

Thomas Blood: Sangre de Tho'mas

My Cuban father calls to me in Spanish, "Tesoro de mi Vida," which in English means, "Treasure of my life." However, his treasure came at a price. Similarly, my mother tells me that I have "Thomas blood," which I learned also came with a high price tag. Let me explain how these two things make me strongly believe why everyone should vote in the 2020 election.

My father's family came from Cuba in 1962. They all went through the legal immigration process and eventually became U.S. citizens. They arrived in Miami to the Freedom Tower with little more than the clothes on their backs. I hear stories of what it was like in Communist Cuba and life was not pleasant there. Because I am a second generation Cuban-American, I would never take for granted my right to vote. So many in my family did not have that privilege and by not voting, I would be disrespecting the many sacrifices that they made to come here. Despite anyone's personal background, I think that every person should vote because it is the way to equalize. No matter if one is rich, poor, male, female, ethnic, religious or atheist, every person equals only 1....one simple, yet powerful vote.

Furthermore, on my mother's side of the family, I heard about Private First Class, William H. Thomas, my great uncle. He will forever be remembered in the history books and in our family lineage, as he is the recipient of the Medal of Honor.

William H. Thomas joined the army in 1942. On April 22nd, 1945, he was serving as a machine gun operator in the Philippines. Despite being mortally wounded, he refused medical treatment. After his traumatic injury, he laid suppressive fire against the enemy until his weapon was destroyed by opposing fire. Even after the loss of his gun, he still refused to retreat. With the last of his strength and will, he hurled his two final grenades towards the enemy. His efforts were

critical in securing the victory. His platoon was able to continue with the surge to secure their strategic position. Unfortunately, Private First Class William H. Thomas, (age 22) died later that same day with dignity, honor and valor. His fellow soldiers were all moved by his heroic sacrifice. In fact, on September 24th, 1945, Private First Class William H. Thomas was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor, the highest accolade in the United States Military. Due to his tenacity and heroic actions, he maintained the momentum of the battle and the remainder of the men in his company survived.

My mother always speaks about our Thomas legacy. I came to understand the true breath, power, and depth of her words. I have Thomas blood in me. When I pause to recognize what this man did for our country, I will vote because of him, and because of my family's escape from a repressed Cuba. Everyone should vote in the 2020 election. 1 vote=1 person.