



David Franklin Tharp

October 9, 2025

David Franklin Tharp passed away peacefully at age 91 following a remarkable and inspiring life.

David was born at home in Snyder, Arkansas, in the rural southeast Arkansas Delta. He was the fourth of five children to Joshua and Blossom Henderson Tharp. His father was the bookkeeper, business manager, and general store manager for a large farm.

David attended a one-room schoolhouse in Snyder until seventh grade, when the family moved to the nearby town of Dermott, Arkansas. He regularly attended reunions with the Snyder school for most of his life. He graduated from Dermott High School in 1952 and attended the University of Arkansas at Monticello for two years. Following his older brothers Jack and Josh in a career in the booming oil industry, he transferred to the University of Houston and graduated with a degree in petroleum engineering in 1957. He met Lillian Smith at a campus Methodist group, and they married in 1958.

David had an endless supply of remarkable stories that spoke to his resourcefulness, ambition and sacrifice, almost none of which were exaggerated. He talked of how his family did not have indoor plumbing at their home in Snyder. He was behind the wheel at age 12 driving his baby sister, Wanda Tharp Eason, so that his parents could attend church. He was no

stranger to picking cotton. One of his early responsibilities after the family moved to Dermott was walking the family cow so that it could graze. He routinely hitchhiked from Dermott to college in Houston and to summer jobs in the oil patch.

David devoted his career to working for independent oil companies, primarily operating along the Gulf Coast around the Texas-Louisiana border. He drilled hundreds of wells in his lifetime and played an indispensable role in the success of many of those companies, guiding them through cycles of boom and bust. He continued to work well into his seventies.

David was a devoted Christian and a longtime member of Cypress United Methodist Church and later Mosaic United Methodist Church. As a second act, he joined the church choir in his fifties and later began taking piano lessons as an absolute beginner. Poppy was a proud and beloved grandfather.

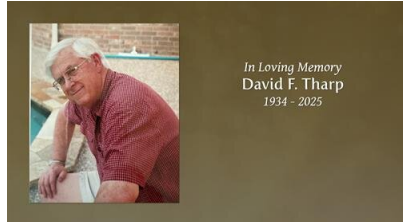
David was preceded in death by his wife of 65 years, Lillian Smith Tharp, and their daughter, Brenda Kaye Tharp. He is survived by son Larry; son Tommy and his wife Regina, and son Robert and his wife Sarah Perry; former daughter in law Carla Todd Tharp; and seven grandchildren Andrew Tharp, Ashley Morgan Tharp, Madison Tharp, Matt Tharp, Franklin Tharp, Samuel Tharp, and Teddy Tharp.

Funeral services are Thursday, October 23, 2025 at 2:00 p.m., at Wildwood United Methodist Church, 8911 FM 1488, in Magnolia, Texas. He will be buried on Saturday, October 25, 2025 in Henderson Cemetery in Pangburn, Arkansas.

Tribute Wall



“ *Joseph Earthman Generations created a Tribute Video in memory of David Franklin Tharp* ”



Joseph Earthman Generations - October 22, 2025 at 08:18 PM