

## CLASS OF 2020



### Pat Thomas

A native of Quincy, Pat Thomas was a graduate of the University of Florida, where he served as Senior Class President, and a Korean War veteran (U. S. Army). Thomas was Chairman of the Democratic Party of Florida from 1966 to 1970. In 1974 Thomas unseated the sitting state representative from District 10, and won the general election to the Florida House of Representatives. After serving one term in the House, Thomas ran for the Florida Senate and with no Republican opponent, won the election by winning the Democratic primary.

Thomas would go on to serve the next 26 years in the Florida Senate, until his untimely death in 2000. At the time that made him the second longest serving member of the Florida Legislature. He served as Senate President from 1993 – 1994.

His most notable accomplishments as part of the Florida Legislature included helping to save the Old Capital building, establishing the Korean War memorial, and working with then Governor Lawton Chiles and Senator Childers to save a law that helped the state file suit against tobacco companies on behalf of Medicaid patients.

Thomas was known for his support of the law enforcement profession and law enforcement personnel. Through his support and work within the Legislative process, the land which houses the Florida Public Safety Institute was leased to the Leon County School Board for purposes of establishing a state law enforcement training academy in the mid-1970s. His efforts also helped ensure that competing sites were not developed. For his efforts the newly established training academy was named the Pat Thomas Law Enforcement Academy.

In 1999 ownership of Pat Thomas Law Enforcement Academy with all of its training programs was transferred to Tallahassee Community College. Eventually training opportunities were expanded and rolled into one umbrella institution named TCC's Florida Public Safety Institute, or FPSI. Today that Institute still sits on land secured through the efforts of Senator Pat Thomas.

Watch the video presented at the 2020 Heroes in Public Safety Lifetime Achievement Award Ceremony of James Harold Thompson speaking on behalf of Pat Thomas [HERE](#).