc. - January 27, 2024 at 06:17 PM