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Thomas Howard Gerard



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Thomas Gerard Obituary

GERARD, THOMAS, HOWARD, the man who air conditioned Miami Beach including such famous spots as "The Famous" restaurant and the "Dupont Plaza Hotel", and most stores along Washington Avenue, passed away August 20, 2009. He arrived in Miami in the 1950s after having grown up in Chicago. He was born May 19, 1922 in Ironwood, MI. Tom graduated from the Univ. of Colorado with a degree in engineering

and then went on to the Univ. of Chicago where he earned his MBA. Previously, he served in the Army Signal Corps in the Pacific Theater during WWII. He moved to Miami Beach and opened a small storefront on Alton Rd selling air conditioners to a city that never had AC before. Tom went door to door and air conditioned stores, homes, hotels, restaurants and businesses. He realized that air conditioners, being such a new invention, had no way of being tested or repaired. Together with his brother, Tom invented and manufactured the equipment needed to test and measure AC units. This new "side venture" quickly replaced his air conditioning business and became a world class manufacturing company with two major factory warehouses. TIF Instruments, with over 600 employees, became the largest international manufacturer and distributor of leak detectors and other major instruments for AC, computer and auto repair. As a young man, Tom married Judith Krensky and had two sons, James and John. Judy's untimely death left Tom to raise the two boys himself. Later, he met his current wife, Suzanne Lasky, the former news reporter, and they have been a devoted couple for over 24 years. Tom was the kind of man, rare in today's world, about whom no one ever had a harsh word. Everyone who met him immediately took to his charm, sense of humor and caring personality. Thomas Gerard was an active member in the community taking part in many charitable organizations including the Diabetes Research Institute, the Alzheimer's Notables of the Jewish Home and Hospital for the Aged, Temple Beth Shalom, The Smithsonian Institution, The (former) National Association of Christians and Jews, American Jewish Committee, AIPAC, and so many others. He is survived by his adoring wife Suzanne and his sons John Gerard/Howard Moore, James/ Lorraine Gerard, and his brother Len and a list of friends and family too long to list here. So whenever you enter a building and feel the coolness of the air and are grateful to be in out of the extreme Florida heat, just for a second, think of Tom Gerard and smile. He'd like that. Funeral services will be Sunday at 2PM at Menorah Gardens, Riverside, 20955 Biscayne Blvd. Aventura. Instead of flowers please make a donation to the Parkinsons Foundation in Miami for research into MSA. To visit this Guest Book Online, go to www.MiamiHerald.com/obituaries.
Published by the Miami Herald on Aug. 22, 2009.



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