



## Paul "Big Iron" Thompson

November 1, 1937 - July 31, 2016

Paul Dennis "Big Iron" Thompson, 78, passed away surrounded by his loving family on Sunday, July 31, 2016, at Baptist Memorial Hospital Golden Triangle in Columbus, Mississippi. Visitation will be held on Tuesday, August 2, 2016, from 4 p.m. until 8 p.m. at Nowell Massey Funeral Home in Louisville, Mississippi. Funeral services will be Wednesday, August 3, 2016, at 11 a.m. in the Nowell Massey Funeral Home Chapel with Rev. Mike Childs and Bert Haaga officiating. Interment will follow in Arlington Baptist Church Cemetery in Neshoba County.

Paul was born on November 1, 1937, to Code and Pauline Barrett Thompson of the Burnside community. He graduated from Arlington High School in 1955. He joined the U.S. Army in 1957 where he served as a Military Policeman stationed in California. After his service he moved to Poplar Bluff, Missouri before returning home. After his return to Mississippi he became a Deputy Sheriff for Neshoba County from 1962-1963. He graduated from the Mississippi Highway Patrol Academy in 1963 and served as a Trooper assigned to Winston County until 1985 when he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant over the Division of Implied Consent. He held this position up until his retirement in 1990. He was a Mason in the Betheden Masonic Lodge.

Paul was a Boy Scout in his youth at Arlington. While living in Poplar Bluff, Missouri he served as Scoutmaster for Troop 164. After returning to

Mississippi he became Scoutmaster for Boy Scout Troop 5 in Louisville, a position he held from 1963 until 2008. He served as Ranger for Camp Palila Boy Scout Camp from 1967 until 1980. During his Scouting tenure he received numerous awards including the Silver Beaver and the Good Shepherd. He led many young men on his several expeditions to Philmont Boy Scout Ranch over the years.

Paul is survived by his wife of 54 years, Margie Hendrickson Thompson, of Louisville; three daughters, Denise Keller of Philadelphia, Mississippi, Paula Perkins (Mike) of Louisville, and MeLissa Halford (Tommy) of West Memphis, Arkansas. One of his greatest joys was being "PawPaw" to his five grandchildren: Justin Keller (Laken), Samantha Perkins, Brett Perkins, Mackenzie Halford and L. T. Halford; and his great-granddaughter, Karcie Raye. Paul also leaves behind his brother, Tony Thompson (Jimmy Diane) of the Nanih Waiya Community.

Mr. Thompson was preceded in death by his parents; his sisters: Kay Haas, Shirley McMillan and Jo Massey; his brother, John Thompson; and his son-in-law, Harold Keller.

Serving as pallbearers will be Justin Keller, Brett Perkins, Wally Bennett, Eddie Harsh, Michael Peterson, Kevin Hudson, Michael Cravens and Kent Coffey. Honorary pallbearers are the Band of Brothers. Memorials may be given to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Tribute Program, P. O. Box 1000 Department 142, Memphis, TN 38148-0142 or to Paralyzed Veterans of America, 801 Eighteenth Street, NW Washington, DC 20006-3517.

Services are under the direction of Nowell-Massey Funeral Home, 724 North Columbus Avenue, Louisville, MS. Memories and condolences may be shared with the family by signing the guest register at [www.nowellmasseyfuneralhome.com](http://www.nowellmasseyfuneralhome.com).



# Cemetery Details

## Arlington Baptist Church Cemetery

Highway 19 North  
Marty Stuart Drive  
Philadelphia, MS 39350

# Previous Events

## Visitation

**AUG 2.** 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Massey Funeral Home  
724 N. Columbus Avenue  
Louisville, MS 39339  
(662) 773-3501  
nowellfuneral@bellsouth.net  
<https://www.masseyfuneralhome.net/>

## Service

**AUG 3.** 11:00 AM (CT)

Nowell-Massey Funeral Home Chapel  
724 N Columbus Ave  
Louisville, MS 39339  
nowellfuneral@bellsouth.net  
<http://www.nowellmasseyfuneralhome.com>

