



Dr. Richard Whatley Thames Ph.D.

July 23, 1941 - April 21, 2024

Richard Whatley Thames, aged 82, died on April 21, 2024, from pulmonary complications. Dr. Thames was professor emeritus of German at the University of Montevallo, where he was affectionately known to some two generations of students and faculty as "Herr Thames." Professor Thames came to what was then Alabama College, in 1967, as a national teaching fellow. He would stay for thirty-four more years, rising through the ranks to full professor. Dr. Thames retired from the University of Montevallo in 2001.

Dr. Thames was born July 23, 1941, in Meridian, Mississippi. As a week-old infant, he was adopted by his parents, Richard T. and Annie Lucile Whatley Thames. For many years he was not aware that he had been adopted, nor did he ever consider his parents as anything other than his biological parents. In 2004, however, with the help of an adoptee advocate, Dr. Thames was successful in identifying his biological mother and, subsequently, becoming acquainted with his two half-sisters, Mrs. Pamela Boucher of Locust Grove, Georgia, and Mrs. Patrick Delk-Bogue of Stockbridge, Georgia. Since that time, Richard and his two sisters have formed a new and happy family relationship.

Professor Thames held degrees from the University of Alabama (A.B.), Mississippi State University (M.A.), and The Florida State University (Ph.D.). He did additional study on a Fulbright grant, 1968, to Germany. Professor

Thames also studied at Yale University, Summer 1988, and the Wiesneck Institute, in Germany, Summer 1990. In addition to teaching language and literature courses, Dr. Thames was chair of the department of foreign languages at Montevallo for fifteen years.

Dr. Thames is, perhaps, best recognized for his long service to the foreign language profession. He was a prominent leader in foreign language circles at the state, regional, and national levels. Richard was, in fact, present and participated in the founding of many of our state's foreign language associations. He was twice nominated by Alabama Association of Foreign Language Teachers (AAFLT) for the Outstanding Teaching Award: Post Secondary. And, in 1989, Dr. Thames was awarded the Outstanding Teaching Award: Post Secondary by the Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT). Dr. Thames was also a member of the SCOLT Board of Directors. In 2017, The Alabama World Languages Association awarded Dr. Thames the organization's Founders Award. Richard Thames is especially remembered for his strong and sustained support for foreign language study and programs in the state of Alabama. Many Alabama teachers remember Dr. Thames from his time as the institute evaluator for several of the Alabama Humanities Foundation's teacher workshops. For Dr. Thames, this was just another way for him to share in the advancement of foreign language teaching and learning in Alabama.

Since retiring from the University of Montevallo, Richard traveled extensively to Europe, having been in every major country on the continent, as well as Great Britain and Ireland. He also loved to spend time with his companion animals, particularly his dogs.

Dr. Thames will be buried in the interior columbarium at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, in Birmingham. A requiem mass will be celebrated at 11

a.m. on Saturday, May 11, 2024 at St. Andrew's, where he was a very active and supportive member of the parish for more than forty years. It is suggested that in lieu of flowers, contributions be made to St. Andrew's or one of its charity outreach programs.

Dr. Thames is survived by his two half-sisters and their families. He also leaves behind his beloved dog, Madison, and his cat, Inky.

Previous Events

Mass

MAY 11. 11:00 AM (CT)

St. Andrews Episcopal Church
1024 12th St S
Birmingham, AL 35205
<https://www.standrewsbham.org/>

Tribute Wall

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“ Richard was my colleague at the University of Montevallo for many years and dear friend to my wife Judy and me for all those years. We are saddened because of his passing, but happy that he is no longer suffering. Our deepest sympathy to his family. Judy and I will always remember taking Richard to lunch at Firebird Restaurant in Hoover on his last birthday. It was an enjoyable occasion, one we won't forget. We went out to eat with him and our mutual friends Shirley and Ray Mayfield on numerous occasions and remember many of his humorous comments on people and places. After Ray died, Richard took care of Shirley in her last days and was at her bedside when she passed. We will also remember his love for his dogs and even our dog Houdini. I can see Richard now as he petted Houdini while our vet was putting him down, a very sad occasion for all of us. David and Judy Morgan

David T Morgan - April 27, 2024 at 12:08 PM