



Royce Dale Thomas

July 24, 1958 - January 9, 2020

Royce Dale Thomas, lifelong resident of Kalkaska and die hard “Blue Blazer” passed away suddenly on Thursday, January 9, 2020 at Ascension Providence Hospital in Southfield. He was born on July 24, 1958 in Kalkaska, the son of Virginia (Williams) and Duane Thomas.

Royce married his sweetheart, Terry Reynolds on October 16, 1982 in Kalkaska. Together they were involved in the community, school, church and family. Whether giving someone a helping hand, a word of encouragement or advice, playing a round of golf, Royce was there. He was known by many titles, such as “Coach T” to the school athletes, but his most cherished was “papa”.

Royce was founder and part owner of Grand View Golf Course. He had 40 plus years in the oil and gas industry and was currently employed at Fortis Energy Services. Royce was a member of Kalkaska Church of Christ.

Royce is survived by his devoted family, wife, Terry; daughters, Kassi (Thomas) Burkam of Kalkaska, Ashley (Matthew) Thomas of Howell; grandbabies, Cecilee and Blakelee Burkam, Caden, Christian and Camden Thomas; parents, Duane and Virginia Thomas, of Kalkaska; brother, James (Kathy) Thomas of Rexton.

During the services the family would invite everyone to wear “Blazer Blue” in memory of Royce.

Visitation will be held on Friday, January 17th from 4:00 – 8:00 pm at Kalkaska Church of Christ. Additional visitation will be on Saturday at New Hope Community Church from 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM. Funeral services will begin at 1:00 PM at New Hope.

Memorials may be given to the Royce Thomas Scholarship Fund, c/o Chemical Bank, PO Box 120, Kalkaska, MI 49646

Condolences can be left online at wolfeoneill.com

Arrangements were made by Wolfe-O’Neill Funeral Home, our family serving yours.

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 17. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Kalkaska Church of Christ
1725 W. Kalkaska Rd
Kalkaska, MI 49646

Visitation

JAN 18. 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM (ET)

New Hope Community Church
5100 Bethesda Court
Williamsburg, MI 49690

Service

JAN 18. 1:00 PM (ET)

New Hope Community Church
5100 Bethesda Court
Williamsburg, MI 49690

Tribute Wall



“ Royce Dale Thomas

January 30, 2023 at 04:02 AM



“ Royce Dale Thomas

January 30, 2023 at 01:03 AM



“ Our deepest sympathy to you, Terry, Kassi, and Ashley and the Thomas Family. Royce will be missed by so many people. We go back many years... 1974 to be exact and no need to say we had a lot of good times together. He was a good husband, father, and a good business partner. He worshiped the ground Kassi and Ashley walked on and he always called Terry his pride and joy. He touched a lot of people's lives and will always be remembered as Kalkaska Girls' Basketball's biggest supporter and fan!! You are in our thoughts and prayers and God Bless you.

Sincerely, Rickey and Linda Mcdowell

rickey mcdowell - January 26, 2020 at 10:11 PM



“ Steve and I are so sorry to hear of Royce's passing. He was a wonderful man and will be missed by so many. We are unable to attend because we are out of town but our thoughts and prayers are with you Terry and your whole family. May God comfort you through this tough time. Love, Steve & Marri Hogerheide

Marri Hogerheide - January 17, 2020 at 10:47 PM



“ *Fairest of All* was purchased for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.



January 17, 2020 at 07:09 PM



“ *Medium Dish Garden* was purchased for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.



January 17, 2020 at 01:13 PM



“ *Strength & Solace Spray* was purchased for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.



January 17, 2020 at 12:42 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* was purchased for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.



January 16, 2020 at 05:29 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.*



January 16, 2020 at 01:42 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.*



January 16, 2020 at 09:59 AM



“ *As a girls basketball player in the 90's Royce is part of some of my best memories from high school. As so many have mentioned he had a unique way of making you feel important and like he would do anything for you. Even as an adult, 20 years removed from high school and no longer living in Michigan, Royce was someone I know I could've called in a crisis. His positivity and energy were contagious and my mom put it perfectly last night when she said "Royce was someone you always hoped you would run into." I feel incredibly fortunate to have known him. Thank you Terry, Kassi and Ashley for sharing your dad with us. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you.*

Sara Vergote

Sara Vergote - January 16, 2020 at 08:45 AM

NK

“ Words can't express how saddened we are to hear of Royce's passing. He was a generous and caring man to all he knew. We'll miss the way his eyes would twinkle as he told a story about his family or sports life. Our thoughts and prayers are with Terry and her family.

