



John Thomas "Tom" Gibson

October 23, 1947 - December 11, 2025

John Thomas "Tom" Gibson, 78, of Rockton died on December 11, 2025. Born October 23, 1947 in Rockford; son of George and Virginia (Smith) Gibson. Tom graduated from Auburn High School, class of 1965. He was united in marriage to his first wife, Penny Meyer on August 24, 1968. He obtained his Bachelor's Degree from Illinois State University in 1969 and his Master's Degree in Education from Northern Illinois University. Additionally he obtained his Professional Education License (PEL/Type 75) Certification. Tom began his career at Harlem High School, where he was a history teacher; after working in education for a decade, he was employed at Murphy Motor Freight Lines in Sales, United Technologies (Taylor Freezer) in Purchasing and later retired from his Sales position at A&B Freight Line. Tom was the President of the Traffic Club. He married his second wife, Pauline "Polly" Johnson Bovi on May 5, 2000. Tom was a dedicated father and coach to his boys in their younger years. He loved spending time with his grandchildren, whom he adored. Above all else, he loved his family and was proud of their achievements. Tom was a die-hard St. Louis Cardinals fan. He loved spending time outdoors, feeding the deer on his property in Rockton and visiting the wild horses along the lower Salt River in Arizona. Tom spent winters in Mesa, AZ, where he enjoyed the outdoors and the beautiful weather. He was a skilled golfer, participating with his foursome each week. He was an avid skier and enjoyed skiing the powdery slopes of Lake Tahoe. Tom was a storyteller. His outgoing personality and a wonderful sense of humor brought stories to life. It was common to run across him on a bar stool at the Whiffletree in Roscoe, spinning a tale or chatting with his friends. He donated to the Helping Hands Food Pantry where his brother Jerry was the Director. Survived by his beloved wife, Polly; children, Tadd (Anna) Gibson, Troy (Kelly) Gibson; step-children, Heidi (Ryan Vanden Huevel) Bovi, Joseph (Amy) Bovi, Nick (Alissa) Bovi; grandchildren, Taylor (Nick Wallace) Gibson, Collin Gibson, Addison Gibson, Avery Gibson, Braden Jones, Cassidy Jones, Elliot Bovi, Jonah Bovi, Cece Bovi, Nico Bovi, and a baby on the way; brother, Jerry (Naomi) Gibson and a large circle of friends. Preceded in death by his parents, and first wife, Penny in 1993. Memorial Visitation on January 17, 2025 from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m., followed by a Celebration of Life at 2:30 pm. Live stream of the service can be viewed here: <https://my.gather.app/remember/john-thomas-tom-gibson> Cremation Rites have been accorded. In

lieu of flowers, memorials in his memory may be made to Helping Hands Food Pantry, 7620 Elm Ave. Machesney Park, IL 61115 or <https://helpinghandspantry.com/donate/>, St. Jude Children's Hospital, <https://www.stjude.org/donate/donate-to-st-jude.html>; or American Heart Association, <https://www.heart.org/>; all causes close to his heart. Share a memory or condolence at www.graceFH.com. Grace Funeral & Cremation Services assisted the family.

Previous Events

Memorial Visitation

JAN 17. 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM (CT)

Grace Funeral & Cremation Services
4301 N. Main St.
Rockford, IL 61103

Celebration of Life

JAN 17. 2:30 PM (CT)

Grace Funeral & Cremation Services
4301 N. Main St.
Rockford, IL 61103

Tribute Wall



“ Grace Funeral & Cremation Services created a Tribute Video in memory of John Thomas "Tom" Gibson



Grace Funeral & Cremation Services - January 17 at 09:43 PM



Beautiful. We miss you, Tom!

Wendy & Mike Whatton - February 17 at 05:00 PM



“ Kristin L. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of John Thomas "Tom" Gibson.

Kristin L. - January 17 at 01:59 PM



“ Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of John Thomas "Tom" Gibson.



January 17 at 10:44 AM



“ Ron Glavan planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of John Thomas "Tom" Gibson.

Ron Glavan - January 17 at 10:44 AM



“ Just so happy we made the trip to San Tan to meet Tom and Polly for dinner before they went back to Rockford. We enjoyed it so much and that memory of Tom will live on in our hearts. 💕💕

linda johnson - January 17 at 10:00 AM

CD

“ Craig & Becca Dunphey purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of John Thomas "Tom" Gibson.