# Tribute Wall



“ *Paul "Big Iron" Thompson*

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January 29, 2023 at 06:32 AM



“ *Thoughts and prayers with you and your family during this time of sorrow.*

*Lisa Blanset- Addy*

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**LBA** - August 03, 2016 at 07:18 PM



“ *Not only did Mr. Thompson inspire generations of Boy Scouts, but generations of Girl Scouts too. He was so generous with Camp Palila and let us camp and canoe there as often as we wanted. I have such fond memories of him. My prayers are with his family. He was truly a great man.*

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**Mary Beth Statham Davis** - August 03, 2016 at 11:13 AM



“ *We are so sorry for your loss. What a great influence he was to so many young men in scouting! Our sons thought the world of him. You all are in our thoughts and prayers!*

*Eddy & Joyce Vaughn*

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**Joyce Vaughn** - August 03, 2016 at 10:24 AM



“ *Classic Sympathy Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Paul "Big Iron" Thompson.*



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August 03, 2016 at 09:12 AM



“ *I'll be honest: During my early days at Camp Palila, Big Iron scared the heck out of me. That scowl, that gruff exterior, that big gun on his hip. But there was something there that also made me want to be on this man's radar: I wanted to impress him, I wanted his respect. 40 years later and I still think of him often, am still grateful for his time and service. And am still a little scared of him. Rest in peace, Iron. You've definitely earned it.*

*Jack Slay, Jr.*

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**Jack Slay, Jr.** - August 03, 2016 at 07:54 AM



“ *Sincere condolences to the Thompson family. It is always hard losing our loved ones, may the God of comfort and peace give your family a deep inner peace during this time of pain and stress. Philippians 4:6-7.*

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**D. Tyler** - August 03, 2016 at 07:51 AM



“ *Thinking of you and your family during this time of sorrow.*

*JB and Mary Blanset*

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**blanset** - August 02, 2016 at 07:31 PM

BT

“ When I was about 17 years old, Big Iron came to my house to discuss troop business. He came in his MHP cruiser so he could listen to his radio for dispatches and we would sit in the car and talk about pending camp-outs or other Troop 5 business. One day he came by and while we sat in the car, my little sister, Charlotte (Nabers), then age 8, came out to the carport storage room and got an orange drink out of the storage room. (She did not see us in the cruiser.) Big Iron turned on the blue lights and a short burst on the siren, got out of the car and told Charlotte she was under arrest for stealing the orange drink. She was speechless and just knew life was over. She tried to explain her way out of the predicament, and Big Iron finally gave in and told her he was kidding. I don't think she ever got over this one. Bill Tabor

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**Bill Tabor** - August 02, 2016 at 07:30 PM

LP

“ Paul was a wonderful, Christian influence on so many young men and women. i really appreciate his willingness to serve in the Scouts and be there for my son, Chris, as he worked to get his Eagle Scout recognition. One of my proudest moments of my son and I am still so proud to say I am the mother of an Eagle Scout. Wouldn't have been possible without Big Iron!

*Linda Jayroe Pepper*

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**LindaJayroe Pepper** - August 02, 2016 at 06:25 PM

HB

“ He was my dear friend and an inspiration to all, both boys and leaders. The memories are many and while the grief and sadness is temporary, the shining examples he left are joyous and happy. We will miss him but await the time when we meet again at our Lord's campfire. . . . you want to sing it's fresh like spring, you want to pass it on. HE DID!!

*Mike "Doc" Barnes*

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**H M Barnes** - August 02, 2016 at 05:40 PM

TW

“ ” Many great memories and stories to be cherished by all that were fortunate to be associated with the Band of Brothers and led by the respected leadership of Big Iron.

