



Thomas J. "T.J." Fontenot

June 12, 1924 - May 14, 2014

Thomas J. "T.J." Fontenot Gueydan - It is with deep sorrow but sincere gratitude for the blessing of such a wonderful, loving father that the family of T.J. Fontenot announces his death. T.J. passed away peacefully on the evening of Thursday May 8, 2014 surrounded by his daughters after a brave battle with bladder cancer. Born on June 12, 1924 in Hayes, Louisiana the youngest child of J.E. and Maude Lambert Fontenot, T.J. grew up in a loving disciplined Christian home in the depths of the Great Depression. He developed a strong work ethic and learned the "value of a dollar" working in his Dad's grocery store and helping him with his cattle business. Young T.J. had his own business venture selling roasted peanuts in front of the Hayes picture show on Wednesday and Friday nights. He was a Boy Scout. He hunted ducks in the rice fields, squirrels in the woods, and fished in the Lacassine Bayou. T.J. graduated from Bell City High School in 1941 where he was on the track team and captain of its Calcasieu Parish Championship basketball team. Following graduation T.J. attended Southwestern Louisiana Institute in Lafayette, Louisiana where he was a member of Alpha Sigma Kappa fraternity. It was there that he met Gayle Andrus. In December of 1941 he joined the U.S. Marine Corp V-12 Program at SLI. He graduated from Officers Candidate School in Quantico Virginia and served in the Pacific and Tien Sin China during World War II. In 1945 before being shipped overseas, T.J. and Gayle were married at Asbury Methodist Church in Los Angeles, California. He purchased her engagement ring with his "peanut money". After

the war Marine 1st Lt. Fontenot returned to SLI and graduated with a BA in Business Administration in 1947. That August T.J. and Gayle moved to Gueydan where they quickly became active in the community. T.J. joined the town's American Legion basketball team. He opened a gas station and started his new business, Gayle Oil Company, which he named for his bride. T.J. pumped gasoline, fixed flat tires, washed cars, and sold fuel to farmers. Through the years his business grew to include the sale of agriculture chemicals, the introduction of bulk fertilizer to the rice belt, the supplying of fuel to drilling rigs, and the purchase of his fuel barge the "Miss Jackie". In 1970 T.J. purchased Andrew Romero Oil Co in New Iberia and expanded into the sugarcane belt and the convenience store business. Gayle Oil Company had now become the largest Amoco distributorship in Louisiana. Two years later T.J. began distributing Citgo products with the acquisition of Harmon Oil Company in Crowley. In 1986 when Amoco removed retail gasoline marketing from Louisiana, Gayle Oil became a full line Mobil distributor along with the Citgo brand. The 1990s brought a new twist to Gayle Oil – real estate. Who would have ever thought land speculation and hamburgers would mix with gasoline? But it worked and T.J. was off in an exciting new direction. In 2007 T.J. sold Gayle Oil Company and his fuel distribution business to Lard Oil Company of Acadiana but retained his commercial real estate business. The key to T.J.'s success was he never thought of his business as work, but as a game. And he enjoyed every day of it. T.J. had a long history of professional and community involvement. He served on both the Amoco and Mobil National Distributors Advisory Councils and was a member of the Louisiana Oil Marketers Association and the National Association of Convenience Stores for several decades. He served on the Board of Directors of the Bank of Gueydan and as Chairman of its Board since 2005. He was past president of the Gueydan High School Boosters Club and was the 1987 Duck Festival Honoree. T.J. and Gayle were the 2002 King & Queen of the Krewe de la Chambre Royale Mardi Gras Ball. For many years T.J. was an active member of UL's V-12 Alumni Reunion Committee and of Ducks Unlimited. He was a

member of the Attakapas Chapter of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, serving as co-chairman of its Flag Committee. T.J. was a 32nd degree Scottish Rite Mason and a Shriner for over 65 years. He was a charter member and Past Master of Gueydan Masonic Lodge # 429. He and Gayle were faithful and active members of the Gueydan First United Methodist church for over 60 years. What is really important in this message? It is the acknowledgement of the life of the man we all knew as "Mr. T.J.". The man who was always a gentleman treating everyone with dignity and respect. The man whose word and handshake were his bond. The man who always had a smile on his face and rarely had a bad day. The man who had grown to love the town of Gueydan and its people. The man who felt he owed a big debt to a town that had been so supportive of him and his business. And because of that he was always there to support the schools, the churches, the Scouts, the Little League teams, and everything patriotic. It is the sense that we have lost a real friend. T.J. is survived by his three daughters Cassandra "Cassie" McCain and husband Bill of Gueydan, Jacqueline "Jackie" Robins and husband Dr. Ronald Robins of Houston, and Mary Gayle Fontenot of Lafayette; two grandsons Jordan A. LeJeune, MD of New Orleans and Theodore "Ted" LeJeune of Lafayette; three step-grandsons Kevin Robins, William C. McCain III, and Clayton C. McCain all of Houston, Texas; a sister-in-law Lena Andrus of Mandeville and numerous nieces and nephews. He is preceded in death by his parents, his wife Gayle Andrus Fontenot, two brothers Curtis and Durel Fontenot, two sisters Christine Baggery Dionne and Juanita May, and a brother-in-law Edgar Roy "Ted" Andrus. Funeral services for Mr. Fontenot will be held at 3:00 p.m. Wednesday, May 14, 2014 at the First United Methodist Church in Gueydan. Interment will be in the Methodist Cemetery in Branch, Louisiana. Pastor LaMarylis Cotten of the Gueydan Methodist Church will conduct the service. Visiting hours will be observed from 3:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. Tuesday May 13, 2014 and from 10:00 a.m. until time of the services Wednesday May 14, 2014 at Matthews and Son Funeral Home

