



## Thomas Blackeagle Jr.

February 5, 1953 - November 20, 2022

Thomas Lee Blackeagle Jr. (Now Wena Thā) was born on February 5, 1953 to Lucy Billy and Thomas Black Eagle Sr. He was raised at McKinley Indian Mission by John and Norabelle Runyan along with many other foster brothers and sisters. When his mother passed away in his teen years he met his sister, Georgia, and became involved with his mother's side of the family. Georgia taught him about the Yakama culture; giving him a connection to his people and helping shape him.

After he graduated from Toppenish High School in 1971, he went to live with his father in Montana. There, he got to meet many of his half-brothers and half-sisters. Thomas Sr. taught him about cattle ranching and carpentry and Tom helped his father for a few years before moving back to the Yakima Valley.

When he returned to the Valley, he applied his carpentry skills and began to work with local construction companies. He was able to save up and purchase two houses that he rented for a while before selling and moving to New Mexico where he went to school at Artesia Christian College and earned his bachelor's degree in cross cultural ministries. From there he went to Pacific Christian College in Fullerton, California in 1985.

While in California, he located Sybil Brazil who had sponsored him when he was living in foster care as a child. He lived with Sybil for three-and-a-half years while attending college and developed friendships with her whole family. This included her granddaughter, Melinda Radke, and great grandchildren

(Melinda's children), Christian, Thomas, and Sara. While he was close with the whole family, he maintained a relationship with Melinda upon his return to Washington in 1988.

In 1989 he invited Melinda to Washington to visit him at the Mission. During her visit, he proposed to her and asked if she would come to Washington to stay with him. They were married on July 7, 1990 in Bell Gardens, California. Tom and Melinda lived at McKinley Indian Mission with his in-laws, Thomas and Wanda Taylor, as well as Melinda's children. He welcomed her children with open arms and loved them as his own.

Tom and Melinda worked together to minister to the congregation of McKinley Church of Christ. he became the head pastor at the church in 1995 until he retired from it in 2005. He brought in multiple work groups to help in the community and was a constant mentor, friend, and pastor to the people of the Yakama Reservation and beyond. The National Missionaries Convention named him president in 1996. For the next year he travelled across the country to many different conventions to tell his story and share the gospel. He had a servant's heart and worked tirelessly to help the people around him. In 1992, Tom and Melinda welcomed their son, Seth, into the world and later in 1995, they had their daughter, Emily. Tom loved his children and made sure he was involved in their lives and encouraged them in their walk with Christ. He made a conscious effort to be present at their school activities and actively involved in their studies as well.

Even though Tom may not have been the head pastor at a church after he retired from McKinley Church of Christ, he still ministered to the Yakama Indian Reservation and surrounding area. Tom officiated many weddings, funerals, and held many prayer vigils for members of the community. He started to work at Catholic Charities in 2005 as the Volunteer Coordinator. He used this role to continue his ministry by serving the elders throughout the entire state of Washington, building ramps, scheduling volunteers to pick up seniors, painting houses, cleaning yards, and many other projects; Tom would jump right in and work hard to complete the project smiling and laughing the

whole time.

Tom never knew a stranger. He would strike up conversation with anyone and everyone. Always welcoming with a warm smile, handshake, or hug. Tom would always take his time to make sure he greeted you and ask how you were doing. His earnest and friendly demeanor encouraged many to seek him out when they needed someone to help and/or support them. He remembered their name and could tell you everything he knew about the person off the top of his head. He would take anyone under his wing and made sure they knew they were loved. Not only by him, but by his Creator.

Tom was also a loving grandfather. He spent much of his free time chasing them around the yard – usually with a water hose. Tom loved his family and was proud of every single one of his kids. Whenever the family would get together, he'd have an armful of grandkids and a huge smile on his face. They adored their papa and would seek him out to play and talk.

His greatest desire was to spread the Gospel and ensure his people and everyone he met knew the love of Jesus Christ. He was a loving and devoted husband, father, grandfather, uncle, friend, and mentor. He will be missed greatly by all. He passed away on Sunday, November 20, 2022. Tom is survived by his wife, Melinda, his stepchildren, children and their spouses, Christian Radke (Whitney Radke), Thomas Radke (Amber Radke), Sara Brown (Jim Brown), Seth Blackeagle (Anndee Blackeagle), Emily Shewey (Jakob Shewey), his grandchildren and many nieces and nephews. Funeral services will be held on Saturday November 26, 2022 at 10am at the Yakama Nation Toppenish Community Center with a graveside service to follow at Toppenish Creek Cemetery.