*He always had time to listen and to offer advise that would make you a better person.*

*Thanks good friend for the encouragement and discipline and always sharing an example for spiritual growth."*

*Your wisdom and humor will remain trademarks to inspire all that knew the legend of Big Iron.*

*---Thad Watkins*

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**Thad Watkins** - August 02, 2016 at 02:01 PM

BH

“ One of my earliest memories of Mr. Thompson was at Camp Palila. I was so-o-o-o new to Scouting, I may not have even earned Tenderfoot yet. Parents of the other boys had picked them up, and Big Iron and I were outside of the Ranger's Cabin. He asked if I knew how to read a map & compass, to which I obviously answered "no". He took the time to help me understand the basics of map & compass ... and every Scout knows the first thing you do is "orient the map". I've thought many times how that is such a simple, appropriate, and comprehensive picture of Mr. Thompson and his life's work: to make sure that every boy orients his life properly ... to put God first, his family second, and his brothers in Scouting next. To walk wisely. To be slow to speak, slow to anger, and keep a smile on your face. And to give abundantly of yourself, not expecting to receive. Thank you for all that you did for all of us, Big Iron! "Softly falls the light of day, as our campfire fades away...."

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**Bruce Herrington** - August 02, 2016 at 12:42 PM

TM

“ Big Iron shaped and molded my life. Outside of my father he was the man I respected the most. Those trips to Philmont and National Jamboree and the summers at Palila, still are the most enjoyable time of my life. He made a difference in so many lives. A true example of a Christian man!!

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**Tom Morgan** - August 02, 2016 at 12:03 PM

JM

“ All the trips, all the stories, all the lessons, all the discipline he taught us.....  
Even after I was grown up.....He was still an inspiration and true friend to me.  
Boy Scouts made me a man.....Big Iron made me a good man!  
I will truly miss you my friend and Masonic brother!

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**Jimmy McCleer** - August 01, 2016 at 10:00 PM

CS

“ He was a man with a big heart who will be greatly missed. Prayers for his family and friends.

Carol Cravens Swain - August 01, 2016 at 09:27 PM



“ Peace, Prayers & Blessings - Blue and White was purchased for the family of Paul "Big Iron" Thompson.



August 01, 2016 at 08:12 PM

JJ

“ Have been listening as so many have shared memories of Big Iron these last few days. The love that he had for young people and the impact he had on so many of our youth is beyond measure. He literally knew people in EVERY state they visited on their trips ! I loved talking with several of his Scouts and hearing them share their adventures, from canoeing on the Current River to the ultimate Boy Scout adventure at Philmont, that indeed helped turn boys into men. Good men. Men of God. Good Husbands. Good Fathers. Good Sons. Their lives were changed. And so this Mother says thank you, Paul Thompson - "Big Iron", for sharing your life and your wisdom with our boys. Fly High.....

Judy Jackson - August 01, 2016 at 07:52 PM

WC

“ Wayne Childress. Outside of my father no other man had a greater influence on my life than Mr. Big Iron Paul Thompson. I wonder how many young men's life he helped mold in the 50+ years he led the Scouts of Troop 5 Louisville MS. The stories are endless as well as the memories. Go rest high on that mountain. Till we meet again.

Wayne Childress - August 01, 2016 at 06:59 PM

AP

*Psalms 133*

Arlin W. Steen, Jr. PM - August 02, 2016 at 12:24 AM

JR

“ I served on the staff of Boy Scout Camp Palila in Louisville during the camp's final years and Mr. Thompson was living in the camp director's lodge. I remember helping him move out of the lodge when the camp closed, and how sad he was that Palila would exist no more. He became one of the most admired and respected men I have ever met in Scouting. He will be remembered by many.

*Well done good and faithful servant.*

Jonathan Rogers - August 01, 2016 at 06:27 PM

WB

“ Big Iron was a great example. He not only led us at Palila and Philmont but also to the foot of the cross. I'll never forget seeing him jog in his red long handles for his physical at Philmont. I still tell my kids about visiting BIT (Burnside Institute of Technology) and drinking sweet tea at his mom's after mowing the grass.

