

2021 TFA Reunion

by John Paul Thrasher

The 2021 Thrasher Family Association reunion is scheduled for August 27-29 in Athens, Georgia and “God willing, and the creek don’t rise” will go forward as planned. I hope you all will consider joining your cousins in Athens for the 2021 Athens TFA Reunion. Reunion headquarters will be the Springhill Suites, located at 220 South Hull Street in historic downtown Athens. The hotel is a new property and has set up a block of 10 rooms for Friday (8/27) and Saturday (8/28) as well 5 rooms for Thursday (8/26) and Sunday (8/29) should anyone choose to come a day early or stay a day later. The name on the Group Reservation is the Thrasher Family Association and the group rate will be honored until August 1. Those making a reservation should identify themselves as part of the TFA group and make the reservation in their name secured with their personal credit or debit card. Our group reservation includes a meeting room that will be at our disposal beginning at 3 p.m. on Friday (8/27). Breakfast (included in room charge) will be served in the meeting room on Saturday and Sunday morning. Once again, Dr. David Thrasher will serve as our medical advisor to make sure we can have a safe reunion. I am hopeful that the pandemic situation will have improved across the country by late August as more people get vaccinated and that our TFA members will be comfortable in traveling to Athens. More details to come.



Happy Spring!

Spring has sprung and the new year brings a Thrasher Family Association Reunion!!

Dr. Sue Thrasher: Educator

by David E. Sumner

Sue Thrasher, who was editor of the TFA newsletter from 2015-2020, has had a 40-year career as an educator in many different capacities. She earned an Ed.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, M.Ed. from Georgia State University and a B.A. from the University of Georgia. She has worked as a high school teacher, special education director, principal, school district administrator and college professor. In 1984, she was named special education “Teacher of the Year in the Southeast.” At the college level, she has taught educational technology, school management, research methodology, and educational leadership at Mercer University (full-time) and special education courses at Agnes Scott College as an adjunct. Between 2008-2013, she created an online business teaching special education courses to teachers in Georgia and surrounding states.

In 2008, she returned to Athens to take care of her mother (Caroline B. Thrasher) after the death of her father (Col. Warren A. Thrasher). Sue moved back home and served as her mother’s caregiver until 2017 when Mrs. Thrasher passed away peacefully one month shy of her 98th birthday.

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Dr. David Thrasher: “It’s personal to me.”



by David E. Sumner

Dr. David Thrasher, a pulmonologist, was frequently in the Montgomery news during the last year as a local expert on treating and preventing Covid-19. He is Director of Respiratory Therapy at Jackson Hospital and treated Covid-19 patients at all the Montgomery hospitals. The Montgomery Advertiser quoted him in six articles between April 2020 and January 2021.

He was featured in a July 23, 2020, article in The Daily Beast titled, “Inside an Alabama Doctor’s Weekend of COVID Hell.” The article

reported, “The alarm goes off in Thrasher’s red-brick home in Montgomery at 4:00 a.m. on weekend mornings. He grabs his green scrubs, blue gloves, N100 mask, and face shield and walks out the door. Some days he doesn’t return until 8:00 p.m. with his face bruised from the equipment and nose bleeding. When he’s on call, he’s getting beeped throughout the night about COVID-19 patients, about their charts, about their ventilators.” (See TFA website to read this article).

During the Christmas holidays, he said he juggled an “intense patient load” as four of his seven medical partners and two nurse practitioners were out with Covid-19. He also had a business partner in Florida who was dying from the virus.

The first article in which he was quoted appeared on April 2 after a press conference at City Hall with Montgomery Mayor Steven Reed. In the article, “Expert predicts explosion of cases coming to Montgomery,” Thrasher said, “The next 30 days are going to be really bad for America, for Alabama, and I fear for Montgomery.”

In a June 13 article, “Virus count keeps rising,” Thrasher said, “Montgomery and the surrounding areas throughout central Alabama remain a hotspot for the virus, and yet most citizens appear to think the worst is over. I can assure you that Montgomery’s cases are not going down, and if our community does not take this seriously, the virus will continue to spread, and our medical capacity will reach its limit.”

In a December 30 article, he was asked, “How does it feel to be among the first recipients of the vaccine?” Thrasher said, “I’m so excited. I’ve got four of my partners out sick. I have a business partner in Florida who is dying of Covid. It’s personal to me. I want to be the first to show the public that I’m not afraid to take the vaccine. It’s safe. It’s efficacious.”

