

THOMAS CARLISLE GRAHAM



Thomas Carlisle Graham passed away on July 3, 2023, in Naples, Florida at the age of 96. He is survived by his devoted wife of 75 years, Irene Wallace Graham, and four children - Susan Scheessele (John), Naples, Florida; Thomas Graham Jr. (Joan), Mason, Ohio; John Graham (Susan), Bloomington, Indiana; and Sara Balough (Dale), Los Angeles, California.

Tom was born and raised in Greensburg, Pennsylvania. After graduating from Greensburg High School, Tom was accepted into the Navy V-12 program and he attended the University of Louisville during World War II. In 1947, he graduated with a degree in Civil Engineering and embarked on a career spanning more than 50 years in the American steel industry, starting as a draftsman. A year later, he married his high school sweetheart, Irene.

During the Korean War, Tom was called to active duty by the U.S. Navy. He was stationed for several years in Iwakuni, Japan, where he was joined by his wife and daughter and greeted the arrival of his first son.

After completing military service, Tom moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and resumed his career in the steel industry. Over the following three decades, he moved steadily from draftsman to management to eventually attending the Harvard Business School Advanced Management Program. In 1974, he was appointed as CEO at Jones & Laughlin (later LTV) Steel Corporation.

In 1983, Tom was recruited as Vice Chairman of USX and COO of the US Steel Division. During his tenure at what was then the largest steel producer in the United States, he planned and implemented an often-controversial, whatever-it-takes turnaround and revival of the nation's largest steel producer. He rationalized and modernized steel plants, right-sized the workforce, and returned the steel group to robust profitability. When Tom retired from USX in 1991, he had earned a reputation as a steel industry turnaround expert.

Shortly after his retirement from USX, Tom was recruited as CEO of Washington Steel. This turnaround was completed when the company was sold to a new owner, Lukens Steel.

Tom was once again recruited to initiate a turnaround - this time at Armco Steel LP. There he presided over a massive improvement in operations and led an Initial Public Offering that converted the 50/50 Joint Venture of Armco Inc. and Kawasaki Steel of Japan into AK Steel Corporation. Tom served as Chairman and CEO of the new publicly traded company.

At age 70, Tom retired again in 1997 but he remained active into his eighties operating a consulting business. During this period, he authored a monthly column for the American Metal Market Magazine known as Parting Shots.

Over the five-decade span of his career, Tom led multiple Fortune 500 organizations, served as Chairman of the American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI), the steel industry trade association, and received numerous awards and accolades including the Gary Medal, the Willy Korf Steel Vision Award, and the Benjamin F. Fairless Award. He was inducted into the American Metal Market's Steel Hall of Fame in 2012.

During his lifetime, Tom held executive officer and/or board director positions for Jones & Laughlin Steel Corporation, LTV Steel Corporation, USX Corporation, United States Steel Corporation, Washington Steel Corporation, Armco Steel LP, AK Steel Corporation, Uniroyal Corporation, Mellon Bank, International Paper Corporation, and Hershey Foods.

Tom's career was marked by a relentless quest for improvement and outright disdain for the status quo. He relished seeing both people and assets achieving their potential. He held a special fondness for the men and women who worked with him to implement the often-difficult changes in culture at the heart of the successful transformation of the companies that he led. Tom had the courage "to break eggs to make an omelet".

Through the years, he held memberships at the Fox Chapel Golf Club, Laurel Valley Golf Club, The Rolling Rock Club, The Hole in the Wall Club, and others. He was a long-time member and served as President of Pittsburgh's Duquesne Club and in recent years enjoyed playing bridge at the Naples Athletic Club and at Moorings Park.

Although Tom's public persona was that of a demanding taskmaster, he was, in his private life, a loving and devoted husband and father. Multiple generations of Grahams treasure their patriarch and the joyful times spent together celebrating family events in Pittsburgh, Naples, Tuscany, Hong Kong and elsewhere.

Tom was preceded in death by his parents Archibald and Clara (Beattie) Graham, and his siblings Dorothy Momeyer, Kenneth Graham, and Mildred Croushore.

Tom is survived by nine loving grandchildren - David Scheessele (Dawn), Loveland, Ohio; Sarah Scheessele Oswick (Pierce), Golden, Colorado; Amy Graham Mohl (Doug), Herndon, Virginia; Eric Graham (Jennifer), LaGrange, Illinois; Jennifer Graham Staver (Brian), Encinitas, California; Kathryn Graham Cortes (Pablo), Miramar, Florida; Trevor Balough, Bloomington, Indiana; Thomas Balough (Virginia), Kentfield, California; and Julia Balough, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. His legacy also includes 12 great grandchildren.

Tom was a patron and supported the mission of the Institute for Humane Studies (The IHS). Contributions to IHS or your favorite charity are invited in celebration of Tom and his family's wish to recognize his life, well lived.

The family wishes to express their appreciation to the residents and staff of Moorings Park as his life was enriched and his care was optimized during his final years there.

A memorial service for Tom will be held by the family at Bower Chapel at Moorings Park, 130 Moorings Park Drive, Naples, FL at 11:00 am on August 12, 2023.

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