# Previous Events

## Funeral Service

NOV **26**. 10:00 AM (PT)

Toppenish Community Center  
600 N. Meyers Road  
Toppenish,, WA

# Tribute Wall



“ Thomas Blackeagle Jr.

October 05, 2023 at 11:22 AM



“ I was also a classmate of Tommys all 12 years, and we graduated together with the class of 1971 from Toppenish High School. I remember Tommy from the first day of 1st grade at McKinley Elementary as a very kind and caring soul who would do ANYTHING for anyone. Even recently, as grown Sr. citizens, we would see each other from time to time and without fail he would ask about my family. He always had kind words for my family. I will never forget how reverent and emotional I would get when I had the opportunity to hear him sing the Lord's Prayer with his deep baritone voice at a funeral or a church service. He could really get low while singing. Later in life he introduced me to his wife and children, and I got to know them a bit from driving school bus. I will miss him dearly and will always have fond memories of my old "McKinley Buddy". Rest in Peace, Tommy.

**BLAINE THORINGTON** - November 27, 2022 at 02:57 PM



“ Allison Davis-White Eyes lit a candle in memory of Thomas Blackeagle Jr.



**Allison Davis-White Eyes** - November 26, 2022 at 05:47 PM

CB

“ Tom was truly an example of God's grace. He would greet you with a smile and made sure that you were okay. He would share a few words of encouragement with you, and say a prayer with you. He was a kind and gentle soul. When he spoke for God, he spoke with his all for Him! Thankful he was able to perform, officiate My Sons wedding this past April 2022! Rest in Heavenly Peace Tom! Your work is done.

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**Charlotte Bennett** - November 26, 2022 at 02:41 PM

GT

“ Gary Thorington purchased the Classic Charcuterie Snacks Gift Set for the family of Thomas Blackeagle Jr..



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**Gary Thorington** - November 26, 2022 at 11:58 AM

AC

“ I have nothing but fond and positive memories of Tom. He was such a caring and calm person for me, and I would have been lost without that in my high school years. I am truly heartbroken by his passing. Sending nothing but light and love to Melinda, Sara, Seth, Emily and all of the babies as they go through this. Thank you Tom Blackeagle for who you were to so many!

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**Audrey de la Cruz** - November 26, 2022 at 10:34 AM

VS

“ When I was down in White Swan with the LaSalle immersion group, Mr. Blackeagle taught us what hard work ment. The message wasn't only what hard work ment to us but giving back to the community in a Christ like way. Not only was Mr. Blackeagle a good friend in the week I was down there, but he was also a good teacher that had taught how to do quality work. Mr. Blackeagle will be missed by all on the Lasalle immersion team, but we will all get to see him someday in heaven.

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**Vincent Santucci** - November 26, 2022 at 01:36 AM

JK

“ It was a privilege to know a true brother in Christ. I appreciated hearing him preach at McKinley Church., He was guest speaker at Independent shaker church a few times spreading the word of God. He performed my grandson Andy and Bernice's wedding this past April. We will miss everybody's friend Tom. His work is done.

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**Joyce Kahclamat** - November 25, 2022 at 09:28 PM

DK

“ To the Family of the Late, Great Thomas Blackeagle Jr:

*I mourn the passing of my old friend, Tom. Tommy and I were close childhood friends since we entered Mrs. Mayer's first grade class together at McKinley School. My family lived and farmed a little over a mile north of the McKinley Indian Mission. Tommy and I spent many hours playing baseball and later, ping pong in the mission hall. One of my lasting memories is playing Little League baseball with Tommy in Toppenish. Since my parents worked late into the evening harvesting our crops, the wonderful John Runyan would pick me up and take me home. But after every practice, every game, without fail, we stopped at the A&W and Rev. Runyan treated us to a teen burger and a frosty root beer. John and Mrs. Runyan were such kind and generous people. Tom and I sang choir in jr high and he led the singing of "Danny Boy" at my father's funeral. Our birthdays were exactly one month apart. I will miss my friend, Tommy. It's like I lost a part of my childhood.*