Jack & Nadine

Nadine Kubisch - January 16, 2020 at 05:47 AM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.



January 15, 2020 at 04:27 PM

GA

“ The best memories that I have of Royce were his outstanding personality and presence. I first met Royce while playing in the Kalkaska men's softball league. He was a fantastic ball player, always friendly, and always with a smile on his face. When Royce purchased the Sport Shop in town he came to me and asked if I would work for him. He needed someone knowledgeable with archery, and I said yes. I worked for Royce until he sold the business. He was a great boss, being always sympathetic of other's needs. He was always available to talk to when you needed an ear to listen. I will truly miss him as he was a great man, and friend.
Gene Abramczyk

Gene Abramczyk - January 15, 2020 at 03:58 PM

PL

“ I am deeply saddened to hear of the loss of a cherished former co-worker! I worked with Royce many years ago. He was a recent high school graduate and we were both tellers at the bank in Kalkaska. He also played on a Men’s softball team with my husband at the time. Our paths have crossed occasionally over the years and it was always a joy to see him. He was a wonderful person! Condolences to his entire family.

Pamela Lacy - January 15, 2020 at 03:47 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.



January 15, 2020 at 02:29 PM

DM

“ My memories of Royce run the gamut! When my family moved to Kalkaska in 1968, all we neighborhood kids played baseball, kick the can and other games together. Such fun! Then, as adults, Royce was always positive and encouraging when I hit him up for yet ANOTHER donation! On a personal note: It’s so nice to work with people like Royce, who always have your back and help so willingly! Takes the sting right out of less pleasant encounters! He was always promoting Kalkaska as a CARING COMMUNITY! I know he will be sorely missed by his family, friends and Kalkaska! Also, Duane and Gin, you did a heck of a job raising him and can look at his life accomplishments with pride! 💕🥹💕

Dawn Vanderberg MacKeller - January 15, 2020 at 12:09 PM



“ *Tranquil Seas was purchased for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.*



January 14, 2020 at 09:49 PM



“ *Met Royce when I was quite young, grew up with terry her younger brothers were my best friends had some good times in kalkaska , played some golf and cards with Royce he was fun to be around and always a gentleman sounds like he will be greatly missed by his community and by those who love him* ❤️

jacky childers - January 14, 2020 at 03:47 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.*



January 14, 2020 at 03:36 PM

DD

“ God blessed Royce with one of greatest gifts ever! Royce made everyone feel like the most special person in the world because in that moment to him you were! The world is full of loving, caring people but nobody could make you feel like Royce could! So blessed to have him as such a huge part of my life! When I think about my life I realize a big part of who I am is Royce Thomas' friend! I have been so blessed Terry, Kassi, and Ashley to part of your family! God bless you!💙💙 Peace,
Dave Dalton

Dave Dalton - January 14, 2020 at 02:46 PM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.



January 14, 2020 at 02:22 PM

YL

“ Your friends at Ally Exploration, LLC. purchased the Ocean Breeze Spray for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.



Your friends at Ally Exploration, LLC. - January 14, 2020 at 10:26 AM

SG

“ Dear Terry, Kassi, Ashley and Family,
We are deeply sorry and pray for God to comfort your
through this difficult time.

Jim & Sandy Gray

Sandra Gray - January 14, 2020 at 10:17 AM

DH

“ Dave and Diane Heymes purchased the Beautiful
in Blue for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.



Dave and Diane Heymes - January 14, 2020 at 09:58 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for
the family of Royce Dale Thomas.



January 14, 2020 at 09:25 AM

DS

“ Royce and I began our high school days in Kalkaska at the same time in the fall of 1972. He was a freshman in the Class of 1976 and I was beginning my first year as a teacher at Kalkaska High School and as the four-year faculty sponsor of the Class of 1976. I have so many memories during our four years together. Ninth and 10 grade Honors English: (Royce admitted decades later that he had fudged a few assignments). Sports: the only KHS athlete to be selected by the coaches as Outstanding Athlete three times as a sophomore, junior, and senior. (No fudging there, he was a natural!) Looking through the class yearbook tonight reminded me of just how much Royce's positive personality, charisma, exuberance, and contagious spirit were an integral part of success of the Class of 1976.

