

## Veteran, businessman Thomas Miller dies in Clark County

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Rachel Parsons Gilliam

Former Tuskegee Airman and Winchester businessman Thomas Miller died Friday at 93.

Miller was born in Madison County in 1918, but spent most of his life in Winchester after moving here at age 4. Although his military career took him overseas for three years, he returned home to establish the two businesses he ran with his wife, Ann.

Thomas Miller and the former Ann Taylor were married three months when Miller was drafted in October 1942, when he began training to work as part of the ground crew for the famed Tuskegee Airmen.

His service brought him numerous awards and accolades over the years, Ann Miller said, and he enjoyed attending reunions and awards ceremonies when his health allowed it.

The Millers attended church together at Broadway Baptist as children, and continued their membership into adulthood. Thomas Miller was the oldest male member of the congregation before his death, and he served the church in numerous capacities.

The two began dating as high school students at the old Oliver High School, where Thomas Miller was three grades ahead of his future wife. After graduating, Miller began working for the Bell family on North Maple Street, serving as a chauffeur and working in the home.

He briefly attended Fiske University in Nashville after the war, but came back to Winchester to open his service station and taxi company on West Washington Street. The Millers worked at the service station together for 23 years before opening another business, Maple Street Liquor Store. The couple also ran the liquor store for more than 20 years.

"We were in business together for over 50 years," Ann Miller said.

Thomas Miller was a hard worker all his life, Ann Miller said, beginning with his paper route at age 10.

In 1955, the Millers moved to Los Angeles, where they lived for a year, also operating a service station owned by a friend.

In 1952, they bought the home on South Burns Avenue where they lived for 60 years. Ann Miller said because the home was not in the black community, they had to fight to live in the neighborhood.

"He enjoyed being in business. We had a pretty good business. We managed to make a living out of it. We came a long way and worked hard together. The Lord blessed us," Ann Miller said.

Funeral services will be Thursday at 1 p.m. at Broadway Baptist Church. Visitation will be from 11 a.m. until the hour of service.

"Overall, he was a good husband and friend," Ann Miller said.