



Dr. Thomas C. Sparkman

November 2, 1931 - October 13, 2025

Dr. Thomas Carroll Sparkman, beloved husband, father, grandfather, physician, and servant of the Lord, passed peacefully into his eternal reward on October 13, 2025, surrounded by his loving family. He was 93.

He was born on November 2, 1931, and was raised on a small family farm near Poplar Bluff, Missouri. His deep Christian faith, instilled early and carried throughout his life, guided every aspect of his personal and professional journey. Dr. Sparkman lived a life of loving the Lord and loving others. As a longtime member of the Church of Christ, and later of St. Andrew Lutheran Church and Zion Lutheran Church, Tom lived by the example of Christ—selflessly serving his fellow man with gentleness, sacrifice, wisdom, dedication, and compassion.

After finishing his high school studies at age 16, Dr. Sparkman then studied at Harding College, David Lipscomb University, and then Southeast Missouri State University, earning a degree in education. He taught for four years in the rural Rushville Schools, a one roomed school, before joining the Army during the Korean conflict. It was there he was trained as a medical specialist and his love for medicine was born.

Following his military service, he earned his medical degree from Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas. In 1963, he began what would

become a six-decade career of serving the Cape Girardeau area, most of that time in family medicine. He was one of the first board-certified family physicians in Cape Girardeau, and a founding member of Cape Girardeau Doctors' Park, where he served on the board as president for many years.

Dr. Sparkman practiced medicine in an era when family doctors gave everything of themselves. He rose before dawn to make hospital rounds, spent long days seeing patients in the office, returned to the hospital in the evenings to round again, and dictated charts late into the night. He made house calls, delivered numerous babies, met his patients in the ER, performed in-office surgeries, and answered the call literally day and night with unwavering dedication. Sundays were different-he paused for church to "spend time with my maker" and then family lunch first before returning to care for his patients. His service was not just his profession, but his calling. There are countless stories from those under his care who would patiently wait all day to see him because of the attention they would receive, many relating stories of how Dr. Sparkman diagnosed an illness when no one else could, or made a dramatic change in their quality of life or even how he saved their lives.

In his later years, Dr. Sparkman extended his care to the elderly and vulnerable, working with the Community Counseling Center, Crown Hospice, and serving as Medical Director for several nursing homes in the surrounding area, and even participated on a medical mission trip to Africa at age 80. His commitment to healing spanned generations and touched thousands of lives.

He also served his profession and his community through leadership roles: he was President of the Cape Girardeau County Area Medical Society and was President of the Missouri State Medical Association. He was an alternate delegate to the American Medical Association and served as an associate councilor from Missouri for the Southern Medical Association. He also served

as a board member of the Southeast Missouri Hospital Board of Trustees, St. Andrew Lutheran Church, and the SEMO District Fair Board. He was a proud member of various groups such as the American Academy of Family Practice, the Missouri Academy of Family Physicians, and the American Geriatrics Society. He participated in numerous medical research trials and introduced Cape County's first dialysis machine-an innovation that would later extend his own life.

Dr. Sparkman retired in 2023, completing an extraordinary 60-year medical career.

In 1979, he married the love of his life, Carol Wessell-Hahn, and together they shared a deep commitment to each other over a 45-year marriage grounded in mutual love, respect, and putting the other first. Despite the demands of his profession, Tom made time for his children's and grandchildren's events-recitals, sporting events, graduations-always a supportive and loving presence.

He and Carol shared a love for travel, often serving as the accompanying physician on executive trips for Chrysler Automotive. Their journeys took them around the world-to Paris, London, Australia, Japan and many destinations in between. At home, Tom found joy in gardening, treasure hunting for grocery bargains (oftentimes in the middle of the night after leaving the hospital), and delighting in unexpected finds-like bringing home mystery canned goods without labels or a 50-pound bag of brownie mix.

