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George D. Thompson; hosted '80s radio show

By Walter F. Naedele

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George D. Thompson, 93, of Philadelphia, former host of a Jenkintown radio show, died of complications from a broken hip Wednesday at Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital in Darby.

After a career with the U.S. Postal Service, said his daughter, Juanita, he produced and directed *George Thompson and Friends*, a program of sacred music on WIBF-FM, in the 1980s.

In 1941, Mr. Thompson enlisted in the Army Air Corps, trained as a mechanic, and was assigned to Tuskegee (Ala.) Army Airfield to work with the Tuskegee Airmen, the first African American flying unit in World War II.

"When they realized that he was an accomplished musician," his daughter said, "they switched him from being a mechanic" to being a trombone player in the Airmen's band.

He was a writer and field editor for *Hawk's Cry*, the newsletter of the Tuskegee Airmen, his daughter said.

Born in Richmond, Va., Mr. Thompson graduated in 1933 from Overbrook High School and in the late 1940s from Dolan College of Embalming. "He served an apprenticeship," she said, "but never worked for a funeral home."

An organist for the young adult choir at Mount Carmel Baptist Church in Philadelphia in the 1930s, he was later organist and pianist for several churches.

In the late 1930s, Mr. Thompson worked as a courier for state offices between Philadelphia and Harrisburg, and for 15 years beginning in the 1950s, he worked for the Postal Service.

Besides his daughter, Mr. Thompson is survived by a son, William; a brother; two sisters; and four grandchildren. His wife, Bernice, died in 1996. A son, George Jr., died in 1990.

A viewing is set from 10 to 11 a.m. today at Wood Funeral Home, 56th Street and Girard Avenue, followed by an 11 a.m. funeral there. Burial is to be in Mount Lawn Cemetery, Sharon Hill.



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