



Thomas Jackson Risinger

FEB 18, 1938 - JAN 4, 2025



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Weslaco- It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Thomas Jackson Risinger, who left us peacefully on January 4, 2025, at the age of 86. Thomas, known to all as Tom, was born on February 18, 1938, in Woodville, Texas, to Thomas Jackson Risinger III and Bessie Lee West. He grew up in Wharton, Texas, where he graduated from Wharton High School. He went on to attend the University of Texas at Austin on a rodeo scholarship, where he was a proud member of the Sigma Nu Fraternity and also completed the ROTC program. His time at the university instilled in him lifelong friendships, strong values, and a deep love for the Texas Longhorns. On January 28, 1961, Tom married the love of his life, Dianne Wood, in Wharton, Texas, and together they built a life filled with love, partnership, and cherished memories. Following his graduation from UT, Tom served honorably in the United States Army at Fort Lee, Virginia, where he demonstrated dedication, discipline, and a strong sense of duty to his country. Tom's career in agriculture and livestock spanned decades and continents. In the mid-1960s, he was introduced to Simmental cattle by Travers Smith and proudly held American Simmental Association Membership Number 5, a distinction he cherished deeply. He played key roles in agriculture missions to Japan, helping to open U.S. beef exports to the Japanese market, and participated in a U.S. agricultural trade mission to West Africa, including Nigeria, Gabon, Cameroon, and the Ivory Coast. Additionally, Tom was a respected authority in the livestock industry, judging national cattle shows across the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and Central and South America. For decades, Tom and his beloved wife Dianne ranched in Texas and Wyoming, building a legacy of hard work, dedication, and a deep love for the land. Tom also found great fulfillment in consulting with cattle breeders around the world, working alongside beef producers on several continents who were eager to succeed in the cattle industry. He had a special talent for guiding others to achieve success, and his



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mentorship helped countless individuals in the agricultural community thrive. A lifelong advocate for the Texas beef industry, Tom dedicated much of his time to stock shows, cattle industry educational opportunities, and youth programs and events. His passion for mentoring and educating young people helped shape the next generation of leaders in agriculture. An avid outdoorsman, Tom found immense joy in hunting birds, deer, and elk. He had a knack for telling great hunting stories that brought laughter and camaraderie to all who listened. Tom also cherished the simple yet profound pleasures of life, especially riding a good horse through a set of good cattle, embodying his deep connection to the land, animals, and the cowboy way of life. After retiring from the cattle business, Tom and Dianne "ran away" in a pickup and 5th wheel succeeding in seeing so much of the lower 48, Canada, and Alaska, and visiting so many dear friends made over the years. They wintered for nearly 17 years at Victoria Palms Resort in Donna, TX, enjoying the sunny weather and sunny dispositions of fellow resort-goers in that delightful place. In 2018, they moved to John Knox Village, Weslaco, TX, where they continued to enjoy retired life to its very fullest. Dianne continues to live at John Knox Village. He is survived by his beloved wife, Dianne Wood Risinger; his daughters, Tracy Risinger Smith (Bruce) and Whitney Risinger Swanner; his grandchildren, Tommy Swanner and Phoenix Swanner; and his sister, Mary Ella Risinger Anderson. Each of them will forever cherish his memory. Tom was preceded in death by his parents, Thomas Jackson Risinger III and Bessie Lee West. A Memorial service to honor and celebrate Tom's life will be held at 10:30 am on Saturday, February 15, 2025, at John Knox Village, 1300 S. Border Ave., Weslaco, TX 78596. Tom's legacy will live on in the hearts of his loved ones and the countless individuals he inspired through his work in agriculture, his love for the outdoors, and his dedication to family and community.



Tribute Wall

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Anonymous shared a **Video**.



August 7 at 4:22 PM



David Thornton posted:

Tom was a very special man. I was proud to call him my friend, and fellow cattleman from his time in East Texas, and as a resident of Victoria Palms in the Texas Valley. He was always positive and had a good outlook on life. I was blessed to know Tom for the last 25 years of his life. Prayers and condolences to his family.

January 16 at 1:09 PM



Mark Smith posted:

Mr Tom was a pioneer in Simmental breed, leader, friend, and a great example for young cattlemen and breeders. I always admired him , his cattle , friendship, and leadership. Prayers and condolences to the family. Tom Risinger was the salt of the earth!

January 16 at 1:09 PM



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January 14 at 2:07 PM



Media

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Anonymous shared a **Video**.

August 7 at 4:22 PM





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Thomas by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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