A quiet philanthropist, Dr. Sparkman supported countless causes, including the Southeast Showcase, St. Louis University, the American Cancer Society, and Southeast Missouri Hospital.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Thomas Echeberger and Gertrude Gardner Sparkman; his father-in-law and mother-in-law, Albert H. Wessell and Dorothy Wessell; his brother, Glenn Sparkman; his sisters, Mary Nell, Alice Lee, Verna, and Vera Sparkman; his son, Thomas Kendall Sparkman; and infant granddaughter, Sage Elizabeth Sparkman.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Carol Sparkman, and his legacy is secure in their children: Randy (Laura) Sparkman, Dr. Mark (Angel) Hahn, and Tara (Shawn) King. He was a proud grandfather to Thomas Sumner Sparkman, Blake Sparkman, Caden Hahn, Sienna Hahn, Everly Hahn, Tanner King, and Callie King; and he is also survived by many nieces and nephews. His love of medicine is being passed down to son, Mark, a family physician, his granddaughter, Blake, a future physician, and granddaughter, Callie, a future nurse.

Dr. Sparkman leaves behind a legacy not only of professional excellence but of deep faith, unyielding dedication, and a servant's heart. His was a life well-lived and a race well-run. There is no doubt he is hearing the words from Matthew 25:21 - "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Visitation will be held on Sunday, October 19, 2025, from 3:00 until 6:00 PM at Ford and Sons Funeral Home at 1001 N. Mt Auburn Rd. in Cape Girardeau, MO. Visitation will continue Monday, October 20, 2025, from 9:00 until 11:00 AM at Zion Lutheran Church, 176 Co Rd 226, Gordonville, MO, 63701. Funeral service will follow at 11:00 AM at Zion with the Rev. Daniel Warner officiating, with a luncheon to follow. Military rights and committal will be held at 2:00 PM at Cape County Memorial Park Mausoleum.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorials be made to Zion Lutheran Church in support of their sound system improvement fund, or a charity of your choice..

Cemetery Details

Cape County Memorial Park Mausoleum

2315 Highway 61 N
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT **19**. 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM (CT)

Ford and Sons Mt. Auburn Funeral Home
1001 N. Mt. Auburn Road
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

Visitation

OCT **20**. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Zion Lutheran Church of Gordonville
176 Co Rd 226
Gordonville, MO 63701

Funeral Service

OCT **20**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Zion Lutheran Church of Gordonville
176 Co Rd 226
Gordonville, MO 63701

Tribute Wall

SP

“ i remember dr Sparkman , he was or family doctor ,i remember his first office one of many was on kings highway , the build was to small for his patients to sit inside so we would have to wait in our cars till it was r time to see him.

shirley lee porter - February 04 at 12:53 PM

JF

“ Joe & Rachael Narsh and family purchased the E nchanted Cottage for the family of Dr. Thomas C. Sparkman.



Joe & Rachael Narsh and family - October 19, 2025 at 07:13 PM



“ To all the family, I send my sympathy and my love. I will be thinking of you. Jane Cooper Stacy

Jane Stacy - October 19, 2025 at 03:12 PM

A&

“ Amber &. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Thomas C. Sparkman.

Amber &. - October 19, 2025 at 12:54 PM

CL

“ Dr. Sparkman delivered 2 of our 4 children. We were an Army family with our roots in Cape. Twice I was staying in Cape while my husband was elsewhere until I could join him. He was always there for us when we were in between different post and once my husband retired, he became the primary care provider for our family. You could not ask for a more compassionate, knowledgeable doctor. Our prayers and thoughts are with Mrs. Sparkman and his family at this time. He will be missed.

Cindy Lowes - October 19, 2025 at 02:42 AM

TC

“ I am so very sorry for your loss. Blessings to your entire family. Dr. Sparkman delivered me in 1965 and for the rest of her life my mother would brag about how "Dr. Sparkman said I had the prettiest baby he'd ever seen." My mom was barely 20 and had gotten pregnant and 'had to get married', so Dr. Sparkman's kindness to her and his kind words meant a lot to her. I'm guessing there are thousands of stories out there like this. RIP Dr. Sparkman. You done good.
- Teri Carter

Teri Carter - October 17, 2025 at 12:19 PM

BH

“ Dr. Sparkman, was our families doctor, always kind and caring. I know he will missed by many.
Carol, I'm so sorry to hear the passing of Tom. You will always be close to my heart thinking of you in the coming day's

Beverly Hester-Lorenz - October 17, 2025 at 09:06 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Dr. Thomas C. Sparkman.*



October 17, 2025 at 08:00 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Dr. Thomas C. Sparkman.*



October 16, 2025 at 07:40 PM



“ *Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Dr. Thomas C. Sparkman.*



October 16, 2025 at 11:37 AM



“ *I had several family members who would wait for hours to see Dr Sparkman in his office. He was well loved by so many. Deepest sympathy to Carol and his entire family .*

