

## Lyman W. Thomas

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A Prominent State, Community Leader

March 22, 1926 -- Feb. 4, 2003

MONTROSE -- A man the Montrose community embraced and loved, Lyman W. Thomas, age 76, died Tuesday morning, Feb. 4, 2003, at his home in Montrose.

Lyman W. Thomas was born in Hotchkiss, Colo., on March 22, 1926, the son of Charles E. and Beulah M. (Livesay) Thomas. That same year the family moved to Cedaredge, Colo., where his father was a butcher in Wicks Grocery and Market. In 1935, when Lyman was 9 years old, his father drowned in Eggleston Lake on Grand Mesa. In 1938, Lyman and his mother moved to Delta, Colo., where he attended school and graduated from high school in 1944.

Lyman served in the Army Air Corp from 1944 through 1945. In 1946 he attended Colorado A. & M. College (now CSU) for one year. He then flew for Monarch Airlines in 1947 and half of 1948.

In June of 1948, Lyman married Lila A. Whitley in La Crosse, Kan. To this union two children were born: A son, Lyman W. Thomas Jr., who passed away Sept. 23, 1983; and a daughter, Lenette K. (Thomas) Traub.

They lived in Gunnison, Colo., where he was station manager for Monarch (later Frontier) Airlines, and then Scottsbluff, Neb., before moving to Delta, Colo., where he was manager of the Delta Chamber of Commerce. It was while he was chamber manager that he and 14 other businessmen on the Western Slope founded Club 20, a Western Slope Chamber of Commerce, or lobbying group. Lyman was the last living founder.

While in Delta, Lyman was active in Toastmasters Club. He was elected Lt. Governor for District 26, which covered Colorado, Wyoming and Nebraska and in 1958 he won all of the speech contests in Colorado; District 26, Zone A; (an additional five states) Region 3; (an additional seven states) held in Kansas City and thereby earned the right to compete, with four others from around the United States, in San Francisco, Calif., for the International Championship. His son was having major surgery that week and Lyman elected to stay home with his family.

In 1958 he moved to Montrose and opened Thomas Graphic Arts, a commercial printing plant.

Lyman was a Past Patron of Silver Star Chapter No. 40, Order of the Eastern Star, Past Master of Montrose Lodge No. 63, AF & AM; Past Exalted Ruler and Past District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler of Montrose B.P.O.E. No. 1053 and was the first in Western Colorado to be awarded the "State Elk of the Year" in 1980. He was a 32-degree Mason and member of El Jebel Shrine. He was Parade Captain for the Western Colorado Shrine Club "Corvettes." He received the Jewel of El Jebel in 1990 and the Jewel of Honor in 1997. He was the sponsor of many crippled children into the Shrine Children's Hospital in Salt Lake City, San Francisco, and the Shrine Burn Hospital in Houston, Texas.

Lyman received the "Man of the Year" award from Club 20 in 1972 and was elected "Lifetime Board of Directors Emeritus" in 1990. In 1997 Club 20 named one of their three annual awards "The Lyman Thomas Award."

He was appointed by Gov. John Love to serve on the first Colorado State Parks and Outdoor Recreation Board from 1972 until 1976, being chair in 1973. He was appointed by Gov. John Vanderhoof to serve on the committee to make the final selection of the location of Interstate Highway No. 70 from Rifle to Eagle, Colo.

Lyman was a former Montrose County Commissioner, was a great musician and artist. He was a choir director at Montrose Christian Church and sang in the choir for many years.

He loved practical jokes . . . whether he pulled them on someone else or they were pulled on him. Lyman's sense of humor was known and loved by all.

He was a member of the Menoken Christian Church, having served as Elder and Worship Leader. He didn't fear death, to go and be with his Lord . . . but he was concerned regarding the method of death.

Surviving family members who were so proud and honored to share Lyman's life include his beloved wife, Lila Thomas, of Montrose, Colo.; one daughter, Lennette and husband David Traub, of Grand Junction, Colo.; one daughter-in-law, Seleena King, of Montrose, Colo.; four grandchildren: Dylan Thomas, Cory Thomas, Shawn Traub, Brett Traub; one great-grandchild, Tristan Rock; and two brothers: Charles E. Thomas and wife Jean, of Grand Junction, Colo.; and Floyd E. Thomas and wife Clodell, of Okmulgee, Okla.

Lyman was preceded in death by his parents and his son, Lyman W. Thomas Jr.

A memorial service in celebration of Lyman's life will be held Friday, Feb. 7, at 2 p.m. at the Montrose Christian Church in Montrose. The service will conclude at the church.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to: Shriner's Children Hospital (El Jebel Hospital Travel Fund), In Memory of Lyman W. Thomas, El Jebel Temple, 4625 West 50th Ave., Denver, CO 80212.

Arrangements are being handled under the direction of the Crippin Funeral Home & Crematory of Montrose, (970) 249-2121.

*-[http://www.montrosepress.com/lyman-w-thomas/article\\_e897c7e7-8d31-50f7-bad5-4c38fd4b9c36.html?mode=jqm](http://www.montrosepress.com/lyman-w-thomas/article_e897c7e7-8d31-50f7-bad5-4c38fd4b9c36.html?mode=jqm)*