in Gueydan. Pallbearers will be Dr. Ronald Robins, Bill McCain, Jordan LeJeune, MD, Ted Lejeune, Maxie Hungerford, and Chris Callager. The family would like to express their sincere appreciation to the companions who helped make Mr. Fontenot's life easier: Maxie Hungerford, Celena Breaux, Kay Woods, Ronda Lane, Jim Messer, Gaylon McGinnis, Bridgette Woods, Bridgette Norris, Kay Johnson, Crystal Hanks, Grace Thompson, Elaine Trahan and David Schexnaider. Memorial contributions in T.J.'s name may be made to the Gueydan First United Methodist Church Endowment Fund, 501 Main Street, Gueydan, La. 70542; the T.J. and Gayle Fontenot Memorial Fund at the Gueydan Museum, Box 331 Gueydan, La. 70542; or to The National World War II Museum, 945 Magazine Street, New Orleans, LA 70130. Arrangements have been entrusted to Matthews and Son Funeral Home.

Tribute Wall



“ Thomas J. "T.J." Fontenot

January 28, 2023 at 04:12 PM



“ I'll always remember Mr TJ for his kindness and sincerity to employees of Penny Wise. He was an awesome man and I appreciate him still today even 30 years after I had the pleasure of working for him.

Brad Ridge - May 14, 2014 at 09:20 PM



“ My Prayers and condolences goes out to the family of Mr. TJ. Your father was a very kind person always a smile and kind word, a strong man by far the best man I ever knew in Gueydan. He will truly be miss by all that knew him.

Claude Huntsberry

Claude Huntsberry - May 13, 2014 at 06:02 PM



“ To my extended Family. Sorry for the loss of your Father. He has gone to a new home paved with Gold. While being his caregiver we talked somewhat your Dad called on The Lord while his new home and wings was getting ready for him and on Thursday night Jesus came and he took his hand. Rest on Mr. T.J.. The Battle has been won.

Bridgette Woods Dartez - May 12, 2014 at 11:47 PM

CW

“ Dear Cassie, Jackie and Mary Gayle,
I remember when your mom and dad first moved to Gueydan. What a loving and handsome couple they were! Later, I recall each of you girls being born. So much time has gone by..... Please accept my sincere sympathy in the death of your dad. You three have lost a wonderful parent and Gueydan has lost an out standing citizen that will br missed by everyone! God bless each of you and your families.

Carole Rowe Williams

Carole Rowe Williams - May 12, 2014 at 10:57 AM

KH

“ To T. J.'s family. So sorry for your loss. I enjoyed knowing Mr. T. J. through his many years in SAR. He will be missed by many. Yvonne Carter (now deceased) introduced me to him long ago and then I met Cassie and Bill through him. He was always great company at an SAR Christmas party or at the George Washington Ball.
Sincerely, Katherine Hill

Katherine Hill - May 11, 2014 at 01:35 PM

TR

“ My prayers and condolences to Mr. T.J.'s family. I had the privileged to work for him. He always had a kind word for me whenever we would meet. I admired him for that. This man who built an empire would always pump gas and greet him customers. He was a remarkable man and will be greatly missed.

Teresa Richard - May 10, 2014 at 09:35 PM

CG

“ I have always had the deepest respect for Mr. T.J. and will treasure the kindness both Ms. Gayle and Mr. T.J. bestowed upon me and my family. My prayers go out to Cassie, Jackie and Mary Gayle, as I know how much he will be missed...

Sincerely,
Cecilia Gayle

Cecilia Gayle - May 10, 2014 at 07:06 PM

CL

“ I read your very touching tribute to your wonderful dad. Very well said.
Please know, I think often of you and your family when I remember Gueydan .
Coach Lopez

Carole DROST Lopez - May 10, 2014 at 02:12 PM