



## Thomas Onslow Swangin Jr.

December 15, 1942 - February 7, 2026

### A Journey of Service

Thomas Onslow Swangin Jr.'s life was defined by the quiet guidance he offered, the comfort he gave, and the unwavering belief that service was both a calling and a way of life.

A sunrise that began a life rooted in Faith and Purpose, Thomas was born on December 15, 1942. He was the beloved son of Thomas Onslow Swangin Sr. and Florence Peggy Powell Swangin and was preceded in death by his younger brother, Michael Dewitt Swangin, a decorated Vietnam War hero. He carried forward the legacy of his maternal and paternal grandparents, Alice C. Howard Powell, Ulysses S. Powell, Lucille Turner Swangin Tavaris, and Michael Tavaris. This foundation of family, strength, and resilience became the cornerstone that shaped his life of service.

A man of deep and enduring spiritual conviction, Thomas walked the path he believed God had prepared for him. During his formative years, he was a Boy Scout, paperboy, and proud member of the Blessed Sacrament Golden Knights Drum and Bugle Corps, where he performed and competed as a mellophone player. He graduated from Seton Hall Preparatory High School and went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts in Humanities and Classical Languages from Seton Hall University and a Bachelor of Sacred Theology

from The Catholic University of America. Called to the ministry, he later graduated from Immaculate Conception Seminary in Darlington, NJ, and chose his path as an ordained Roman Catholic priest at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Newark, NJ. He served as a dedicated parish priest, hospital chaplain, chaplain of the Parents Booster Club for the Weequahic High School Football Team, and mentor in the Newark Diocese.

Thomas' dedication to others was grounded in a lifelong commitment to learning. His ministry extended far beyond the pulpit. Believing he could extend his service more broadly through education and counseling, he left his parish to pursue a career in public education. He later earned a Master of Arts in Student Personnel Services from Kean College of New Jersey, along with additional graduate studies and professional certifications in counseling and educational administration that supported his decades of work transforming the lives of students.

This expansion led him to a life devoted to empowerment — guiding generations of young people academically, strengthening families, and uplifting communities. His passion for advocacy inspired scholarship initiatives, tutoring programs, nonprofit educational publications, and workshops designed to help families access higher education opportunities. Whether mentoring youth, writing articles, or coordinating community programs, Thomas consistently demonstrated that service begins with compassion and is sustained through action. He dedicated nearly four decades to education as a guidance counselor, retiring from the Edison Board of Education Public School System.

In taking that leap of faith, he was also led to the love of his life and soulmate, Marilyn Marie (Smith) Swangin, with whom he built a strong partnership rooted in love, family, respect, and shared purpose. Together, they raised two daughters, Shown Marie and Terica Lynn, whose lives reflect that enduring

legacy.

Thomas and Marilyn created initiatives that reflected their shared belief in education, public service, and community. Thomas believed that having a path paved with opportunity was a strong foundation for both economic growth and community development. After retiring, Thomas continued his commitment to strengthening families and communities by volunteering and donating his time, education, and financial support to Neighborhood Housing Services of Camden, Inc. For him, retirement was simply another opportunity to live out his faith through action. He, alongside his wife, became HUD-certified housing counselors, youth mentors, and advocates for community revitalization for over two decades.

Known for his modesty, honesty, humor, and gentle spirit, Thomas made people feel seen, valued, and cherished. Even in his final days, his greatest concern was not for himself but for the well-being of his family — a reflection of the selfless love that defined his life.

Thomas departed this life on February 7, 2026, at the age of 83, leaving behind a legacy built not in titles but in lives touched, hearts comforted, and futures strengthened through his guidance.

He leaves to cherish his memory his devoted wife, Marilyn Marie (Smith) Swangin; his loving daughters, Shown Marie Swangin-Horton and Terica Lynn Swangin; his sister, Patricia Lee Chunn; cousins Carolyn Stewart, Basil Jeffers, Calvin Jeffers, Linda Taylor, and Barbra Powell Heisser; nephew and godson Keith Michael Bellinger; his beloved grandchildren, Sayla Marie Horton and Michael Christopher Horton; his future son-in-law, Brian James Rubino; and cherished extended family, friends, and community members.

His life was a quiet sermon, spoken not in words alone but in kindness offered, guidance given, and unconditional love. Though his earthly journey has reached its sunset, the light he ignited in others continues to shine, reminding us that a life of faith expressed through service is never truly lost but carried forward in every life it has touched along the way.

Relatives and friends are invited to attend his viewing on Friday, February 27th from 10-11:15 AM at Sacred Heart Church, 260 High St., Mt. Holly. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:30 AM at the church. Entombment to follow at Jesus, Bread of Life Cemetery and Mausoleum, Mt. Laurel. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made in Thomas' memory to:

Neighborhood Housing Services of Camden, Inc.  
(Memo Line: Thomas O. Swangin Jr. Education Fund

(Please do not make checks payable to the fund name.)

Or visit:

<https://www.nhscamden.org/tosjrmemorial>

# Cemetery Details

## Jesus, Bread of Life Cemetery

3055 Fostertown Rd  
Mount Laurel, NJ 08054

# Previous Events

## Viewing

FEB 27. 10:00 AM - 11:15 AM (ET)

Sacred Heart Church in Mount Holly  
260 High St.  
Mount Holly, NJ

## Mass of Christian Burial

FEB 27. 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM (ET)

Sacred Heart Church in Mount Holly  
260 High St.  
Mount Holly, NJ

# Tribute Wall



“ *Basket Full of Wishes was purchased for the family of Thomas Onslow Swangin Jr..*



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February 26 at 08:46 AM



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



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February 25 at 07:18 PM