



## Thomas J Skillman, III

October 31, 1935 - February 21, 2025

Thomas J Skillman III passed away peacefully on February 21, 2025, at the age of 89. He was born on October 31, 1935, in Narberth, PA. Growing up, his passions were basketball and lacrosse. During high school, he spent his summers working at a ranch near Cody, WY, an experience that inspired him to move west. He gave up a lacrosse scholarship to Princeton in order to attend Colorado State University (CSU), where he met his wife of nearly 69 years, Betty Ann. He graduated from CSU in 1957.

At CSU, Tom was a member of the Rodeo Club, participating in saddle bronc riding and roping. After fulfilling his commitment to the Army, he and Betty moved to Yuma, CO, where he pursued his career as a Soil Conservationist. Tom was also a founding member of the Yuma Pheasant Hospitality Association, which brought hunters and economic growth to the area during the hunting season.

In 1967, Tom and his family moved back to Fort Collins, where he began working for the CSU Alumni Association. His passion for lacrosse led him to become the CSU lacrosse coach from 1968 to 1971. In 2014, he was inducted into the CSU Lacrosse Hall of Fame as the first lacrosse coach at the university.

Sports were always an important part of Tom's life. He enjoyed watching CSU

football and basketball, attended his children's and grandchildren's sporting events, and was an avid golfer.

In 1968, Tom founded Skillman Photography, which continues to operate today, capturing family memories through weddings, senior and family portraits, and school pictures. He was also the official photographer for Miss Rodeo Colorado and the Larimer County Fair & Rodeo Queen.

Tom was a long-time member of the CSU 50-Year Club, the Rams Club, Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce, Fort Collins Country Club, and The Elks Club.

He is survived by his wife, Betty; his three children, Tom Skillman (Beth), JoAnn Caddoo (Skip), and Bob Skillman (Karen); Tom's sister, Sara Jehle; ten grandchildren; and several great-grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held on March 22, 2025, at 1:00 pm with a celebration of life reception to follow at 2 pm in the Stadium Room at the CSU Canvas Stadium. Parking is available in the lot directly west of the stadium. Entrance to the Stadium Room is the Premium Club Entrance on the stadium's west side. An elevator inside the entrance goes to the 4th floor, where the Stadium Club is located.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

MAR 22. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (MT)

Canvas Stadium Room  
751 West Pitkin Street  
Fort Collins, CO 80521

## Celebration of Life

MAR 22. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (MT)

Canvas Stadium Stadium Room  
751 West Pitkin Street  
Fort Collins, 80521

# Tribute Wall

TH

“ Thoughts and prayers to Betty and all the Skillman family. I remember many tailgates at old stadium and nights at Tom and Betty’s with my parents Tom and Diane Holtorf. Tom took my senior pictures and engagement pictures at the house in Fort Collins.

*Thomas and Julie Holtorf*

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**Thomas Holtorf** - March 22, 2025 at 06:21 PM

CM

“ I have fond memories of several Fourth of July celebrations with Tom and the whole Skillman crew and my grandma (Bonnie Sowder) and grandpa’s (Glen Sowder) home. Tom always brought the best fireworks. Tom also took our family photos, my senior pictures, and other important family events. His photos are treasures for my family. Tom was such a wonderful person. I am so happy I got to know him. I send all my love to his family during this time. With love, Corinne Melusky

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**Corinne Beth Melusky** - March 21, 2025 at 11:24 PM

SS

“ Tom and Betty have been my dear friends since 1971 when took my wedding pictures! What a stroke of luck to meet them! We tail gated for years at the old stadium, such fun! The whole family is a great group of friends and I feel so lucky to know them! Tom was the best, he always made me laugh even in the end! Happy Trails Tom, until we meet again❤️

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**Susan Strauch** - March 21, 2025 at 08:37 PM

TC

“ I have know Tom for over 40 years. We met at a snowy Silver Falls Conference center in Oregon. There at the invitation of a mutually used photo lab, we rapidly became friends. With our wives, we have played golf all over the Southwest. We would try to get connecting hotel rooms where we would share cheese and crackers with our fine adult beverages. Thanks to Betty, we are now fans of Jarlsberg and Havarti cheese. Making so many great memories and times just being together.

Just one of my favorite memories with Tom, is after CSU Rodeo Club Reunions and at other times, we would sit around the outside patio fire pit behind the bar at the Aquarius Casino and Hotel in Laughlin, NV. There with the chill of February or March evenings, warming our feet by the fire, with a fine scotch and occasional cigar, we solved all the worlds social and political problems.