*On my Honor*

*Woody Brand*

Woody Brand - August 01, 2016 at 05:55 PM



“ *Classic Sympathy Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Paul "Big Iron" Thompson.*



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August 01, 2016 at 05:31 PM



“ *It would be difficult to overstate how much Big Iron mean to me. I thought of so many Monday night meetings, so many trips, so many bus rides, and so many campouts last night. He served so many so well for so long.*

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**Kent Coffey** - August 01, 2016 at 01:45 PM



“ *If the iron is blunt, and one does not sharpen the edge, he must use more strength, but wisdom helps one to succeed. - Ecclesiastes 10:10*

*If there is one word I can use to describe the man it would be wisdom. So as I was thinking about what I would say, I found this verse in Ecclesiastes that also had his nickname and thought it might be appropriate. As I read all of the wonderful memories that are being posted, the wisdom that this man imparted to those around him shines forth like the beacon that this man was in our community. My son and I are both recipients of this wisdom and our families have been blessed by it. God bless and comfort your family in this time and know that our prayers and thoughts are with you.*

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**Sam Suttle** - August 01, 2016 at 01:03 PM



“ It was my privilege to go to Philmont with Big Iron as a Scout with my older brother Marshall Hollis as well as John Ed Carter from Troop 32 Vardaman and the 1966 contingency from Pushmataha Area Council. I later returned to Philmont under Big Iron's leadership as an assistant expedition leader with my younger brother Freddy Hollis from Troop 32. The saying that you "go to Philmont a boy and return a man" is true because you went with Big Iron. In addition to our Troop 32 Scoutmasters, who were my father Charles Hollis, David Blue and John Jasper Adams, Paul "Big Iron" Thompson was our true image of a man! Phillip Hollis, New Smyrna Beach, FL 407-832-6444

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**Phillip Hollis** - August 01, 2016 at 11:30 AM

JT

“ I supposed it's enough just to say that I knew and was in so many ways defined by such a legend, knowing that's what he was to so many people. Ironically, to hear "Mama ain't here, and I don't care" is to be told that who and what you are is cared for more deeply than an 11-year-old kid can imagine.....

*Memories? year after year..... trips to Camp Wilkes, Camp Seminole, the USS Alabama, the Current River in Missouri, National Jamboree, Philmont, Shiloh, Vicksburg, Sipsey, the local ever changing and evolving 'Permanent Camp-site', Jack Warner's cabin, and a few other places I may be leaving out. As memories go, these are some of the best made, and not easily lost.*

*Also not forgotten are the well-taught lessons in leadership, determination, respect, integrity, and other character traits that propel you successfully through life, and that are sadly beginning to disappear. What a tremendous privilege and blessing to have known Big Iron, and to have been given these things by him. He lived up to his great name, and then some.*

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**John Triplett** - August 01, 2016 at 11:27 AM

AB

“ I owe a great deal of thanks to Big Iron. He made a very significant positive influence on me in my boyhood -- probably second only to my dad. He taught me many things, not only hands-on scouting -- and manhood -- skills, but also about character: honesty, initiative, hard work, self-reliance, service, and Christian living.

Of my many memories of him, one that comes to mind at present is of the bus ride back from Mobile, AL. I had won the scavenger hunt on the USS Alabama and had collected my prize of a large bag full of candy. I was selfishly enjoying it by myself on the back of the bus. He was watching through the rearview mirror, and called me upfront. He told me that the candy prize was intended to serve as a test: would I share or not? I had not, at that point, but took the hint. Anyway, not many men would take such advantage of a bus ride to teach character lessons, but he did.

What a legacy. God did not make enough men like him.

Adam Byrd

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Adam Byrd - August 01, 2016 at 10:22 AM

DW

“ There are many special people who God has placed on the paths of our childrens' lives. However, Paul, "Big Iron," Thompson is one of those giants who left an indelible footprint in the life of our son Trey Woodruff.

To his family, we thank you for always supporting the devotion "Big Iron" had for Troop 5 and BSA. You will be remembered in our hearts and prayers.

