

HAROLD THOMAS DeKUNDER

JUNE 15, 1945 – JANUARY 03, 2026



DeKunder

Harold Thomas “Tom” DeKunder was born in San Antonio, Texas, in 1945 to Henry Julius DeKunder and Bessie Sonley DeKunder. He was raised on the South Side of San Antonio and graduated from Highlands High School in 1963. He attended Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos, earning a Bachelor of Science in Education in 1968 and a Master of Education in 1974. In 1993, he proudly earned his Doctorate of Education from Texas A&M University in College Station.

Tom met the love of his life, Mary Ann Zemanek, at a friend’s wedding in 1968. They recently celebrated their 56th wedding anniversary. Tom was a devoted father to his children, David and Sidonie, throughout their lives.

Tom often shared fond memories of his grandparents’ farm in northeast San Antonio. He was a proud descendant of the Coker family, whose roots date back to the Battle of San Jacinto. He was an active member of the Coker Cemetery Association, and he will be laid to rest in this historic family cemetery.

Tom dedicated his life to public education. He began his career in 1968 at O’Henry Junior High in Schertz, then joined Marion ISD in 1970 as a teacher and coach. Over the years, he served in various administrative roles before becoming Superintendent of Marion ISD in 1997. After retiring in 2000, he became an education professor at St. Mary’s University in San Antonio. Throughout his career, he also taught education courses at Southwest Texas State University, Our Lady of the Lake University, and UTSA. He made a lasting impact on every community he served as a teacher, coach, and administrator.

An active community member, Tom served on the Guadalupe County Historical Commission, the Marion Lions Club, and the Coker Cemetery Association. Tom devoted time to preserving historical cemeteries throughout Guadalupe County, a reflection of his lifelong passion for history. He was instrumental in founding the Marion Education Foundation and the Marion Community Library. He served on the Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD Board of Trustees and was on the Board of Directors for the Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative.

Tom was a passionate volunteer and meet director for the UIL Region IV 1A/3A Track and Field Meet for 30 years. Some of his greatest joys came from coaching numerous district track and field championship teams at Marion, including a state champion athlete. He also proudly led Marion ISD’s first district football championship team in 1977. Coach DeKunder loved reminiscing about his coaching era and celebrating those athletes.

Everyone who knew Tom knew he loved traveling to West Texas. No small town could be passed through without driving by its football stadium. He also had a great love for nature and animals. Over the years, he adopted a miniature donkey named JD and kept a small animal farm behind his office, which included a pair of mallard ducks named Bernard and Bernadette and a rabbit named Spanky. In retirement, he took pride in his butterfly garden and once nursed an injured monarch butterfly back to health over the course of a month, naming it Lady Spirit. He was an exceptional storyteller.

Tom will forever be remembered for his playfulness, humor, guidance, and wisdom. He found humor in everything and never missed a chance to share a pun. During the final two years of his life, Tom bravely battled cancer and, while in remission, passed away due to complications from pneumonia. One of his favorite songs was "Happy Trails" by Roy Rogers, a fitting farewell.

Tom is survived by his wife, Mary Ann; his children, David DeKunder (Odilia) and Sidonie Dickson (Nicholas); his grandchildren, Milena Dickson, Tori Mai (Zac), Nicholas Dickson, and Elizabeth Dickson; and a great-grandchild Lilith Mai. He is also survived by his brothers, Joe DeKunder (Edna) and Alan DeKunder (Jean), as well as numerous brothers-in-laws and sisters-in-laws, nieces, and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents and his sister, Barbara Jean DeKunder Olsen.

Services will be held at Schertz Funeral Home, 2217 FM 3009, Schertz, Texas on Thursday, January 15th. Visitation beginning at 10:00am, followed by a service at 11:00 am. A reception lunch will immediately follow at the VFW Hall at 1000 FM 78, Schertz, Texas.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in Tom's memory to one of the following organizations: Marion Education Foundation (please designate for teacher grants), the San Antonio Autism Treatment Center, or South Texas Blood and Tissue Center Foundation.

SCHERTZ FUNERAL HOME & CREMATORY

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Published on the Schertz Funeral Home & Crematory website January 2026.