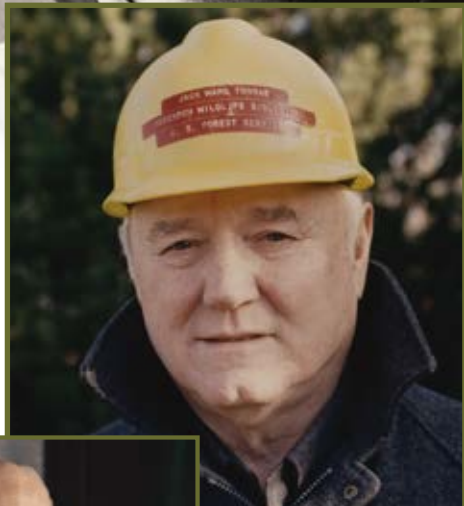
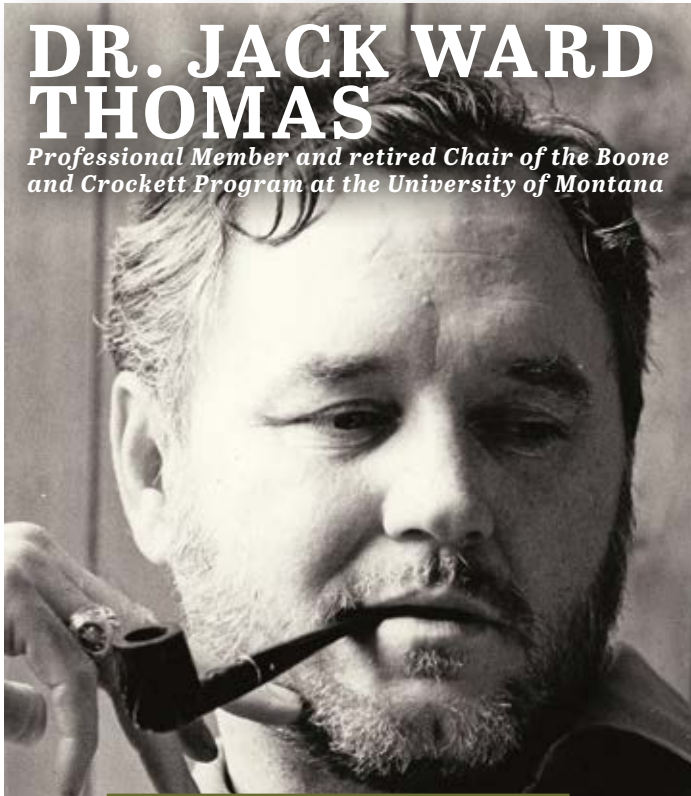


IN MEMORIAM

DR. JACK WARD THOMAS

Professional Member and retired Chair of the Boone and Crockett Program at the University of Montana



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B&C DOCTORAL FELLOW (2004)

Dr. Jack Ward Thomas, longtime Professional Member and retired chair of the Boone and Crockett Program at the University of Montana, passed away in his home Thursday, May 26, 2016, after a long battle with cancer. He was 81.

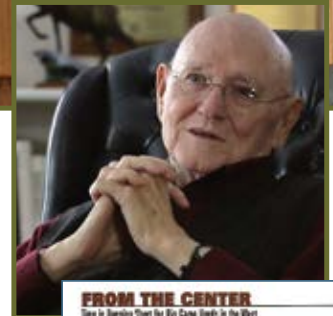
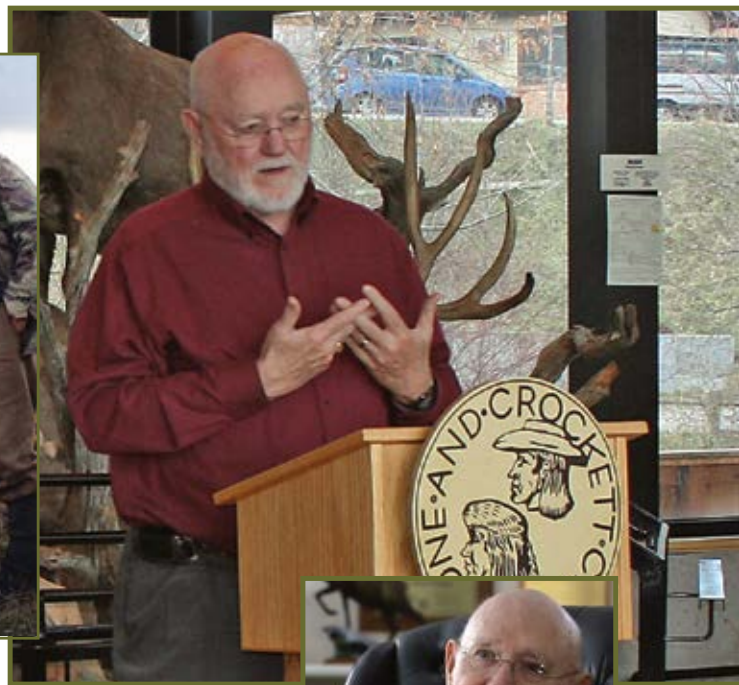
Jack was a loving and proud husband, father, and grandfather; Korean War veteran; loyal friend; an accomplished and genuine outdoorsman; a professor; and a giant in the fields of wildlife biology, ecosystem management, and public lands management and policy. Born in Handley, Texas, on Sept. 7, 1934, Jack was a young child during the Dust Bowl and had lifelong memories of spending time under a table draped with a damp tablecloth to keep the dust at bay.

