



Linton (Tom) Thomas Clower

June 24, 1938 - May 22, 2025

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Tom Clower, devoted husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, passed away peacefully at home in Granite Bay, California, on Thursday, May 22, 2025. He was surrounded by family members and friends who loved him and prayed for his tranquil entry into heaven.

He was preceded in death by his parents, brothers William (Billy) and Richard (Dick), and beloved son, Troy.

He is survived by his wife of 40 years, Bette; step-daughters, Heidi Layne (Denny), Heather Paulsen, Hillary Graves (Bobby); bonus step-son, Keith Paulsen (Patty); daughter, Brenda Strait (Earl); grandchildren: Dustyn Clower, Nick Paulsen, Tyler Graves (Ashley), Alexis Krystal Rose, Kyle Paulsen, Zach Rorison (Marissa), Kiely Graves, Luke Rorison, Drake Rorison, and Ella Graves; Great-grandsons: Jaxon and Dawson Graves; nephew Dan Clower (Kathi) and niece Beth DeShazo.

Tom was born to William and Norie Clower in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. In 1941 his family moved to Southern California to pursue an entertainment career for his brother Billy. The family all found jobs at Lockheed Martin. In 1952, when Tommy (as he was known to his family) was 14, his father died of

a heart attack. He and his mother moved in with Billy and his family. In 1953, Billy opened the Billy Clower Dance Studio in Ventura, California. The dance studio became an anchor in the community and remains in business to this day.

Tom was a natural born athlete and was inspired by his older brother, Richard, a runner and track star who won a state championship and was offered a full scholarship at the University of North Carolina before heading to California.

Tom excelled in high school baseball, especially as shortstop, graduating from Ventura High School in 1956. Later, in 1961 he traveled to Arizona to try out as a professional for the San Francisco Giants. At 23 he was considered too old for the majors, but he enthusiastically tried anyway.

In 1957 he joined the Army as a member of the 101st Airborne. He completed at least 14 jumps at Ft. Campbell and served as a medic after the April 24, 1958, tragedy that killed 5 paratroopers and injured 100 others.

When he wasn't playing baseball or working at the Ventura 76 gas station on Main Street or lifeguarding at the ocean or serving in the military, Tom could be found doing what he loved most, which was surfing. Ventura in the 1950's was a magical place to be for Tom and he made the most of it. He and his friends were well-known in the surfing community, especially at Oil Pier, a special spot where the surf was just right and perfect for locals.

After Ft. Campbell, Tom returned home and attended Ventura College. While there he and his friends decided, mid-semester, to head to Hawaii for the surf trip of a lifetime. Without a real plan or much money, off they went. They had a great time and surfed from dawn to dusk. They had so much fun, that rumor is an ordinance was created after their trip that said "haoles" could no longer overstay their welcome. While there, they filmed their wave riding and Tom's favorite pastime later in life was to share those videos with family and friends. Once back home, he cleaned up his grades and then went on to attend Fresno State College, graduating in 1964 with a bachelor's degree in business.

With his first wife, Tom became a father to Brenda and Troy, and loved nothing

more than to spend time with them, nurture their interests, coach their sports, and cheer them on. Camping, fishing, and waterskiing were also favorite activities, and Clear Lake was a favorite spot. Brenda loved horses and Troy was a trailblazer in the world of skateboarding and snowboarding and Tom could not be prouder.

Always the athlete, Tom, like his brother, Richard, was an avid runner and completed several marathons with impressive times. One example is in 1978 he completed 26 miles in the 2nd Annual Sacramento Marathon in 3 hours and 16 minutes.

In 1982, Tom began dating Bette Walters. Tom, likely with Billy's guidance, was a great dancer and his skills on the dance floor probably had a hand in solidifying their affection for one another. They made an impressive pair.

On August 12, 1984, he and Bette were married. Professionally Tom worked as a Manager and Agent at Allstate Insurance. As a top performer he was the recipient of several trips which they enjoyed together in tropical areas like Jamaica, Singapore, and Maui. However, their favorite vacation spot was Cabo San Lucas which they returned to year after year. Tom's eagerness to drive from Sacramento all the way down the peninsula to the tip of Baja was symbolic of his boyish optimism and joy for all adventures, especially if they took him close to the ocean and a fishing pole.

The 90's were a time of great tragedy and great joy. Troy was killed in 1993, and it devastated everyone who loved him, but no one more than Tom. His deep faith carried him through, but he never fully recovered. But the decade also made Tom and Bette grandparents, something they both loved and excelled in. Babysitter became a favorite new role.

As the grandchildren grew, a new season of coaching and cheering from the stands began. In 2002, in order to coach soccer for Tyler's team, Tom jumped in with both feet to teach himself all there was to know, since he essentially knew nothing about the sport. Of course he did an awesome job, and the kids had a great time. He was also a constant fan and spectator for many of the

kids activities and loved to root for the Folsom Bulldog Football team, especially when Zach was playing.

Tom not only coached sports, but he was committed to teaching the word of God to his family, friends and fellow church members. He pledged his time, money and love into his Oak Hills Church community and their annual Church Art Camp was one of his favorite times of year to participate and include his grandkids. His other favorite time of year was Christmas, when he wrote and directed the true meaning of Christmas play which the grandchildren acted out before opening presents. This tradition started when they were in elementary school and continued through their high school years. Each year, the roles of Mary or Joseph or the wise men rotated throughout the group. It is a cherished memory for all of them.

After leaving the insurance world, Tom liked to stay busy and turned his love and talent for golf into a part-time job, spent many hours at the gym, and even started delivering rental cars to customers. He was very active until being diagnosed with Guillain-Barre Syndrome in 2021, which took away much of the strength in his legs. More recently, more than one heart attack depleted his strength even more. However, true to form he was always more concerned with everyone but himself, and would always ask, "How are you?"

His loved ones are confident that he is riding a wave in heaven, next to Troy as he skateboards, while smiling with his brothers as they cheer him on and welcome him home.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUN 21. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (PT)

Oak Hills Church
1100 Blue Ravine Road
Folsom, CA 95630

Tribute Wall

SP

“ With sadness I learned of Tom's passing today. I regret I hadn't heard what happened, I would have loved to attend his service. I met Tom when he joined Horace Mann Ins in the early 2000's. We immediately became friends. We golfed often and took trips to San Luis Obispo to golf with our buddies Bob Frantz and Bob Turner. Great times were had by all. I'm going to miss my friend Tom but I he's in a better place now. He's with his savior in heaven. Scott Pinney

Scott Pinney - September 23, 2025 at 03:30 PM

NB

“ Many good times with the Allstate group.

Nancy Binetsch - June 25, 2025 at 03:29 PM

CT

“ I admired Tom for his humor, kindness and love for his family. I cried when I heard of Tom's death as he was one of a kind!!

Carole Thompson - June 23, 2025 at 12:29 PM

KE

“ I remember Tom as a brother in Christ at Oak Hills Church. May God bless you in your spirit life brother.

Keith Elliott - June 21, 2025 at 02:41 AM



“ A sympathy card was purchased for the family of Linton (Tom) Thomas Clower.



May 30, 2025 at 01:04 PM