Karen m Blattner - October 16, 2025 at 10:22 AM

A(

“ He was my doctor growing up. Always told me I had a new freckle on my nose every time I saw him! Such a sweet man! After reading this obit I realized just how amazing this man truly was! Rest in piece Dr Sparkman ❤️

Alea Belmas (Green) - October 16, 2025 at 10:11 AM

TR

“ He was a good one! I have many fond memories of Dr Sparkman as a young nurse. He was very patient and kind. His grin and chuckle would ease a tough situation. I knew I could call him for advice and he was quick to show up when a patient needed him. May God continue to bless his family and bring comfort to their hearts.
Trinka RN

Trinka - October 16, 2025 at 08:51 AM

DW

“ My heart hurts for the loss to the family. Dr Sparkman was my family doctor for many years. He was an amazing doctor and person. Rest in peace Dr Sparkman 🙏

Donna Wills - October 16, 2025 at 05:28 AM

DS

“ I remember him well, and Carol making the rounds at Southeast Hospital years ago when I worked there. They always, always had a nice word for someone when spoken to. He and Carol truly cared about their Patients. Rest in Blessed Peace Dr. Sparkman. Sing your heart out in Heaven and enjoy your Loving Savior's presence. Bless you for all you did to help others in this life. I know God is with your Family and comforting them all until you'll all be together in His magnificence in His everlasting Heaven.



Donna Starzinger-Parnell - October 16, 2025 at 04:08 AM

LE

“ Dr. Tom was a wonderful human leaving many people with fond memories. We cherish the times we spent with him and the family always appreciating the strong and unique hand shake, interesting stories, Cracker Barrel golf tee game competition, and wondering where “Thomas Carroll” was only to find him with seeds or plants from the ditch in a Walmart bag. We were blessed to have him deliver the invocation prayer at our wedding 28 years ago. May God be with him and his great family. Louie II, Christina and family

Louie and Christina Ervin - October 15, 2025 at 11:23 PM

FT

“ Dr. Tom was my Go To Doctor for a long long time. He took great care of me for years. I will always remember decorating his and Carol's home for Christmas for many years. Dr. Tom was not only my Doctor but a good friend as well. All of you have my deepest sympathy. Frank Trankler



Frank Trankler - October 15, 2025 at 10:53 PM

JE

“ Tom lives! We will miss him but Tom lives in heaven and in our memories of the wonderful times together that only he could entertain the youngest to the eldest with his stories. Special late night trips to Kroger’s in Louisiana for pineapple ice cream, the birthday cake he baked for Louie1 in Hawaii, Greg’s trip to the badlands and his prize finding of a rusty shovel handle, gathering of seeds from everything everywhere. “Tomas” in Cancun, Louie’s Bar on San Padre Island, and much, much more. We are blessed to have shared times with this unique and intelligent man. Janet, Louie1 and family.

Janet and Louie Ervin - October 15, 2025 at 09:41 PM

TF

“ The Bibb Family purchased the Joyful Memory for the family of Dr. Thomas C. Sparkman.



The Bibb Family - October 15, 2025 at 08:00 PM

AS

“ What an amazing life Tom lived. We are blessed to have known him. Sending our most sincere condolences to Carol and the family. Lyn and Ford Stoecker.

Allyn Stoecker - October 15, 2025 at 07:14 PM



“ Dr. Sparkman will long live in our hearts for his many humanitarian efforts locally and worldwide. My prayers are with Carol and the family!!!

Adelaide Parsons - October 15, 2025 at 06:38 PM

PS

“ I am so sorry to hear this, but what a wonderful life. He and Carol not only took care of my family, but helped me so much in my tribulations as well. He delivered my two boys, and my oldest son’s middle name - Thomas - was in his honor!! I will always remember he and Carol with love and admiration! Pat Andrews Stewart

Pat Andrews Stewart - October 15, 2025 at 06:23 PM

LP

“ So sorry for your loss, I want to thank you for sharing Doc with us, no words can express my family's gratitude to him as well as Carol for taking care of my family the way you both did. Rest in peace Doc you will be missed ❤️
😭 May God comfort you all 🙏



Laurie Powers - October 15, 2025 at 02:44 PM

CS

“ Connie Sanders purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Dr. Thomas C. Sparkman.



Connie Sanders - October 15, 2025 at 01:44 PM