*Rest in peace, my Friend.*

*Danny Kikuchi*

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**Danny Kikuchi** - November 25, 2022 at 05:23 PM

GT

*Tommy as I knew him when we were kids at McKinley School was a few years younger than me. I knew him because the school was so small that everyone knew each other. He was a friendly guy and always said hello even many years later. He always had that smile when he would greet. He made sure that I knew who Jesus Christ was and his witness helped me finally make my decision to follow Him. He sure was glad when I told him years later that I had made that important decision. Tommy will be missed and I pray for joy and comfort for all of his loved ones*

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**Gary Thorington** - November 26, 2022 at 11:51 AM



“ *Days of Sunshine Bouquet was purchased for the family of Thomas Blackeagle Jr..*



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November 25, 2022 at 11:46 AM



“ *Tommy was the struggling boy my father would take fishing. He was also the holy man that sang at my father's funeral and proud family man that never stopped smiling when speaking of his children. Just last week Tommy blessed me with one of his big, warm hugs. I will miss Tommy but know that his loving presence remains with us. Lots of love to Mindy & children from Karen Holm and the family of Swede Larson.*

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**K.Holm** - November 25, 2022 at 08:13 AM



“ *Tom was one of my favorite people. I specifically loved him as the man who cared for my Uncle in the last days of his life. Tom, God knows your name and has a special reward in Glory for you.*

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**WAYNE BRAZIL** - November 24, 2022 at 04:36 PM

AG

“ Tommy, Eliseo and I were almost inseparable in high school in Toppenish. We had great fun and adventures. Tommy enjoyed coming to our home eat; he loved wherever was served. He became family to us. He introduced me Chess and we taught my Dad and Uncles to play. We had many a great chess matches. Although I didn't meet John Runyan, I did meet Mrs. Runyan and could appreciate their love, influence and life instruction for Tommy. I also met Tommy's brother David Whitefoot. We were close friends. Tommy was a groomsman in my wedding. After the wedding ceremony the Groomsmen were outside the church, Tomm led them yelling and hollering in celebration. He was a free spirit. We moved in different directions and lost contact. But we connected again after his marriage to Melinda. We communicated occasionally. I was greatly saddened to hear of his fatal car accident and death. I will miss him. And I looked forward to that day we can embrace in God's presence. My deepest condolences to Melinda and Tommy Blackeagle family. I accompany you in your loss. Per Mr. Moody, you may read in the newspaper about the death of Tommy Blackeagle Jr. Don't believe it! Tommy is more alive than ever in God's presence. Blessings

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**AUGUSTINE GONZALES** - November 24, 2022 at 04:14 PM

SA

“ Sorry to hear of this loss. He helped us when my mother passed. He will be missed.



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**Shannon Adams** - November 24, 2022 at 02:57 PM

DF

“ I was so sorry to see this and my sympathy goes to his family and all who knew him. He touched many many lives in a positive way and his light shines on.

Dale Funk - November 24, 2022 at 11:36 AM

JH

“ May his love always shine down on you and yours Melinda. It sounds like he was a wonderful husband, friend, father, papa and a godly man.

Jowanda Holden - November 24, 2022 at 10:01 AM

NS

“ Norman And Louise Spradlin lit a candle in memory of Thomas Blackeagle Jr.



Norman and Louise Spradlin - November 23, 2022 at 11:09 PM

NS

Sad to hear of your loss. He was such a nice person. We met Tom In the 90"s at a church singing get together with the McKinley church. We didn't see him again until we started going to the Zillah Nazarene church 10 years ago and to our surprise, he still remembered us. It was always nice to visit with Him. Our prayers are with you. God bless

Norman and Louise Spradlin - November 23, 2022 at 11:26 PM

BP

“ Condolences to Melinda & rest of his loved ones. He was a gentle human being who showed & carried the love of Christ in his heart. He will truly be missed.

