



## Tomas Milan Magdich

July 2, 1939 - April 15, 2014

The Honorable Tomas M. Magdich of Dixon, Illinois, died Tuesday April 15, 2014. He was 74.

He was born in Gary, Indiana, on July 2, 1939, to a bookkeeper, Ann Magdich, and a carpenter, Milan Magdich. His working class childhood was made difficult by the death of his father at the age of thirteen. He was raised by a hardworking, single mother in the 1950s and delivered papers to contribute to the family's grocery money. Although his life was difficult, from early on he always had a passion for school and learning.

Tom graduated from Lew Wallace High School in Gary, Indiana, in 1957 and then attended Ripon College. At Ripon College, he met his future spouse, Judith Lawson. He became president of his fraternity where he developed many lifelong friendships. And it was at Ripon College where he was mentored to seek a career in law after graduating with a degree in philosophy. While attending Northwestern Law School, he discovered his passion for the law and his lifelong mission to help people seek justice. During his first year he married Judith Lawson on August 11, 1962. During his last year of law school he found himself in need of employment due to the impending birth of their first child. A job opportunity with the firm Gunner and Keller is how he came to Dixon, Illinois, fifty years ago, a place that he thought would be a temporary home but grew to endear.

Tom often told the story of how as a young associate he was given the cases

that nobody else wanted or were expected to win. With his passion for justice, he embraced those challenges and after years of success he became a named partner on July 1, 1971. While practicing law as an attorney, he argued landmark cases, but also had time to help with even minor disputes because he held the deep belief that all people deserve representation. He knew justice was found in the big and small matters of life. He took his own dispute over parking tickets to court and prevailed when the city parking meter ordinance was found unconstitutional.

On March 1st 1985 he was appointed by the Illinois Supreme Court as a Circuit Court Judge of the 15th Judicial Circuit. He was elected to the full term in 1986 and was retained in 1992 and 1998. In 1992, he received a one hundred percent approval rating from the Illinois State Bar Association. He served 18 years on the bench before his retirement in December of, 2003. He loved the courtroom both as an attorney and as a judge. He was known to say that the courtroom offered the best show in town.

In addition to being dedicated to the law and his career, Tom was a loving husband, father and grandfather. He loved always learning new things and travelling. He and Judy instilled those interests in their children and grandchildren. Always being a student of life, made him an excellent teacher to his children to his colleagues and eventually to university students at Northern Illinois Law School.

The family could often find Tom around the house gardening and woodworking like his father. In the community he was known for being an entertaining public speaker and humorist.

Tom is remembered for his quick wit, sincere compassion, his unique perspective on life, his storytelling, and his love of his family.

He is survived by his wife, Judith Lawson, his children Amy Jo (Alan) Clemens of Dixon, Michael (Karen) Magdich of Dexter, Michigan, Marjorie (Ken) Erdmann of Tulsa, Oklahoma, seven grandchildren Emily, Thomas, Nicholas, Mary, Henry, Maxwell, and Alexandra, and his brother Dennis Magdich of Chicago, Illinois.

Memorial services for The Honorable Tomas M. Magdich will be held on Saturday April 19, 2004, at 10:30 AM in the First Presbyterian Church in Dixon with the Rev. David Spaulding officiating. Burial of cremains will be at a later date in Oakwood Cemetery in Dixon. Visitation will be on Friday April 18, 2014 from 2:00 to 7:00 PM in the Jones Funeral Home. A memorial has been established to Prairie State Legal Services.

# Cemetery Details

## Oakwood

416 S Dement Ave  
Dixon, IL 61021

# Previous Events

## Visitation

APR 18. 2:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Jones Funeral Home, Dixon  
204 South Ottawa  
Dixon, IL 61021  
Ph: 815-288-2241  
[info@thejonesfh.com](mailto:info@thejonesfh.com)  
<https://www.thejonesfh.com>

## Service

APR 19. 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM (CT)

First Presbyterian Church  
110 E 3rd St  
Dixon, IL 61021

# Tribute Wall



“ *Tomas Milan Magdich*

October 08, 2023 at 11:30 AM



“ *Tomas Milan Magdich*

December 31, 2022 at 02:40 AM



“ *Judy and Family,  
Tom was a special human being. His sense of humor and laugh was contagious.  
My years with him at Ripon and Sigma Chi and at our annual reunions enriched my life. Tom was always the voice of reason. He always fought the good fight with class and dignity.  
I will miss him. My thoughts are with you and your family.  
Howard Myers  
Ripon College 1961  
Sigma Chi*

