



Vinson Farrell Thompson

February 11, 1936 - May 21, 2025

Vinson Farrell Thompson, Sr. of Obion, Tennessee, passed to his heavenly home on May 21, 2025. He was surrounded by his family at his long-time home on Hurt Road.

Vinson was born in Obion on February 11, 1936, to Marion Cecil and Mary Ruth Barnes Thompson. He graduated from Obion High School in 1954 and from Memphis State University in 1958. Vinson later earned his master's degree in education from Peabody College at Vanderbilt University, as well as accumulated 45 post-graduate hours in educational leadership and policy. After serving in the U.S. Navy aboard the USS Los Angeles, Vinson embarked on a long and storied career, holding many roles across the fields of corrections and education. He ultimately rose to the top in both fields, serving as Warden of the Tennessee State Prison in Nashville and as Superintendent of Obion County Schools. After a short stint in politics (serving as the Mayor of Obion), Vinson retired to the fairways and greens of the Wynridge Golf Club, where he never saw a putt he couldn't read.

Vinson was a man of principle. He believed that children deserved the best educational opportunities in the best facilities with the best personnel, regardless of their background. He believed that being an educator was not only "hard work," but also "heart work." In his youth, Vinson was the beneficiary of educators and mentors that taught him the value of being tough, but fair. Vinson later paid it forward by extending those same traits to his students and his inmates, equally and alike, regardless of background or

circumstances. He imparted on his family the importance of education, hard work, learning from history, and “no gratuities.” He imparted on everyone that he ever met the value of a story and a joke. He never met a stranger.

It is hard to say which Vinson enjoyed more – competition or conversation. He enjoyed playing and coaching all sports in his youth, and he later became an avid golfer. He could count the cards in a Rook game, and winning the game always mattered. But he also loved connecting, as his blue eyes would light up at any opportunity to trade tales or learn about someone new. He maintained a treasure trove of jokes, trivia, and little-known Obion factoids, which he was happy to share over an ice-cold Coke. He was one of the oldest surviving members of Masonic Lodge #88 in Troy, having been a member for 67 years.

Vinson was deeply proud of his family; they are his living legacy. He raised a son and a daughter that continue to reflect his values and his love for others. He liked to line up his children and grandchildren to count their college and post-graduate degrees. With his grandchildren, he delighted in counting quarters, trips to the dollar store, or just simply piddling. He later enjoyed watching his great-grandchildren start to explore the great, big world. He always found joy – and especially humor – in the little moments.

Vinson was preceded in death by his parents, by his grandparents, Marion Richard Vinson and Ora Lee Howell Thompson and Fount and Vader Bell Turner Barnes, all of Obion, and by his sister, Annabelle (Herman) Denning. He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Olivia Ann Coleman Thompson, and two children, Anita (Mark) Kapperman of Chattanooga and Vinson Farrell Thompson, Jr. (Liz) of Southaven, Mississippi. He is also survived by three grandchildren, Cameron (Rachael) Kapperman, Conner (Samantha) Kapperman, and Cydney Kapperman, and two great-grandsons, Jack Henry Kapperman and Charles Thompson Kapperman. Vinson was also survived by numerous nieces, nephews, great-nieces and nephews, and in-laws.

Services will be held at Troy Church of Christ located at 1215 US-51, Troy, Tennessee 38260. Visitation will be at the church on Saturday, May 24, from

11:00 AM to 2:00 PM, with funeral services following immediately after. Dr. Chris Gooch will officiate the service, and Dr. Mark Kapperman will deliver the eulogy. Pallbearers will be Greg Ferguson, Gary Buchanan, Travis McDonald, Jon Hahn, Bobby Boyd, Garrett Buchanan, J.C. Coleman and Carter Ayers. Honorary Pallbearers will be Brothers-in-law Herman Denning, Larry Coleman, Dennis Coleman, Bob Wilcox and all those with whom he had the honor and privilege to work with as Superintendent of the Obion County School System during his 20 year tenure in that position. Interment will be at Rose Hill Cemetery in Obion. The family requests that in lieu of flowers, please direct donations to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude PL, Memphis, TN 38105. Donation envelopes will be available at the Troy Church of Christ.

Cemetery Details

Rosehill Cemetery

510 West Black Lane Rd.
Obion, TN

Previous Events

Family and Friends

MAY **24.** 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Troy Church of Christ
Hwy. 51
Troy, TN 38260

Funeral Service

MAY **24.** 2:00 PM (CT)

Troy Church of Christ
Hwy. 51
Troy, TN 38260

Tribute Wall

VH

“ Anne, I'm so very sorry for your loss. You will be in my thoughts and prayers! (((Hugs)))



Vickie Coleman Hood - May 27, 2025 at 04:11 PM

RP

“ Rachel, Rachelle and Heather Pangman purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of Vinson Farrell Thompson.



Rachel, Rachelle and Heather Pangman - May 23, 2025 at 12:44 PM

JG

“ Prayers for the family, RIP old friend!

jimmy gwaltney - May 23, 2025 at 11:09 AM

GS

“ Mr. Thompson was a fine man. My mother worked with him and she thought the world of him. I remember in 1979/80 he assisted me in a school project assigned by Mr. Kerry Olsteen at UCHS. I know that family and friends grieve but knowing that he touched so many people has got to be some comfort.

Georgianna Whipple Scarborough - May 22, 2025 at 03:31 PM

RH

“ Richard, Cindy and Parker Henry purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Vinson Farrell Thompson.



Richard, Cindy and Parker Henry - May 22, 2025 at 01:22 PM

RH

“ Richard, Cindy and Parker Henry planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Vinson Farrell Thompson.

Richard, Cindy and Parker Henry - May 22, 2025 at 01:22 PM