In another article, the Advertiser interviewed Thrasher and two other local health experts. The reporter asked them, “Frontline workers have now been fighting this pandemic for over nine months. What has that experience been like for you?” Thrasher replied, “It’s been very tough. The fatigue is incredible. Our wonderful nurses, our respiratory therapists, environmental cleaning people, are just getting devastated by this disease.” (Continued on Page 5)

[Charles Baggett Gentry](#)

August 17, 2020

Louise Thrasher Carpenter

January 27, 2021

 *In Memoriam*

Upcoming docuseries on Wallace “The Squirrel” Thrasher

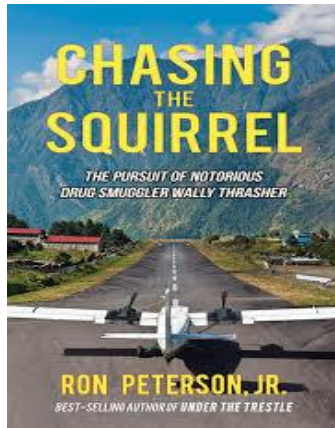
by Nancy Thrasher Cherry

Many of us enjoyed meeting Montana Thrasher and his young family about 10 years ago when he joined TFA. Montana had quite a story to tell. He was the son of a notorious drug smuggler whose daring exploits in running drugs from Latin America and supposedly fiery death were legend in southwest Virginia where the Thrasher family made its home.

Montana showed us the film from the “America’s Most Wanted” TV show, introducing the world to the handsome, athletic, and charismatic Wallace Thrasher, aptly nicknamed “The Squirrel.” He remembered his father as a loving dad, but Montana did not shy away from facing what Wallace had done. At that time, Montana was reconciled to the fact that his father was dead.

Montana participated in TFA’s Y-chromosome DNA project, but his lineage is not one currently being researched by TFA members. Montana had compiled some of his own family history, and our then-chairman, John E. Thrasher, traced Montana’s line back to George Thrasher, born 1780 in Weisenberg Township, Northampton, Pennsylvania, died March 17, 1851 in Botetourt County, Virginia. John’s article appears in the December 2013 issue of the TFA Newsletter, under the heading “Descendants of George Thrasher.”

Since then, Ron Peterson Jr. has written “Chasing the Squirrel,” a 345-page true story of the millions



Cover of Ron Peterson Jr.’s book
“Chasing the Squirrel.”

Wallace pocketed from flying marijuana and cocaine into our country.

Wallace’s career ended in a plane crash in Belize in 1984 with his plane, overloaded with payload and extra fuel, and supposedly Wallace himself, burned to ashes. As a result of the subsequent investigation, the Drug Enforcement Agency’s undercover operation achieved the largest drug bust in Mid-Atlantic U.S. history, netting more than \$150 million in drugs and cash and 13 international traffickers. The investigation led to speculation that Wallace had staged the plane crash and faked his own death. The story has myriad twists and turns, including a murder for hire scheme.

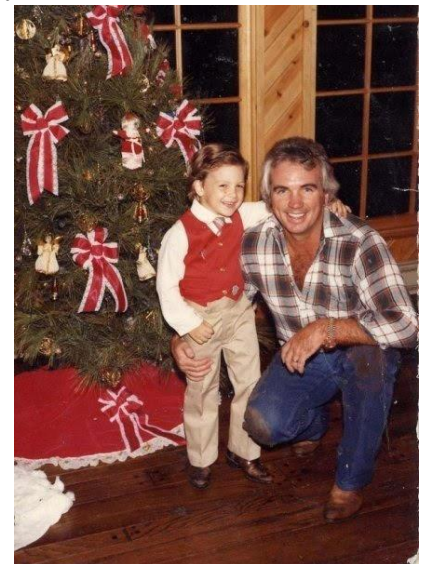
Now Peterson’s book is in development as a multi-episode documentary series which will probably be shown on a streaming service or a cable network. Peterson is Executive Producer on the project and is working with Doug Tower, founder and creative director of Urban Legends

Film Company, which has acquired the rights to the book. The working title for the docuseries is “Where’s Wally?”

Peterson’s book, “Chasing the Squirrel,” was published in late 2020 and is available through Amazon and other retailers such as Target and Walmart. You can also listen to a portion of the story told on a podcast called Vile Virginia, episode 27.

<https://www.vilevirginia.com/episodes/lzpuz5csqf5px2fuafiwqmd1horn7c>

My own interest in the Wallace “Squirrel” Thrasher story came about because my brother’s daughter was attending school in southwestern Virginia at the time that Squirrel’s activities were in the headlines. My niece complained to her grandfather that she was being pestered by classmates about any relationship to the smuggler. Her grandfather – my father – asked me to see what I could find out about the man, but in those days, not much was available online.



A young Montana stands next to his father
Wallace “Squirrel” Thrasher.
Photo provided to TFA by Montana Thrasher

Dr. Sue Thrasher: Educator *(Continued from Page 1)*

Sue has an older brother, Warren, Jr. She is the older sister of John Paul, and they have a younger sister, Peggy Thrasher Law. Sue has an adult disabled daughter, Jennifer, who lives with her. Sue's older daughter, Clare, lives with her husband, James, and their sons, Corin (10) and Felix (6), in Shalford, England.