Craig & Becca Dunphey - January 16 at 02:49 PM

CD

“ Craig & Becca Dunphey planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of John Thomas "Tom" Gibson.

Craig & Becca Dunphey - January 16 at 02:49 PM

TF

“ The Wallace Family purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of John Thomas "Tom" Gibson.



The Wallace Family - January 16 at 02:08 PM

TF

“ The Wallace Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of John Thomas "Tom" Gibson.

The Wallace Family - January 16 at 02:08 PM

LM

“ Lydia M. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of John Thomas "Tom" Gibson.

Lydia M. - January 16 at 09:30 AM

DA

“ A great friend, neighbor and co-worker for 40 years I've known him. Tom will be missed by so many. One of the smartest people I've known, a history book himself, kind to all, honest as can be and fun to talk to about anything but especially politics. Our thoughts, prayers and love to Polly and family. RIP my friend.

Merrill & Darcy

Darcy - January 16 at 08:44 AM

TS

“ The Old Post Staff purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of John Thomas "Tom" Gibson.



The Old Post Staff - January 14 at 08:07 PM

FF

“ Frank and Joyce Yattoni and family purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of John Thomas "Tom" Gibson.



Frank and Joyce Yattoni and family - January 14 at 08:49 AM

RY

“ I only knew Tom and Polly as "special neighbors" who came to their winter home in Arizona over the past few years. The very first time we met he offered to climb a ladder for me and cut off some palm tree fronds that I couldn't reach no matter how high I climbed. Tom was such a helpful, friendly and caring man who always had a story to tell, a book to recommend just an ear to listen. We would converse on subjects like American Western history or how to kill off stubborn weeds. We only got to share a dinner out with he and Polly once but were always planning that second one. He was like one of my oldest friends but I only knew for such a short time. I did know how special his family was to him. I feel cheated by his untimely loss. Love to Polly and heartfelt condolences and sorrow. All of our time together was cut way to short. God Bless. Bob and Renee Young.

Robert Young - December 22, 2025 at 01:55 PM

NJ

“ Nina Fulling & Alene Johnson purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of John Thomas "Tom" Gibson.



Nina Fulling & Alene Johnson - December 19, 2025 at 04:14 PM

NJ

“ Nina Fulling & Alene Johnson planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of John Thomas "Tom" Gibson.

Nina Fulling & Alene Johnson - December 19, 2025 at 04:14 PM

JJ

“ Tom will be dearly missed. We first met many years ago through the transportation world, when I was a customer he called on during his time with A&B. I truly enjoyed our conversations over lunch, our golf outings with the Traffic Club, and being his guest at the annual traffic club dinner. In many ways, it was because of Tom that I went on to become a member of the Rock River Valley Traffic Club—and later had the honor of serving as its president last year. I will be forever grateful to have known Tom and send my heartfelt condolences to his family. God bless.

John T. Oldham Jr. - December 16, 2025 at 06:36 PM

JW

“ My condolences go out to Tom's family.

Knowing Tom from the transportation industry and working with him over the years was a unique treat as most who knew him will tell you. We always parted company with a positive humorous insight from Tom's perspective.

Great sales representative for A&B Freight Line and friend! See ya on the 19th hole Tom-

Jeff Wilmarth - December 16, 2025 at 09:46 AM

DN

“ My deepest sympathy to Tom's family. He was a amazing man and friend to my husband Dan who passed away 5 years ago. I will never forget the great times we had years ago with the traffic club people. RIP my friend and hope you see Dan in heaven.

Diane Nail - December 16, 2025 at 08:22 AM

BE

“ I worked in purchasing at Taylor with Tom. He was so much fun to be around. Loved his stories on US history and told him if I had him for a teacher it would have been so interesting. Many talks about politics were shared. He loved his family and was so proud of them. I'm glad he found Polly to share the last years of his life with. RIP Tom

Becky Esselman - December 15, 2025 at 06:41 PM

DB

*My sincere condolences to Tom's family and friends.
A friend from Auburn High School Class of 1965. R.I.P. Tom.*

Dave Bennett - January 17 at 12:18 PM