I have been linked to Royce throughout his adult life, observing and respecting his career, marriage, parenting, faith, coaching, volunteering, hometown loyalty and dedication to the Blazer Nation. It was fitting that 40 years after graduating with the Class of 1976, Royce was inducted into the Kalkaska High School Alumni Hall of Fame with the Class of 2016 based on his career achievements and his unselfish dedication to Kalkaska sports, students, and the community. Since his induction he has been an advocate for seeing that other deserving alumni are recognized for their accomplishments and community service. It was an honor to be his teacher, class sponsor, friend, and fellow Christian. I will miss him.

David Stockford - January 13, 2020 at 08:46 PM

DM

“ Terry, my heartfelt sympathy to you and your family.

Dee McCormick

Dee McCormick - January 13, 2020 at 05:56 PM

AS

“ Dear Terry, Kassi, Ashley and family,

Our hearts are aching for all of you. Please know you are in our thoughts and prayers.

*With deepest sympathy,
Ann and Max*

Ann Schwandt - January 13, 2020 at 02:55 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.*



January 13, 2020 at 12:21 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.*



January 13, 2020 at 12:16 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.*



January 13, 2020 at 09:38 AM



“ *Lily and Rose Tribute Spray was purchased for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.*



January 13, 2020 at 09:31 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.*



January 13, 2020 at 08:44 AM



“ *We are so sorry for the loss of Royce. He was always an amazing friend to have and to play sports with. He will be dearly missed and a friend we will never forget.*

Jim, Jeff, and Bill Hiller - January 12, 2020 at 09:45 PM



“ *Magnificent Life Spray was purchased for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.*



January 12, 2020 at 04:38 PM



“ *Guiding Light Bouquet was purchased for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.*



January 12, 2020 at 11:07 AM



“ *What an amazing man that touched so many lives. I left Kalkaska 15 years ago and when I look back some of my fondest memories include Coach Thomas. I was lucky enough to play basketball and have him as one of my coaches. It's amazing the amount of people he was able to inspire, lead, and impact in his time with us. A player from a generation long after mine wrote that she felt like Royce was her biggest fan when he was in the gym but it turns out he was all of ours. It couldn't be said better! It takes an amazing person to have that kind of impact on so many people over so many decades. Rest easy coach and know that we are all better off because you chose to be in our lives!*

Jen Evans - January 12, 2020 at 01:41 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.*



January 11, 2020 at 10:54 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.



January 11, 2020 at 09:16 PM



“ My sincere condolences to the Thomas family. May all the wonderful memories you have shared help you through this difficult time.

Rose Zech - January 11, 2020 at 08:40 PM



“ Royce always had a smile on his face when I saw him. Always encouraging. He will leave a big hole in lives of people he knew. His love of his family and of the Kalkaska community was lived in him. RIP Royce your family and friends will miss you!

Mary K Slick - January 11, 2020 at 08:04 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.



January 11, 2020 at 07:06 PM

TN

“ I remember playing baseball with Royce and he was one of the nicest guys I knew. Royce I know you are in heaven. God will take care of you my friend. Will miss you thanks for your friendship.

Tim Norkowski - January 11, 2020 at 06:41 PM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.



January 11, 2020 at 05:02 PM

DG

“ I had the pleasure of knowing Royce a long time. I have many memories of how generous he and his family are. Many Christmas Eve memories will always be on my mind. I'll never forget every time he would see me, he would always call me "smiley". I could never stop smiling when he was around!

Dave S. Gonyer - January 11, 2020 at 04:59 PM

GH

So sorry to hear of Royce's passing. My condolences to the family. He will be missed. Never saw him that he didn't make an effort to stop and chat for a minute. Sorry his beautiful grand babies will have to grow up not knowing him. He was so proud of them and enjoyed them so much. 🙏 to the family!

