

IN MEMORIAM OF OOM TOM CAMPHER

On 18 February 1926 Thomas Johannes Campher was born in a small Transkei town, Engcobo, he was one of three children a brother and sister, who both sadly passed away at a very young age leaving Tom as the only child. Tom Campher married Edith in 1954 and 4 children were born, Thomas, Libby, Vic and Gerhard, sadly Edith passed away and Tom married Tiensie in February 1992, sadly Tiensie passed away in 2019 and his daughter Libby in 2020.

Tom turned 95 in February this year and would always be remembered for is what he did for Volvo in South Africa from 1966 to 1998.

In 1952 Tom (known as Tommy) Campher also got involved and raced in Rally's first in DKW's, Volkswagens and of course in a Volvo, doing his last in 2002 50 years later. Winning numerous rallies' over the years his major achievements in a Volvo would be the fact that he won two LM rallies and the 1993 Commemorative LM rally. The last Volvo he did a rally in was a beige 1967 Volvo 122S, which is now owned by a 30 year old Volvo enthusiast.

In 1976 Volvo Cars decided to disinvest and they left South Africa, leaving Volvo owners with no support whatsoever from a servicing and parts point of view, and none other than Tom Campher decided that he could not walk away and as the dealers closed across South Africa he bought up the parts & started importing. He negotiated with Volvo in Sweden that they would continue supplying parts to him for the fleet of Volvo's they had abandoned. For this Tom had to get an address outside South Africa as they would not supply him with a South African address, the parts came to South Africa via Swaziland.

One morning Tom received a call from Sweden with the following message "management wishes to advise you that they will no longer supply you with parts", very upset Tom decided that he could once again not abandon the Volvo owners and had to make another plan, he tried England, Bulgaria and eventually Sarikulus in Greece made a deal with Tom and parts were being supplied again, this time from Greece. Tom Campher then supplied the entire Southern Africa with Volvo parts.

Tom Campher Motors imported the first Volvo into South Africa when the "borders" opened again and in 1993 they imported a Volvo 850. In 1998 Tom Campher decided it is time to step down and retire, and Tom Campher Motors still exists today now owned by Tom's sons Vic and Gerhard Campher.

Had it not been for Tom Campher, Volvo would not have been what it is today in South Africa, even after Volvo disinvested he kept Volvo alive in South Africa and many owners of Volkvos in those years with Volvo's return became owners of the new and more modern Volvo.

On 21 September 2021, Oom Tom passed away, truly a Volvo legend and as an honorary life member of the Volvo Owners Club of SA, we the members salute you. You will be sorely missed and always be part of our memories, rest in peace Oom Tom and thank you for what you did and for how you touched many lives over the years.

Our sincerest condolences to the Campher family and friends.

Somewhere in the 80's I needed something for my 1970 Volvo 122S and walked into a Volvo dealership for the very first time, yes it was Tom Campher Motors, although I never met Oom Tom at the time I became aware of the dealership and also for the very first time I saw a Volvo 1800ES, a golden one. Never knew that it even existed.

Unknowing at the time, I would at a later stage in my life actually meet Oom Tom and develop a special relationship with him over the years as well a special relationship with Tom Campher Motors and the Campher family.

In 2003 I was lucky enough to buy a 1969 Volvo 1800S from Oom Tom (actually it was his wife Tannie Tiensie's Volvo which she named Jemaima), and a couple of years later we bought his last rally Volvo, 1967 122S which is today in the hands of my Son, Deon.

It was always a pleasure to see Oom Tom when the opportunity presented itself, and Oom Tom hardly missed a Saamtrek in the years running up to 2019. He was there at the Saamtrek in Hazyview in October 2019. True example to many of us as he was 93 years old at the time. What not many know, Oom Tom made sure that the abandoned Volvo owners (abandoned by Volvo in the mid Seventies right through to the early nineties) had spares and

supported in South Africa by way of servicing them to keep them on the road.

That is probably why we still have a number of beautiful examples of the older Volvos still on the road today. Always a smile, always a twinkle in the fading eyes and always there and always friendly. Made time to have a chat to those around him. A legend in the rally world, a legend in the Volvo world. A true gentleman.

Yes, it was a sad day, 21st of September 2021 when I received a WhatsApp from Ansie Campher that Oom Tom had passed away during the evening, at home at the ripe old age of 95! He was an example that age doesn't matter, age doesn't determine how you live life, you live it and you make the best of it no matter what.

He will be sorely missed, but he had a great innings and he deserves the rest. 95 years is a good age to reach in any ones books. Oom Tom on behalf of the Club, the Volvo world thank you. May you rest in peace.



Oom Tom handing the Tom Campher Trophy for the most Original Classic to Rudi Schoeman.



Oom Tom making a dash for it during one the last rally's



2007 – Oom Tom and Deon Jnr with the 1967 Rally Volvo



The winner of the last commemorative LM rally in 1993!



Oom Tom receiving the Chairman's Award at one of the Saamtreds, recognising him for what he has done for Volvo and the Club



Oom Tom with Vic & Gerhard at 2009 Saamtrek