Sue's faith has always been an important part of her life. "My mother made sure all her children were active in the Methodist Church. Our grandfather, Rev. John B. Thrasher, was a Methodist minister, as were many in the Thrasher line." As a volunteer she has taught Bible studies to women's groups, which included the books of Esther, Daniel, Timothy, Jonah, James, the Pauline epistles, and John. After her mother's death, Sue and Jennifer were confirmed into the Roman Catholic Church at the University of Georgia Newman Center. Since then, she has been on pilgrimages with the secular Franciscans to Assisi and Rome, Italy. She said she was attracted by the "clear teachings" of the Roman Catholic Church.

Growing up as a "military brat," she lived in eight different places in six different states, not counting two years in Tehran, Iran all by the time she was 13. She describes her mother, Caroline, as a "very sweet and thoughtful person. She provided an example of unconditional love and encouragement for everyone in the family. My father was strict, believing in duty, honor and country. But we realized he was also a hero because of how he conducted himself during his military career. He could walk into a room with all kinds of nationalities and command respect and show them respect. He was very much a diplomat."

Her life has not always been easy. "In 1972 I married my college sweetheart who became a Methodist minister. We served churches all over northeast Georgia for 11 years and were blessed with two daughters, Clare and Jennifer.

"Jennifer was disabled from birth and, unfortunately, her father and I went through an unexpected, bitter divorce in 1984. My name has been legally changed from (Mary) Sue Thrasher McGrath to Sue Quillian Thrasher, just to confuse genealogists!" She explains that Quillian was her paternal grandmother's maiden name.

She traveled frequently before the pandemic. "I enjoy gardening, swimming, and being of service in the Bill W. fellowship. Before the pandemic, I would visit Clare about once a year, and she would visit me once a year, and sometimes we would meet up in Scotland. One time we met at Disney World."

"I have a puppy, Sugar, that takes a lot of our energy and time. We love her. Jennifer and I enjoy taking care of our little dog."

She was not active in the Thrasher Family Association until 2013. "My brother, John Paul, got me interested in the TFA when he hosted the reunion in Athens in 2013. I don't know the stories and history like he does, but I love meeting all my 'cousins.'"

Sue created the TFA website in 2013 and continues to manage it. Her main goal right now is "keeping up with the website a little better, posting more things and not leaving it quite so static. I also want to travel again when we can travel."

Sue Thrasher sums up her life by saying, "I think my calling in life has always been teaching and presenting information to groups. I taught in one way or another, children and adults, disabled or not, for 40 years. I still really enjoy teaching and learning. That is my love, my calling."

***** A Note on TFA Dues *****

The Thrasher Family Association dues are \$20 per year and can be paid at the upcoming 2021 Athens TFA Reunion or by mail. Checks should be made payable to the Thrasher Family Association and mailed to:

**Thrasher Family Association
Attn: Angie Grooms, Treasurer**

PO Box 1137

Davidson, NC 28036

grooms75@bellsouth.net

Dr. David Thrasher: “It’s personal to me.” *(Continued from Page 2)*

Dr. David Thrasher wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) on the frontlines of fighting the COVID pandemic.

Another question was, “What would you say to someone who might feel hesitant about getting the Covid-19 vaccine?” Thrasher said, “I feel very comfortable that this is a safe vaccine. I wouldn’t taking it or wouldn’t be holding out for my grandchildren to take it unless I was very comfortable. This is a game-changer. It is a miraculous vaccine. There is so much mess in social media, all falsehoods. I am trying to give people the non-political truth.”

Finally, he was asked, “Does the Covid-19 vaccine mean the pandemic is over?”

Thrasher replied, “This is just the beginning. We have a hard six months to go. There will be a lot of deaths before it’s over. But if everyone will keep wearing their masks, social distancing, take the vaccine, this summer is going to be a whole different experience for us. Having said that, this isn’t a magic bullet. I will not be immune tomorrow. So, it’s important that we do these things now until the end of the summer.

In a 2017 profile in the TFA newsletter, he said he first learned about the association in 2009 from one of his patients, Bill S. Thrasher, who was in the intensive care unit at Baptist Hospital at the time (and later died). “We started talking about our names, and he told me about the Thrasher association and the reunions. That’s how I first discovered the Thrasher association.” He attended his first reunion in 2010 and his family hosted the TFA reunion in Montgomery in 2017.

I emailed Dr. Thrasher and asked his permission to publish this article. He said “sure,” and added a couple of comments. “As far as Alabama is concerned, Alabama has had more deaths per one million population than all but nine other states in the United States. January was an incredibly busy and deadly month not only in Alabama but across the United States,” he wrote.

He ended on an optimistic note, however. “I am very optimistic about this summer. By then I hope that we would have at least 60 percent of the people immunized or have the antibodies from having the virus itself. I do believe if everyone in your party has been vaccinated, you can go to restaurants, social events or concerts and be at least 95 percent protected. I look forward to when we can have a reunion again, but I don’t think we should get together until all are vaccinated.”

Please continue to share your news and photos with your “cousins by the dozens.”

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