Betty Pierre - November 23, 2022 at 10:02 PM



“ *Be My Love Bouquet with Red Roses was purchased for the family of Thomas Blackeagle Jr..*



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November 23, 2022 at 08:55 PM



“ *I am so shocked to hear of Tom's passing just this week. He was here at our house just last Wednesday---I thank God we got a last chance to hug and kiss him even though we did not know it would be our last. What a beautiful soul!! And Mindy---we only saw you once in passing, but felt like we knew you for Tom always spoke of you/his love for you (and he brought us some of your jam!). His children--all of them---blessed to have such a loving person in their lives!! We even had to download the site to hear the "daughter with the beautiful voice" sing in Alaska!! I could go on and on and on. We will miss those calls saying "I'll be over in a bit" where we then rushed to put on the coffee always excited that he was coming to Goldendale. We are so very, very sorry for the pain all who love him will have to bear at his passing out of time-----but he isn't "gone", merely changed. God bless and be with all of his family members at this time. I feel like you've been part of our lives just by the love he shared for all of you with us. What a good soul. May the Angels and Saints of Heaven greet him and escort him to paradise!*

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**Rick, Cheryl, Jarrod Swearingen** - November 23, 2022 at 08:16 PM

JO

“ Tom was a great friend over the years. From the first time meeting him, we were friends. When Mom and Dad moved down to be house parents at the McKinley Children's Home, along with Ruben Nichols became a trio. All three of loved singing and many times Mr. R or one of the Hadley sisters would ask us to sing for the services. The three of us would pick a song out of the book and decide who was singing what part and that would be the special music for the service. Over of the years the USN kept me away from the Valley...After retiring when I could get over to help at the Mission it was like never having left. He will be missed by all who knew him. He is now at home in his new place, not made with human hands.

Joseph - November 23, 2022 at 07:56 PM



I remember him as we grew up at mission going to church there and going to McKinley school next door  
We lived on Katie road down Moses snd weiners we all went to church there I remeber church camp  
And him ministry's in church when my kids were little he'd come pick them snd talk about changing my lifestyle I glad my kids went to church there like we did  
He was a faithful servant just like Mr Rynuion and his wife when we ate at there house after church and Dorthy snd Ellen and Edina  
God be with his family as his family welcomed him home to mansion in sky

Jennie lukes - December 02, 2022 at 04:14 AM

MR

“ Tom never knew a stranger." From Community Organizing efforts in 1996 to connecting with volunteers about building ramps through Catholic Charities and various encounters in between, Tom was so full of life and love.from Sister Mary Ellen Robinson, SNJM

Mary Ellen Robinson - November 23, 2022 at 06:38 PM

CB

“ My condolences to Tommy's family, he will be truly missed. Both my husband's and my families grew up with him through school and McKinley Mission. He conducted wedding services and picked up our kids for Vacation Bible School. His beautiful voice will be missed as well as his kindness and everlasting smile. Rest in peace.  
Cathy and Ted Lame Bull

Cathy Lame Bull - November 23, 2022 at 04:54 PM

TG

“ I haven't seen Tom in years but always considered him a friend. The world was a better, gentler, kinder place just knowing he was in it. Our loss is heavens gain. I know he is happy now, basking in the love of his creator. God bless Tom and God bless us everyone.

Teresa L. Gehlen - November 23, 2022 at 04:50 PM

TC

“ Tom Blackeagle was an incredible human being that you rarely meet in a life time. Warm smile, friendly; good listener; willing to help at the drop of a hat, willing to give assistance when ever needed; gracious; family orientated; spiritual in nature; community minded - and I could go on and on and on  
it was truly an honor to know him- Rest in peace  
Tom C -Volunteer Chore Services



Tom Carroll - November 23, 2022 at 03:45 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Thomas Blackeagle Jr..*



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November 23, 2022 at 03:15 PM



“ *Tom had a pure heart and he loved to help others. He was such a wise and awesome man! We will all miss you Tom Blackeagle Jr. Godspeed to you my friend!*

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**Michael** - November 23, 2022 at 02:11 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Thomas Blackeagle Jr..*



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November 23, 2022 at 02:00 PM



“ *Tom will be truly missed, I will miss him bringing in fresh caught salmon and huckleberry pie and jam to share. He was such a kind soul and a good man. I am feeling a little sentimental as I realize our agency all staff is the last time to see him and witness his beautiful voice in prayer. God Bless you.*

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**Elaine** - November 23, 2022 at 12:59 PM

LO

“ I can remember the first time I met Tom & his family at McKinley Church. He always had a big smile on his face every time I seen him. Surprisingly he remembered me every time he saw me outside of church! Even as I got older. He is going to be deeply missed. He touched so many lives & shared the love of Christ with everyone he came encounter with. The last time I saw him, was at my Grandma's house. He built her some stairs. Prayers to the family left behind. 🙏🙏

Leanita Orozco - November 23, 2022 at 12:48 PM



“ My memories of riding the bus with Tommy are vivid. He was a shining light even back then! My family and I were so very honored and blessed that Tommy officiated at my grandmother Nina Barnett's memorial! She always had a soft spot for him. My thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends who he leaves behind.

