



Om is a sound and symbol rich in meaning and depth.

Om reminds us that we have the ability to move past our physical and mental states of consciousness and connect with the divine- both in ourselves and others.

In its essence, Om represents the sound of divinity in all things in the past, present and future.

**Celebration of Life
Order of Service**

Ayya Santussika, Officiate

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Lighting of Candles

Welcome

Guided Meditation

**"The Buddha's Words on
Loving-Kindness"**

**Eulogy
Valerie Fisher**

Invitation to Share

**"Reflections on Universal
Well-Being"**

Blessing



William E. Thomas

February 14, 1950 – April 30, 2015

Celebration of Life Service

May 11, 2015

**Hakone Gardens
Saratoga, California**

Seeker. Critical Thinker. Orator. Insatiable Reader. Teacher. Learner. Skeptic. Explorer. Smooth Talker. Golden State Warriors Fanatic! In a life characterized most by an innate sense of curiosity, William Edward Thomas, also affectionately known as Billy, lived out more than one calling in his lifetime.



Those who knew him best know that on the day of his birth – Valentine’s Day, 1950 – in St. Louis, Missouri, William was destined for the road less traveled in search of an extraordinary life: “I want to stand as close to the edge as I can without going over. Out on the edge you see all the kinds of things you can't see from the center.” (Kurt Vonnegut)

Son to Freddie Lee Thomas Sr. and Dorothy Louise Peebles-Thomas and brother to nine siblings in the Thomas family, young Billy distinguished himself with a sense of style, a flair for the dramatic, a confident stride and a head held high(always). When he wasn't playing sports, he was immersed in a book. He grew to share his father’s love for jazz music and the St. Louis Cardinals, even working alongside him at Busch Stadium as a young man. Young Billy shared a close relationship with his paternal grandmother Pauline Parker whom he called “Mama” and often persuaded to take his side when he couldn’t get his parents to agree. One thing was certain: whether in a Dashiki sporting an Afro or “dressed to the nines” in a tailored suit, ascot and Stacey Adams at a gallery event, or on the sidelines in full regalia at a Warriors game, Billy/William’s distinctive charisma, intelligence and striking presence were undeniable.

As father to Krystal, William sought to instill the importance of being fully present. Whether teaching her to read, offering (sometimes unsolicited!) counsel during her college years, or gently encouraging a brand new Mommy in the wee first hours of the birth of Grandbaby Khloe Rose, his words of wisdom were consistent: “It’s okay. Take your time and enjoy these moments.”



As life partner to Valerie, William found a soul mate, confidante, lover, intellectual sparring partner and fellow skeptic all wrapped up in one. Together, they built a vibrant family life with a deep and mutual awareness of being “a guest in this world to know the secrets that lie beyond it.” (Rumi).

William is survived by his beloved Valerie and their family, Leila, Manon and Patrick; daughters Leslie and Krystal, son-in-law Ronnie and brand new granddaughter, Khloe Rose and son Christopher; and siblings Freddie Jr. (wife Bobbie), Johnnie (husband, James), Anita (husband Jay), Darnell, Jerome, Gerald (wife Sheba), Patrice and Armond. He was preceded in death by his parents, grandparents and sister Lybrenthia.

We’re deeply honored to celebrate William with treasured family and friends with whom he shared a rich tapestry of living, laughing, learning and loving. We gather together in the knowledge that his essence, his spirit, his soul remains with us on this gloriously poignant day.



“William was both offended and deeply saddened by the prevalent suffering and injustice in the world. He blamed their source on our estrangement from the essential nature of the truth, of the world and ultimately, from one another. Ignorance and lack of clarity, deeply rooted below sedimented layers of lies and misinformation were his greatest enemies. ‘Sadly’, he said, ‘we believe the first story we are told when we should rather negotiate and re-negotiate EVERYTHING we believe to be true!’

William flirted with the inconvenient side of the truth with both comfort and arrogance. I absolutely loved this about him. Long nights of passionate conversations, often brought us to the edge of reason, revealing fascinating and uncharted territories. We would laugh and marvel at the discovery that we knew nothing and that it was okay, because we had traded the absence of blinding certainty for endless and enlightening possibilities.

Unlike most of us, William did not seek the safety of knowledge. He thrived on the deconstruction of what we think we know for the benefit of a perpetual exploration of what we have no idea can potentially exist.

I long for his magnificent madness...” (Valerie Fisher)