Howard - April 18, 2014 at 07:53 PM



“ *Heavenly and Harmony was purchased for the family of Tomas Milan Magdich.*



April 18, 2014 at 01:12 PM

MA

“ *Judy and family,*

*What a beautifully written obituary on Tom. So very sorry for your loss. It was so nice getting to spend some time here and there with Tom and the family the last few years; Tom always carried on interesting conversations with a dose of wit, (as I see is noted here by other friends and family). His calm demeanor and strong will truly made him graceful in character; and a role model to the family.*

*With love,*

*Mara*

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**Mara** - April 17, 2014 at 07:44 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Tomas Milan Magdich.*



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April 17, 2014 at 01:41 PM

BK

“ *Bill and Robin Kelly purchased the Ocean Breeze Spray for the family of Tomas Milan Magdich.*



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**Bill and Robin Kelly** - April 17, 2014 at 11:13 AM



“ *A Full Life was purchased for the family of Tomas Milan Magdich.*



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April 17, 2014 at 10:36 AM



“ *Dear Amy Jo and Family,*

*I'm very sorry to learn of the loss of your father. I know you will miss him dearly. Please know that my thoughts and prayers are with you at this very difficult time.*

*With sincere sympathy,  
Kathy Cox*

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**Kathy Cox** - April 17, 2014 at 09:04 AM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Tomas Milan Magdich.*



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April 17, 2014 at 07:50 AM

DB

“ Dear Judy and family  
Nancy and I believe we have some sense of the loss you feel because Tom was so special to us. It is difficult to think of someone no longer being here who brought so much care and love and concern and joy to this world. We will miss not seeing him but he will always remain a part of our lives. Whenever we want we will see him in his waiter's uniform serving in Ripon College's dining hall. We will see him providing outstanding leadership to our Sigma Chi fraternity. We will see him giving sound advice to young men and we will see him sitting in a room full of fellow Sigma Chi alumni telling stories from "the greatest show in town"-- the court room. We will think about how dedicated he was to his family.  
May you find comfort in what you know about Tomas. His life made a difference.  
Danny Behring  
Ripon College 1962, Sigma Chi Brother  
Nancy Behring  
Ripon College 1962

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Daniel Behring - April 16, 2014 at 08:45 PM

MS

“ Dear Judy and family,  
I am so sorry for your loss. I can remember Tom in the courtroom both as a lawyer and a judge. He was always fun to watch him work.  
He was such a fighter and a great role model. My prayers are with you and your family.  
Martie & Ron

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martie semetis - April 16, 2014 at 04:41 PM



“ *A Full Life was purchased for the family of Tomas Milan Magdich.*



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April 16, 2014 at 02:12 PM



“ *Sentimental Dreams was purchased for the family of Tomas Milan Magdich.*



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April 16, 2014 at 11:02 AM



“ *Dear Judy and family, Just want to tell you how sorry I am to get the news about Tom. Remembering all wonderful trips we had together. I know Charles and Don was there with open arms to welcome him. I will keep you in my prayers during this awful time. Love and hugs..*  
*Bea*

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**Bea Simmons** - April 16, 2014 at 10:05 AM

DB

*Dear Judy and family.*

*Nancy and I believe we have some sense of the loss you feel. It is difficult to think of someone no longer being here in person who brought so much care and love and concern for others to this world. Family in particular, as you know was the top of his list. We shall miss not seeing him but he will always be a part of our lives, and we will see him whenever we want. We will see him serving food in a white uniform in the Ripon College dining room, running our fraternity as president as no one else could, counseling young men and sitting in a room full of fellow Ripon College and Sigma Chi alumni telling true stories about what happened in the "greatest show in town," the courtroom. May you find comfort in what you know so well. His life made a difference.*

*Danny Behring  
Ripon College 1962  
Sigma Chi brother  
Nancy Behring  
Ripon College 1962*

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**Daniel Behring** - April 16, 2014 at 03:47 PM

JS

*Dear Amy Jo, Alan, and family,*

*Please accept my sincere sympathy and prayers at this time.*

*Jean Spohn*

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**Jean Spohn** - April 17, 2014 at 11:21 AM