Kathy Guess - November 23, 2022 at 12:15 PM

SW

“ Tom deeply touched so many! He allowed God to work through him to help others being the hands and feet of Jesus for countless people. He is one of the most unique individuals I have ever met and I will truly miss him. I learned so much from him about being vessel for the Spirit.



My prayers go out to Mindy and their family. May God bless you all during this difficult time.

Steve Wilmes - November 23, 2022 at 11:53 AM



BD

“ I feel truly blessed to have met Tom and to work with him. His passion to help others was uplifting. He always knew when you needed spiritual guidance and shared his gift with you as needed. He has left an imprint on many lives and will be missed dearly. Prayers to the family 🙏

Beth Downs - November 22, 2022 at 10:17 PM

RJ

“ Rest in Eternal Peace my dear brother, but know many will you. Not meeting that smile, that strong handshake, a hug, and a greeting. Not many can do that, but you did that all the time. Memories. Recall the names from our childhood days up to now. Runyun, Nichols, Hadley, Pratt, Goodman, Bushman, Garcia, McGrew, are just a few, but we all grew together as a family. To his wife, family thank you for sharing him, know our prayers are going for you guys. He worked and took care of elder. He taught our children in church functions. He retired. Then took it upon himself to check on families. Came and visited, prayed together, was very uplifting times. So many families are feeling hurt. We pray for those in need far and near. A lifetime neighbor, classmate, we both took oath to be ordained as servants to provide spiritual guidance, very good pals. Will miss those visits! Safe journey Brother. As you meet all those we miss, you send our love. Prayers and love to all.



Regin Jerry - November 22, 2022 at 09:42 PM

TD

“ It has been a privilege and a blessing to have known Tom since Pee Wee baseball days. I remember Delmar Carl used to drive to Toppenish, Wapato and White Swan to pick up youth to play baseball at different ball fields throughout the Rez. He was a good guy then and grew into a better man. We are charged to love, help and serve and Tom has done exactly that during his time among us. Prayers up for friends and family left behind.

Ted Donato - November 22, 2022 at 09:36 PM

LD

“ I am glad that I had the opportunity to work with Tom at Catholic Charities. He truly cared for the community and elders. RIP Tom.

Lahoma Doublerunner - November 22, 2022 at 06:49 PM

GY

“ Thomas a good man, always had a smile, and treated all people with respect and kindness.



Glen Yallup - November 22, 2022 at 06:21 PM

KC

“ I am so sorry to hear of Tom's passing. He left a lasting impression through his gifts of caring and compassion for others.



Karen Cunningham - November 22, 2022 at 05:40 PM

PS

“ Pam Sohappy sent a virtual gift in memory of Thomas Blackeagle Jr.



Pam Sohappy - November 22, 2022 at 05:25 PM

MG

“ Maxine E George lit a candle in memory of Thomas Blackeagle Jr.



Maxine e George - November 22, 2022 at 04:12 PM

DJ

“ My condolences to all family & friends for the loss of a kindhearted individual. He always greeting everybody with a smile and concern as to how they were doing. He will be greatly missed by the individuals/elders he helped out whenever they needed it. May he have a Blessed Journey that he so well deserves.



Debra M. Johnson - November 22, 2022 at 02:59 PM

TG

“ My condolences to the family.



Tamera Gardee - November 22, 2022 at 02:48 PM

MJ

“ *Maggie James lit a candle in memory of Thomas Blackeagle Jr.*



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**Maggie James** - November 22, 2022 at 02:39 PM



“ *Shasta Watlamet lit a candle in memory of Thomas Blackeagle Jr.*



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**Shasta Watlamet** - November 22, 2022 at 02:13 PM

BO

“ *Bernice Owens lit a candle in memory of Thomas Blackeagle Jr.*



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**Bernice Owens** - November 22, 2022 at 01:56 PM

KP

“ *Condolences to all the family members. Many memories of our big brother at the Mission. Blessings to everyone. Karen Pinkham*

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**Karen Pinkham** - November 22, 2022 at 12:56 PM