DeLaine and Donnie Woodruff

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DeLaine and Donnie Woodruff - August 01, 2016 at 07:57 AM

JA

“ My prayers are with you at this time. Paul's passing is earth's loss and Heaven's gain. He truly was a developer of young men I cannot express my gratitude for the happy memories, kind words of encouragement and loving discipline (when it was necessary) that were representative of Paul Thompson. He influenced my "boys" in so many ways-- he helped my husband fulfill a childhood dream of becoming a Boy Scout leader and played a big part in helping my son develop his leadership abilities. From one grateful wife and mom, let me say, "Thank you, Paul Thompson". We need more Paul Thompsons to step up to the plate and help young men develop their God given potential. May your happy memories be a joy and comfort to you in the coming days

*Joan Agent.*

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**Joan Agent** - July 31, 2016 at 09:11 PM

MC

“ I'll never forget the trips to Shiloh Military Park in TN... I always loved seeing Big Iron getting the newbies excited about going through Egypt... Yup, I fell for that my first time too... He always loved seeing all the guys hike all the trails... I know, I hiked them all and when I was older, either in college or out on my own, I was assisting "Big Iron" on one of these trips as a "Unofficial" Assistant Scout Master and I remember him putting me in charge of the beginners trail... He never let me forget that morning what a crazy nut he thought I was for bringing along a lantern and flashlights.... but I was determined to let the new guys lead the way without telling them how, after all that's what he told me to do... You never know what could happen and I reminded him about "Being Prepared"... Well the hike that should have only taken about half a day, wound up with Big Iron and the crew driving the Scout bus all around the park, well after dark, looking for us, and yes he spotted the flashlights and lantern to find us! I will forever miss Big Iron. He was a huge influence in my life, he is a BIG reason I went into Law Enforcement... 35 years later still in it... To all who ever knew Paul or ever graced the "Troop-5 "Hut" under the many... many... years of leadership, grace, dedication, sacrifice, devotion and LOVE of Paul "Big Iron" Thompson know that he will be forever missed and forever RESPECTED! Rest Easy "Big Iron"... Go rest high on that mountain, son, your work on earth is done. Go to heaven a-shoutin', Love for the Father and the Son.  
Mike Childress

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Mike Childress - July 31, 2016 at 09:01 PM

BS

“ Big Iron was a very special person in my life. Im sure there are many people that would agree that through his dedication and love, he molded many of youg boys into men. He will never be forgotten. I would like to thank his family for sharing such an influential individual with all of us. I am so sorry for your loss.

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Brandon Stovall - July 31, 2016 at 05:15 PM

JP

“ A dear friend of my family. His character demanded respect & should remind us to have a servant's heart & hold strong to our convictions. Prayers for his precious family.

Jennifer Palmer - July 31, 2016 at 04:52 PM

JT

“ I have way too many memories with this great man to choose just one. My best memories though are with him at Current River. He loved going there and he always made the trips great on any budget. I will miss him and the talks we would have at Peterson's Store. He is now with God and my prayers are with his great family.

Jeffrey Tucker - July 31, 2016 at 02:42 PM

LE

“ There is only word that describes Mr. Paul "Big Iron" Thompson. LOVE. A true man with a servants heart for his Nation, State, and the community. So influential on so many people's lives. My heart Goes out to Mrs Thompson and his family. My prayers are with you in the days to come. My family will have you in my family's prayers.

Sencerly  
Harley "Ice Tea Lee" Eaves

Lee Eaves - July 31, 2016 at 12:44 PM



He had many, many friends in the Scouting community that thank him for his service to the boys and community.

Robert Ray - July 31, 2016 at 01:54 PM

RO

*A developer of young men. I worked for "BIG IRON" in the trading post a number of years. He'd drive in at midnight and want to do inventory. It wasn't the inventory that mattered to him, but a young man being taught responsibility. His legacy spans generations and way beyond Louisville.*

*To the family, I extend my heart, for BIG IRON gave his heart to me and so many.*

*Phil. 1:3 "I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of (Big Iron) you."*

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**Roger Orman** - July 31, 2016 at 03:02 PM

PH

*Big Iron is proof that one man can make a difference. He has changed the world. His knowledge of how to take any boy and make a man of integrity and conscience is second to none . I can not properly express my feelings of love and admiration for the man who formed my life.*

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**Pat Huey** - August 01, 2016 at 01:08 PM

RR

*MR. Paul was a good friend to me and my dad JR. Richardson he will be missed. Prayers to all the family. He was a very good man.*

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**Robert Richardson** - August 03, 2016 at 10:00 AM