

Local Search Site Search

HOME	TODAY'S	NEWS	YOUR TOWN	BUSINESS	SPORTS	LIFESTYLE	A&E	THINGS TO	TRAVEL	CARS	JOBS	REAL ESTATE	
Local	National	World	Politics	Business	Education	Health	Science	Green	Obituaries	Special reports	Traffic	Weather	Lottery

HOME / NEWS / LOCAL / MASS.

The Boston Globe

# Friends, family recall 75-year-old man killed in Brighton

By Brian R. Ballou  
Globe Staff / August 12, 2011

E-mail | Print | Reprints | Comments (4)

Text size - +

Relatives and friends of a 75-year-old man killed Wednesday at a sprawling housing development in Brighton remembered him yesterday as a sociable figure who was handy with cars and who sought to remain active despite a worsening disability that hampered his mobility.

Like You like Frie family reca

Tweet Be the first to Tweet this!

Share This

William Thomas, 75, started to lose the use of his legs about 10 years ago from a congenital disease that worsened as he aged, but he never considered himself disabled, his cousin Barbara Roberts said in a telephone interview.

"You would never know unless you actually saw him in that wheelchair, because he drove and got around just like anyone else," she said.

Roberts said her late father had designed a cane for Thomas to use to press on the gas and brake pedals of his automobile. Thomas had walked with a considerable limp, but in recent years relied more on a walker, and then a wheelchair.

Thomas was fatally shot Wednesday morning inside his apartment at the John J. Carroll Apartments, a complex reserved for elderly and disabled residents. Authorities found him sitting in his wheelchair, suffering from a shotgun blast to his chest.

Yesterday, Randy Moore, a neighbor, was charged with first-degree murder.

"I almost still can't believe that he's gone because who would shoot a man in a wheelchair," Roberts said.

As friends grappled with the loss, details of Thomas's life emerged.

He moved with his three brothers from Georgia to Boston in 1958, and owned Williams Auto Body on Woodrow Avenue in Dorchester for many years before retiring. He also owned a limousine service and was a longtime deacon at the Grant AME Baptist Church on Washington Street in Boston.

Thomas was married for 18 years, according to his ex-wife, Joyce A. Johnson.

"He was really popular. A lot of people did business with him and he had the church, too. It seemed like everyone in town knew him," she said in a telephone interview.

Follow Boston.com on Facebook

Like

You like Boston.com · Admin  
Page · Insights · Error

ADVERTISEMENT



Their marriage ended in 1990.

Thomas celebrated his 75th birthday July 9 at a large party thrown by friends at a local hall.

But last week, he found out that his 62-year-old sister had died unexpectedly, of complications from diabetes. Also last week, Thomas underwent an operation on his legs because he had developed sores that weren't healing.

However, Thomas's medical condition did not keep him from participating in one of his passions, gambling. He routinely traveled to a convenience store near his house to buy scratch tickets, and would drive to casinos and racetracks in the region.

At the Carroll apartments complex, on Ledgemere Road, neighbors recalled a likable man.

Richard Brown, 88, who lives in an adjacent building at the complex, recalled "Bill" as an "interesting man, fun to get along with."

Brown said Thomas had recently bought a new Chrysler 300M and often found that a space reserved at the complex for handicapped people was used by others.

"He used to raise hell with them," he said. "There was always someone parked there that shouldn't be."

Resident MaryBeth Scott said she had known Thomas for 14 years.

"William was a good friend of mine and he would help anyone," she said. "He had a hard life because he lived in a lot of pain with his disability."

Correspondent Matt Rocheleau contributed to this report. Brian R. Ballou can be reached at [bballou@globe.com](mailto:bballou@globe.com). ■

© Copyright 2011 Globe Newspaper Company.

#### MORE FROM BOSTON.COM

[Whopper bass reeled in off Connecticut coast](#) *(Local News)*

[Blue shark found in the woods in NH](#) *(Local News)*

[UK takes stock a week after riots began](#) *(World News)*

[Bratton to act as adviser on gangs and violence](#) *(World News)*

[What to do this weekend](#) *(Go To It)*

#### MORE FROM THE WEB

[Let's See If Empire District Electric Is Hiding Weakness](#) *(The Motley Fool)*

[ExxonMobil's earnings: The real story you won't hear in Washington](#) *(ExxonMobil's Perspectives)*

[Gas prices and industry earnings: A few things to think about the next time you fill up](#) *(ExxonMobil's Perspectives)*

[Great White Sharks Pose Danger and Discovery Off Cape Cod Beaches](#) *(FoxNews.com)*

[Reid and Boehner Plans Not That Far Apart](#) *(The Fiscal Times)*

[Sponsored links]



Start your week off right with in-depth coverage. [Subscribe now to the Globe.](#)

#### INSIDE BOSTON.COM

##### TOP 10 MASS. BEACHES



The best beaches in the state for sand, surf, and nature

##### HOW BOSTON RANKS



See how Boston ranks for romance, sports and more

##### DRIVERS TO WATCH AT NHMS



10 drivers to watch at the IndyCar race in New Hampshire

##### ALFRESCO DINING



Try these great outdoor dining options around town

##### PLUS...

[Blogs](#) | [Crossword](#) | [Comics](#) | [Horoscopes](#) | [Games](#) | [Lottery](#) | [Caption contest](#) | [Today in history](#)

#### MOST E-MAILED »

1. [Why did Japan surrender?](#)
2. [Old stomping grounds for Big Papi](#)
3. [Market Watch: Plimsolls-a-plenty](#)
4. [Near salty havens, fresh alternatives](#)
5. [A sober lesson that seems to stick](#)
6. [Seven things college students don't need](#)
7. ['Faces' to get one last hurrah before the bulldozer](#)

#### RECOMMENDED SEARCHES

- [Comics](#)
- [Weather](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [Sudoku](#)
- [Horoscope](#)
- [Crossword puzzle](#)

[Not Your Average Joe's](#)  
Creative, Casual & Fun  
Restaurant. Call Now &  
We'll Save You A Place!  
[NotYourAverageJoes.com](http://NotYourAverageJoes.com)



READER COMMENTS »

[View reader comments \(4\) »](#) [Comment on this story »](#)

Ads by Google [what's this?](#)

[Frank Hernandez, Ph.D.](#)  
Clinical Neuropsychologist Evaluations in English and Spanish  
[www.centalsquaretherapy.com](http://www.centalsquaretherapy.com)

[Stress & Peak Performance](#)  
Online Stress Reduction Training \$45/training. Sign up today.  
[www.ParamountTransitions.com](http://www.ParamountTransitions.com)

[Home](#) | [Today's Globe](#) | [News](#) | [Business](#) | [Sports](#) | [Lifestyle](#) | [A&E](#) | [Things to Do](#) | [Travel](#) | [Cars](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Local Search](#)

[CONTACT BOSTON.COM](#) | [Help](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Work here](#) | [Updated Privacy Policy](#) | [Your Ad Choices](#) | [Newsletters](#) | [Mobile](#) | [RSS feeds](#) | [Sitemap](#)

[CONTACT THE BOSTON GLOBE](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Manage your subscription](#) | [Advertise](#) | [The Boston Globe Extras](#) | [The Boston Globe Gallery](#) | © 2011 NY Times Co.

