



From the Desk of the CEO



Happy Valentine's Day for Our Golden Agers

My Dad, Raymond J. Thumser, recently went to his Heavenly home on January 9, 2026, at 102 years of age. No matter the age, losing someone we love is a profound, life-altering experience characterized by intense grief, shock, and a lasting sense of loss, often involving a mix of sadness, confusion, and deep nostalgia.

Dad's passing caused me to reflect on our Life Center mission statement "to promote, encourage and foster public sentiment for the respect and dignity of human life from conception to natural death." While I have a direct role at the Life Center to protect the preborn, Dad's passing triggered my reevaluation of personal identity, family dynamics and a shifted focus on the many graces and blessings God bestowed upon Pop during his lifetime.

Golden Agers should always be respected, admired and looked to for their wisdom, faith, how they treated and loved others but also how they lived their lives, their life experiences and notable achievements. One such achievement was that of our former Board Member, Deacon Frank Gariboldi, who passed a year ago on Christmas Day, was his graduation from St. John's University with a Theology degree at the age of 75! What an inspiration that age does not necessarily define our boundaries.

Do we take for granted the value of life and the gifts/talents/ wisdom of our elders?

Despite their importance, about 57% of people believe society does not adequately respect the elderly, and there is an increased vulnerability to abuse where roughly 10% of older adults experience some form of abuse or neglect annually. While negative stereotypes like "burdensomeness" persist, fortunately current perspectives emphasize Golden Agers' active contributions to families, economies, and cultural development. They should be embraced for their wisdom, life experience, essential position within the family unit, their witty sense of humor about life, and be treated with respect, honor and dignity.

In 1988, President Ronald Reagan proclaimed National Senior Citizens Day (Proclamation 5847) to be observed in the United States and to be celebrated annually on August 21st, dedicated to raising awareness about issues affecting Golden Agers and honoring their achievements, wisdom, and contributions to their families, communities, and society.

Spend quality time with the elderly in your lives. Listening to their stories, sharing a meal or simply enjoying a conversation can make a world of difference. It's an opportunity to learn from their experiences and gain insights into how the world has evolved over the decades. This interaction not only enriches our lives but also brings joy and a sense of belonging to our elders, reminding them that they are cherished and loved.

Start today and commit to supporting and advocating for the needs of senior citizens. Whether through improving healthcare services, ensuring accessible transportation or combating ageism, every effort counts in enhancing the quality of life for our Golden Agers. They are not just a part of our past but a vital part of our present and future. Let's not take them for granted. Honor them, cherish their legacy, and ensure that their voices continue to be heard and respected.

Our family finds comfort in "stepping up" to honor our father's values, carrying on his traditions, and telling stories that keep his memory alive. Please read our Dad's brief biography I wrote to give to those who joined us in celebration of his life. My prayer is that it inspires you to spend more time with loved ones and capture "moments" within your family that will last a lifetime and become a legacy.

Where there is life there is hope. *Golden Agers give hope to life.*

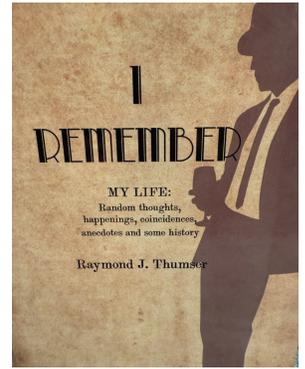
With Love to Our Golden Agers, Happy Valentine's Day!



RAYMOND J. THUMSER

November 18, 1923 – January 9, 2026

The Bible provides valuable insights on wealth, possession, and the real meaning of being rich. It reminds us that being wealthy is not just about the material things we own, but rather about our relationship with God and how we handle the blessings bestowed upon us. True richness comes from our faith, generosity, and reliance on God. Pop was a wealthy man.



At 90 years of age, Pop wrote and compiled his own excellent autobiography book titled, *I Remember* as a labor of love for his four children: Joseph, Gloria, Lauren and Vivian. He was so proud and elated of this wonderful accomplishment especially when he watched our faces light up when he presented a hard copy to each of us on Christmas in December 2015.

Since then, when a family ancestry question arises, we are relieved to know our “go to” for answers is in “Pop’s book.” A good portion of his book was written about his great grandfather on his mother’s side, German brewer Leonhard Eppig, who owned the Leonhard Eppig Brewery in Brooklyn in 1867. At 102 years of age, Pop was humbled yet proud to acknowledge that he was the oldest surviving great - grandchild.

Pop was a very spiritual, devout Catholic who attended Sunday Mass religiously throughout his 102 years of age. Religion and Faith were the foundation of our family threaded throughout history. Leonhard Eppig’s daughter Seraphine became the Mother Superior of the Dominican Sisters in Amityville, and two Churches in Brooklyn, St. Leonhard’s and St. Barbara’s, were named after two other of Leonhard’s children to honor the considerable amount of money donated by Leonhard.

He loved the beach and always shared tidbits about growing up and enjoying his family’s summer bungalow at Rockaway Point, and the fun times he enjoyed being on the “Point’s” baseball team. Pop had a warm, embracing smile, was very witty and had a great sense of humor especially in times when most needed and adapted to any situation he encountered with wisdom.

Some of his most memorable life experiences were graduating from Bishop Loughlin High School and began his working career at age 22 with American Export Airlines (eventually becoming American Airlines) at LaGuardia Airport and enlisted in the Navy Reserves during WWII. After WWII, Pop attended Pace University and his accounting/finance skills background propelled his career to key management positions and promotions at Amoco, ITT, IML Logistics, eventually working then retiring from his prestigious role at UPS.

Pop achieved Third Degree Knight with the Knights of Columbus and continued as a Lifetime Member. He was involved in ministry at his parish of St. Patrick’s in Southold, Suffolk Board of Elections, and dedicated to charitable organizations and prolife causes, especially the Life Center of Long Island.

There is something to be said for those who lived during and through the World War II era (September 1, 1939 – September 2, 1945). Often called the Greatest Generation, Pop developed strong attributes like resilience, personal responsibility, patriotism, frugality, and a strong work ethic. These were shaped by surviving the Depression and fighting/supporting the war effort, resulting in a deep appreciation for life, family, and purpose, with enduring traits including loyalty and determination. *Pop was a living model of this era of life.*

A very “simple man”, Pop’s life was vibrant. He was a sharp, witty 102-year-old who was loving and devoted to focusing on his children and those around him. He relished living on his own in Southold, two blocks from the deeded beach in his development. A sports fan enthusiast, he favored the Giants and Mets (God help them). He enjoyed reading the daily paper, working on his computer with his emails, excel and word files, getting news updates on his cell phone, and following the stock market.

Pop took great pride in his family and his home. He was the healthiest out of all of us. He had perfect blood pressure (never on BP meds), and only had a cold “once in a blue moon.” His credo was “where there is life, there is hope” and such life and hope creates the tomorrows of forever.