

# **PHIL THOMPSON**

## **SC Governing Board - Community Leader - Farmer**

**Inducted into the SC Hall of Fame October 15, 2010**

Philip Samuel Thompson was born November 13, 1906 in Phoenix, Arizona to Alice and Charles Thompson. He graduated from Phoenix Union High School, which was the only high school in Phoenix at the time, in May 1923. He held several high school state records for track and field, which remained unbroken for two decades. Upon graduation, he went to the University of Arizona with a track and field scholarship and played on the Wildcat football team. His major was pre-med and he had plans to become a doctor. Unfortunately, his father who needed help to save the family business, a dairy, located on what is now Sky Harbor Airport, called him home. He was not able to complete his college education because his parents needed him.

Phil bought a farm south of Picacho Peak near Red Rock Arizona around 1935 and farmed there all his life. He planted cotton, wheat, lettuce, watermelons, and ran a cattle-feeding operation. He also raised cattle near Oracle, Arizona for a time. On April 8, 1944, he married Mary Lois Benedict. He was 37 and she was 32. He always joked that he was old enough to know better, but he devoted himself to his wife and three children as well as to his community.

Phil was a 33<sup>rd</sup> Degree Mason, a Worthy Patron of Desert Flower Chapter of Eastern Star, a member of the Lions Club and Eagles. He was very involved in the education of his children and served on the school board of Santa Cruz Valley Union High School for over twenty years, serving as president of the board for at least five of those years.

Phil Thompson was an avid reader and a lover of good poetry. He knew from memory many famous poems and challenged his children to exercise their memories as well. Phil loved sports of any kind and was a life-long season ticket holder to the University of Arizona football games. Phil was unbeatable at cards and loved to laugh and tell stories. His greatest joy was to ride around his farm in his old truck, with tobacco stains on the side, with his two granddaughters, Laura and Charlotte, who were literally the apple of his eye.

Phil passed away on December 4, 1990. He was working when died of heart failure. Upon his death, his family received many notes and letters from people unknown to the family, but expressing thanks for acts of kindness and generosity by Phil Thompson.

