



# Thomas Sutton Wimberly

FEB 22, 1920 - JUN 19, 2022



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**T**homas Sutton “Sut” Wimberly, a long time resident of Monticello, passed away on Father’s Day, June 19, 2022. He was 102 years and four months old. He is survived by a son, David Wimberly (Lynette), and a daughter, Elaine Whittington (Greg), three grandchildren, Amelia Brodeur (Dave), Justin Wimberly, and Jacob Whittington; five great grandchildren Kelly Brodeur (Jocelyn), August Brodeur, McKayla Wimberly, Seth Wimberly and Henry David Wimberly; and two great great grandchildren, Keegan Meadows and Kohen Ramirez.

Sut, as he is known around Monticello, was a native of Cochran in Bleckley County, Georgia, and was born there on February 22, 1920 to Edward Taylor Wimberly and Mary Elizabeth Blackshear Wimberly. He was a great great grandson of General David Blackshear who served as a Private in the Revolutionary War, a General in the War of 1812, Military Commander of the State of Georgia, and after whom the City of Blackshear, Georgia and Lake Blackshear and numerous roads are named. He and his large family of 8 brothers and 3 sisters managed a 300 acre family farm where they grew cotton and peanuts, and raised a few hogs and chickens. They were all members of nearby Longstreet United Methodist Church.

When he was 15, Sut took over managing the plantation, as they called it, and there he learned how to manage. He soon moved to Monticello, to join his sister Lottie and her husband Charles A. “Hoolie” Noegel in the Van H. Priest Co. He worked in the Monticello store for a while and then worked in the warehouse in Madison, before being assigned as Store Manager of the Live Oak store. Almost as soon as the War broke out, he was drafted in Live Oak.

He was inducted at Camp Blanding, Florida and sent to Texas where he completed Basic Training. Then someone told him he could make Sergeant’s pay if he signed up for Paratrooper training, which he did. He was sent to Ft. Benning, Georgia where he completed his jump training on March 7, 1942, and awarded his Paratrooper “Wings”. He was then sent to Ft. Bragg, North Carolina where he was attached to the 503rd Parachute Infantry Battalion until June, 1942, when under command of Lieutenant Colonel Edson Raff, the 2nd Battalion of the 503rd was detached



from the 503rd and sailed to Scotland, becoming the first American paratroopers to go overseas in WWII. There they trained with the invincible British 1st Airborne Division, jumping from C-47 aircraft in mass tactical jumps at 350 feet altitude, earning them the nickname “Red Devils” with the right to wear the red beret that denotes U.S. airborne even today. Then on November 2, 1942, just days before Operation Torch began the unit, scheduled to take the lead in Operation Torch, and was re-designated again as 2nd Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry. On November 8, 1942, they flew some 46 C-47 aircraft flew from England across the English Channel some 1,500 miles to jump into Algeria and seize the Tafarquay airport in Oran, Algeria. This was the first combat jump of any U.S. paratroopers in history and the first combat jump of the 509th Parachute Infantry. On November 15, 1942, the Battalion jumped again on Youks les Bains, Algeria. And on December 24, 1942, the 509th Headquarters Company and 2 French Paratroopers jumped into Tunisia. Sut made these first three combat jumps with the 509th. In training shortly thereafter, he was injured and he was returned to London UK to hospital and subsequently back to hospital in Atlanta.

Shortly, he was visited in Lawson General Hospital by Dave Coley along with Dave’s cousin, Mildred Coley. Sut and Mildred soon figured out that they knew each other from grade school, and the rest of the story “is history”. They were married in Cochran, Georgia, at the First Methodist Church on October 21, 1945, and he worked at the Post Office in Cochran, Georgia from 1944 to 1946. In February, 1946, they moved to Monticello, where Sut re-joined the Van H. Priest Co. as Store Manager. Mildred took a job as Bookkeeper for Johnston’s Locker Plant. They lived at the Monticello Lodge run by Shady Bishop and his wife. Then they purchased their home on East Washington Street where he lived until his passing. He worked for the Van H. Priest Co., from 1946 to 1984 at the Monticello store, and then he retired. Mildred predeceased Sut on October 26, 2021 at age 100 and after 76 years of marriage.

On November 1, 1948, a group of local men, with the sponsorship of the Tallahassee Lions Club, held a meeting at the Monticello Women’s Club, and the Monticello Lions Club was chartered. Sut was the Charter President, the 10th President and the last President when the Club was dissolved in March, 1984. In the meantime, Sut and all his fellow Lions performed an amazing number of charitable deeds for the citizens of Monticello and Jefferson County. The Lions Motto is “We Serve” and serve they did. Many will also remember the fun of the annual Turkey Shoot they sponsored every year.



Sut also served as a Platoon Leader for the Monticello Civil Air Patrol and as Scoutmaster of the Monticello Boy Scout Troop 803 in the 1960s.

After his retirement in 1984, Sut continued to do many good deeds for his friends and he had many. He would cut their lawns, mow their fields, really whatever was necessary.

Sut was an active member of the Longstreet Methodist Church in Cochran, Georgia, and then First Methodist Church in Monticello and Mildred was an active member of the First Baptist Church. Sut and his son David became members of First Baptist on March 24, 1963. Daughter Elaine became a member of First Baptist Church on January 17, 1971.

Sut spent his entire life serving his family, community, country, church and God.

At age One hundred and one, Sut was nominated by the 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment, now known as the 509th Infantry (Airborne) Regiment, to receive the Distinguished Member Of the Regiment (DMOR) Award. He was an "Original" member of the 509th and one of only three still alive when he was nominated. He was one of only approximately two dozen men to ever receive the DMOR. This was pretty rarified air. The DMOR has to be approved by the Secretary of the Army. It is then signed out by the Commanding General of all Army Infantry. This was all advanced by a distinguished gentleman who is very close to President Trump, and the 509th, it was supposed to be awarded to the 2021 class of DMOR recipients at the Bedminister Trump National Golf Club in New Jersey. That didn't happen. But another distinguished gentleman, Governor Ron DeSantis, did present it on October 14, 2021 at the Jefferson County GOP's Annual Lincoln Day Dinner.

A graveside service with full military honors is planned for 2:00 PM on Thursday, June 30th at the Tallahassee National Cemetery. Lifesong ([lifesongfunerals.com](http://lifesongfunerals.com) or 850/765-3190) is assisting the family with arrangements.



## Tribute Wall

**Thomas Sutton Wimberly**

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**Jackie And Chuck Clemens** lit a candle in honor of Thomas.

Sut was loved very much and such a remarkable man. He will be missed very much. From, Jackie and Chuck Clemens

June 25 at 2:31 PM



**Alvin And Gaile Buchanan** lit a candle in honor of Thomas.

June 23 at 7:37 AM





## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Thomas by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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