Glenda & Don Holeman - January 11, 2020 at 09:03 PM



“ *Tender Tribute was purchased for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.*



January 11, 2020 at 04:53 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Royce Dale Thomas.*



January 11, 2020 at 04:53 PM



“ *We are so sorry to hear about the sudden loss of Royce. Royce was a great Man, and certainly one whom his Parents and family can be very proud of, he will be sadly missed by so many. His Blazer Blue Light will shine on through those many lives he touched.*

Mel & Penny Hill

Melvin F Hill - January 11, 2020 at 04:21 PM



So very sorry to hear of Royce passing. May God wrap all of you in his loving arms and bring you peace

Judith Eagan-Schinnners - January 11, 2020 at 06:08 PM

AB

“ My nephew Royce was, is and always be remembered as a God worshipper ,helper of anyone in need, a great son, husband, dad, grandpa, nephew, cousin, and friend. I Will always remember the times we had together, my favorite memorie was when took everyone to see the pistons and my son, Dennis Jr, got to shoot ball from half court, didn't make it but was great just to be able to know he got to stand on the PISTONS court, thanks Royce for all the memories at torch lake, cha ching, concerts etc. I'll always love and miss you

Aunt Barb Bridson - January 11, 2020 at 04:14 PM

DG

“ Looking back at the early days with our families so young. Memorable trips to Disney, Vegas and those wonderful Christmas Eves watching our children having so much fun. He was always right in the middle of the chaos having the time of his life. Our families grew up and away and we all drifted apart..but Dave and I still always felt connected to him. After much time had passed we would see him and it was like we had just visited the day before. We will miss ya big guy.

Dave and Bonnie Gonyer - January 11, 2020 at 04:03 PM

JK

“ Royce was the best man in my sister's wedding and I was the maid of honor. He was in his twenties and I was ten. He was so sweet and kind to a silly little girl in a fancy dress.

Julie Grubb Knight - January 11, 2020 at 03:53 PM

MW

“ So sorry to hear of your loss. Royce will be missed by his basketball friends and family. I remember watching him throwing chocolate candy to the fans. He always shook your hand and thanked you for coming. We will be thinking of you at this time of sorrow. Mike & Connie Winter

mike and connie winter - January 11, 2020 at 02:26 PM

PS

“ We played a lot of baseball and basketball growing up in Kalkaska from 5th grade Basketball with Coach Wozslawski, Coach Chalker baseball, to Coach Converse Football through my junior year in high school. Royce’s friendship was instrumental in helping make it through the tough times as a young boy coming from a physically abusive home. Often times I would show up for gym class with belt marks on my back and legs and Royce would sometimes just be a friend and sit down and talk with me and somehow the day seemed a bit brighter as a young man. I never got the full chance to run in the same circles of friends as Royce, but he always took the time to talk with me in study hall, gym class, and during baseball and basketball season. I left Kalkaska, Michigan after my junior year and joined the U.S. Army serving 24 years as a combat veteran. I remember being in the war in the middle of the desert, not knowing if this was going to be last day and as I thought about my childhood, and adolescence days, I recalled the unique friendship that a very popular young man named Royce Thomas developed with another not so popular kid who needed a friend. I smiled that day too and remembered the kind words that Royce spoke to me during that gym class, he said, “ Perry, these might seem small words of comfort right now, but as your friend I will do anything to help you fight this battle today!” Little did he know that those same words would help me get through the long hard fought battle that day during the desert, fighting an enemy that wanted to destroy us! Thanks Royce! Today I am a highly decorated retired U.S. Army Combat Veteran and I would give back all my medals if I could have one more gym class with Royce!

Perry S. Patrick Sr. - January 11, 2020 at 01:16 PM

KA

Perry thank you so much for these amazing words. As his daughter, this brought my family to tears. You described him perfectly and he continued to live his life that very same way. In his 61 years of life, he has touched more people than any one could in a 100! We will cherish this story you shared!❤️

Kassi - January 11, 2020 at 03:17 PM

DB

“*Royce was my little league coach 47 years ago. I looked up to him then and never stopped looking up to him. Thank you Royce Thomas for the generations of mentoring and love you gave Kalkaska and everyone you came into contact within.*”

Doug Bowerman - January 11, 2020 at 10:20 AM

BA

“*So sorry to hear about Royce. He always had a smile and a big hug. He was a good guy.*”

Bob and Annette Alford - January 11, 2020 at 07:50 AM