He earned his undergraduate degree in wildlife management from Texas A&M in 1957, and then worked for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for 10 years before taking his first U.S. Forest Service position—as a research biologist—in Morgantown, West Virginia, in 1966. While working there, he earned his master's degree in wildlife ecology from West Virginia University.

In 1969, he took the lead of the Forest Service research unit at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Jack earned his doctorate in forestry there in 1972, and wrote one of his most successful contributions to the field of wildlife biology—an article

for the general public titled, “Invite Wildlife to Your Backyard.” In 1974 he moved to La Grande, Oregon, to work as the chief research wildlife biologist and program leader at the USFS Forestry and Range Sciences Laboratory. In that post, Jack was instrumental in establishing the Starkey Experimental Forest Elk Project—an incredibly ambitious and unprecedented long-term study on elk ecology and interactions with their habitat and with humans. He also led a major science assessment and planning effort for wildlife conservation that was the first practical instance of what became known and adopted across the nation as ecosystem management. That effort was published as *Wildlife Habitats in Managed Forests*. In 1982 he co-authored (with fellow preeminent elk ecologist and dear friend Dale Toweil) the tome *Elk of North America*—popularly referred to as “the elk bible.”

In 1991, Jack became embroiled in controversial political issues in the Pacific Northwest—in conserving old-growth ecosystems and spotted owl habitat—which led to the “spotted owl wars” and related controversies. President Bill Clinton selected him to lead the development of what became known as the Northwest Forest Plan, which focused on old-growth ecosystems with emphasis on conservation of northern spotted owls and other old-growth forest species. Two years later, President Clinton



appointed him the 13th chief of the U.S. Forest Service in December 1993.

Upon retirement from the USFS in 1996, he accepted a position as the Boone and Crockett Professor of Wildlife Conservation at the College of Forestry and Conservation at the University of Montana in Missoula. He again poured himself into his work, mentoring students and keeping actively engaged in conservation planning and policy at local, regional, national, and international scales. In this role, Jack demonstrated a deep commitment to helping students personally; not just with a well-placed call to a connection (though he certainly did that from time to time, too), but more often with a closed-door heart-to-heart with a young professional who needed to be reminded of the big picture, who needed a confidence boost, or who needed to be plainly told to toughen up and buckle down. Jack exhibited the rare ability to speak with his B&C students in a way that was simultaneously unvarnished and elegant, firm but never condescending, grounded but still inspiring. Every student I know to have interacted with

Jack wanted to impress him; we all wanted to show him that we were capable, thoughtful, and—above all—honorable. Jack retired from the University of Montana in 2006. This past spring, the University of Montana awarded him an honorary doctorate for his professional accomplishments, lasting contributions to the University, and his role in mentoring, shepherding, and inspiring scores of students.

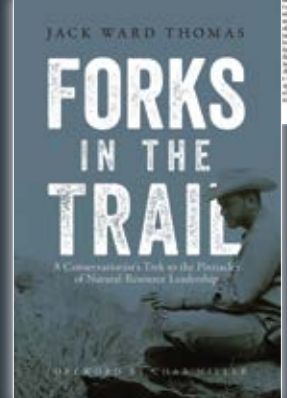
Jack is well known to readers of *Fair Chase*; during his tenure as Boone and Crockett Professor, he authored a recurring column titled *From the Center*, which he often used to address big-picture themes, unpack complex issues, and to passionately advocate for protection and wise management of our national public lands system. This past year, B&C published an acclaimed trilogy of Jack's professional and back-country adventures—*Forks in the Trail*, *Wilderness Journals*, and *Hunting around the World*.

As a preeminent biologist, public land manager, orator and a leader of his profession, Jack had many honors, awards, and accolades bestowed upon him over his

60-year career. But more than that, he was a truly extraordinary man. Even as an exceptionally effective orator and writer, he took to heart and often recalled the thought of Maya Angelou that “...people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” He was kind, generous with his time with students, employees, friends, and colleagues. Jack contributed immeasurably (and more than he knew) to students and professionals across the country. More often than not, they were individuals who needed a hand, a gentle course-correction, or a bit of perspective as they faced their own challenges. For as strong and commanding of a character as he was capable of being, he could just as easily be brought to tears in the middle of a speech or lecture as he recalled a moment of tenderness, tragedy, or simple, true beauty. Just as he moved others, he was constantly moved by the human and natural world around him. Though he will be deeply missed by many, Jack's legacy of influence through honor, loyalty, honesty, and hard work endures. ■

FROM THE CENTER
How is Hunting Smart for Big Game Herds in the West?

With the advice of the...
In this constant...
What the national...



Log into the Associates community to read *From the Center*, authored by Jack Ward Thomas from 1997-2000. Read an excerpt from the front lines of conservation in *Forks in the Trail* in the Fall 2015 issue of *Fair Chase* or order your own copy today at www.boone-crockett.org/jwt