



JOHN WEST THATCHER

August 20, 1927 - October 18, 2019

John West Thatcher, a “banana peddler” as he liked to describe himself, passed away after a long illness on October 18, 2019, in Miami, Florida. Born in Atlanta on August 20, 1927, to Samuel E. and Mary West Thatcher, he and his family moved to Miami when he was a boy. His many friends and business associates saw in him a man of great intelligence, integrity, and benevolence, all packaged in a fine sense of humor.

Although John’s early education was in Miami, he went to high school at Darlington School in Rome, Georgia. John credited Darlington with the teaching, discipline, and values that defined his life. He was a generous supporter of the school, both financially and personally, and served for many years on its board of trustees. Darlington named him a Life Trustee and in 1990 a Distinguished Alumnus of Darlington School. In 2009, Darlington built a new building for its Middle School and named it “Thatcher Hall.”

Following graduation from Darlington, John briefly attended Georgia Tech but later transferred to Davidson College. As with Darlington, so it was with Davidson College: John was a faithful and generous alumnus. Among other things, he served on Davidson’s board of trustees, endowed a faculty “chair” in honor of his parents, and created scholarships for undergraduates. On May 21, 1995, Davidson awarded him Doctor of Law, honoris causa.

An Army ROTC student at Davidson, John graduated too late to serve in World War II. But when the next war broke out, the Army deployed him as a Second Lieutenant to Korea. He soon saw ferocious combat and was seriously wounded. He received the Purple Heart, Combat Infantry Badge, and Korean Campaign ribbons. After returning home, John continued in the Army Reserves, earning several awards for meritorious service and a term at the Army’s Command & General Staff College in Leavenworth, Kansas. He retired with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

After recovering from his wounds in Korea, John began his life’s career at Banana Supply Co. Inc. He started at the bottom, worked in the warehouse, drove delivery trucks and

supervised the unloading of banana ships. He learned every facet of the business and gained a first-hand insight into the lives of its employees. Ultimately, he became its president. Under his direction, the company grew from its modest beginnings to an organization that operated a fleet of ships, trucks, rows of refrigerated warehouses, and branch offices in West Palm Beach, Orlando and Bradenton, Florida, the first vertically integrated banana supply and distribution business in the country. John put the customer first, both in service and pricing, and he treated his employees fairly. While John was President of Banana Supply Company, there were no personnel layoffs.

Dealing with a perishable product, shipping delays, hurricanes, and personnel left John little time for personal pleasure with the exception of his life-long love of golf, which he played and studied, and his faithful work as a Presbyterian layperson.

Following the death of his parents, John created the Samuel E. & Mary W. Thatcher Foundation, Inc. in their honor. From that point to this day, the foundation supports schools, missionaries and missionary organizations, churches, community funds, youth groups and other charities, locally and all over the world. John recognized that God had richly blessed him and that it was not only his duty but a source of joy to give to others.

Although John was not survived by any in his more immediate family (He was predeceased by his parents, Samuel E. and Mary W. Thatcher, and his brother, Samuel E. Thatcher, Jr.), he was survived by a very special group of friends too many to mention in this brief space. Chief among them, however, were Jacqueline Eads, William Jordan, and Zilphia Anderson. Ms. Eads and John served together on the board of Greater Miami Youth For Christ and enjoyed many rounds of golf together; Mr. Jordan was John's executive vice-president at Banana Supply and, after its sale, Bill helped John run the foundation; and Mrs. Anderson was his devoted housekeeper and chef.

A memorial service for John will be held on November 8, 2019 at 11:00 A. M. at Granada Presbyterian Church, 950 University Drive, Coral Gables, FL 33134. In lieu of flowers, Mr. Thatcher requested that donations be made to Miami Youth for Christ.

Events

NOV **Memorial Service** 11:00AM

8

Granada Presbyterian Church
950 University Dr, Coral Gables, FL, US, 33134

Comments



“ A tribute video has been added.



Van Orsdel Family Funeral Chapels - November 05, 2019 at 11:12 AM



“ 6 files added to the tribute wall



Gary D. Brown - November 07, 2019 at 06:18 AM



“ 47 files added to the album LifeTributes



Van Orsdel Family Funeral Chapels - November 05, 2019 at 10:52 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of JOHN WEST THATCHER.



October 28, 2019 at 12:14 PM



“ Mr. Thacher was a a very special man to the Bradley family. My uncles, Jack (Louis), Allan, Bob (Lionel), Benji (Henry) and my Grandfather Allan, were all his loyal employees. Mr. Thacher was more than a boss or a leader for Banana Supply. He was a humble, charismatic man who was extremely bright. He treated all in his employ as family. He helped our family, all immigrants from Belize come to this country and always provided them with a solid job and support. His love and support for my uncles helped put dios on our tables for decades. He will always be in the hearts of my generation for he was the glue that provided our families a roof over our heads and meals on the table. May his souls rest in eternal peace and my his family be comforted during this sad time. From all of us Bradley's, thanks you for all that you did for us.

Lanita Borrero (Josephine Bradley's daughter)

Ianita Borrero - October 27, 2019 at 06:28 PM