Being in the same profession, we enjoyed many photography conferences together in Las Vegas and elsewhere. Tom and I would bring up work issues on occasion. He lamented the fact that the world could use more people that exhibit the best qualities of what Tom called a "John Wayne" type of character. Things like Friendship, Loyalty, Honor, and Commitment, are true American Ideals that reflect his persona. Tom was one of my dearest friends, and a true John Wayne guy. I loved him and will miss him. To Betty and his wonderful children, I'm sorry we can't make this celebration of his life. Peggy and I are sending you our love and a big long-distance hug of support.

*Peggy and Tim Card*

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**Tim Card** - March 20, 2025 at 06:36 PM

SJ

“ Betty and family, so sorry to hear of Tom’s passing, he was a good man and will be missed by us and many more. Our hearts and prayers go out to you.  
Sincerely REN and Sharon Jensen

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**sharon jensen** - March 02, 2025 at 01:31 PM

WF

“ Tom took our wedding pictures in 1975 when Janet and I were married. Always the gentleman and always the pro.

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**Wendell Frey** - March 01, 2025 at 12:36 PM

MW

“ Prayers for the Skillman family. We have fond memories of your family.

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**Mike Walz** - February 27, 2025 at 10:41 AM

CZ

“ What a gem. Loved every visit. Tom and Betty never hesitated to donate to The Ram Good Time Auction for many, many years. They loved The Rams and their community. Such a pleasure to visit them and always left their studio with that feeling of “ahhhh”. What a truly kind man. Pretty funny too!  
Another Fort Collins legacy gone. The angels were waiting and no doubt swooped him right up. They know the goodness they have received.

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**Carol Zick** - February 27, 2025 at 08:24 AM



“ I was privileged to hang out with Tom and Betty at CSU games. Kindness and hospitality was the rule. I cannot count the number of times they invited me to celebrate CSU with them but also remember our lost friends. Too many times we've lost dear friends and once again we've lost another dear friend, we'll miss you Tom!

Mark Cooper - February 27, 2025 at 01:14 AM

CY

“ It was such a honor to of been given the opportunity to spend time with Tom, Betty and the rest of the Skillman Family. The love for his family, friends and the community he served were evident in his daily life. Prayers for peace

Cynthia - February 26, 2025 at 09:33 PM

KW

“ My family has known Tom for over 50 plus years. He used to do school photos in Sterling. We have family pictures that he did for us he was so talented. Your family is in our thoughts and prayers. I will let my daddy know that he has passed. My dad and Tom knew each other pretty well hugs to all the Skillman family.

Kim Jesson Wells - February 26, 2025 at 06:29 PM

MU

“ Tom took my High School Graduation pictures as well as our Wedding Pictures in 1995. He was such a pleasure to be around, and his family has been such a big part of Ft. Collins. His pictures have created such a fond memory for all of my family. To Betty, Tom, JoAnn and Bob our thoughts are with you and hope that God's peace will come upon you and your family.

Mike and Sandi Urbom - February 26, 2025 at 12:33 PM

LP

*My family has known the Skillman family for many years. We had family photos, school photos and wedding photos by Mr. Skillman. He was a pillar of Fort Collins and was such a fun loving man to be around. Tom, Joann, Bob and Beatty we are sorry for your loss. He will be missed by many!!*

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**Linda Pixley** - February 26, 2025 at 05:57 PM

DW

“*Tom took our wedding photos back in 1978. My husband had broken his leg two days before our wedding. Tom was so great at the wedding and our dance reception taking the photos. He said he was having so much fun because he could be creative and get so many different kinds of shots. For awhile, he had a big photo in his studio of my husband and I in the wheelchair. He also took our children's graduation photos. We were blessed to have know him. We send you our prayers and deepest sympathy.*

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**Denise Wiedeman** - February 26, 2025 at 10:00 AM

JC

*Thank you Denise for sharing this story.*

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**JoAnn (Skillman) Caddoo** - February 26, 2025 at 12:09 PM

JA

“*What a wonderful man. Our son Drew spent so much time at his place playing with Daniel. Tom & Betty were like another set of grandparents to him. Tom was a generous, caring person, full of love for others. He will truly be missed.*

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**Jana Anderson** - February 26, 2025 at 09:31 AM

JC

*Thank you Jana, he loved seeing those 2 boys together!*

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**JoAnn (Skillman) Caddoo** - February 26, 2025 at 12:09 PM



“ *Even though we weren't actual family, Tom and his lovely wife treated us as such. Fort Collins has lost a truly wonderful individual.* ”

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**Timothy V McCarthy** - February 26, 2025 at 07:44 AM



*Thank you, Tim.*

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**Beth Skillman** - March 14, 2025 at 02:12 PM