

Thousands attend funeral of James Thomas

October 3 2013 at 10:11am



KILLED: James Thomas

Jason Felix

MORE than 1 000 people crowded the Diocesan College (Bishops) Chapel for the funeral of James Thomas, the South African killed in the three-day Westgate Mall terror attack in Nairobi.

Thomas, 57, had been in the mall when it was stormed by armed men on September 21, leaving 67 dead. He was in Kenya training youths to find jobs and grow the economy.

Cape Town Anglican Archbishop Thabo Makgoba told the gathering Thomas had touched the lives of many Kenyans “far more than he probably realised”.

Claremont Main Road Mosque Imam Rahied Omar called for interfaith unity against terror attacks. He extended condolences to family and friends.

Thomas’s wife, Colleen, said: “He always told me that he loved me pathologically. We spoke about death like many couples and all he asked for was a simple pine coffin, with handles and smily faces on each side.”



WIFE: Colleen Thomas Courtney Africa

James's coffin was pine, the smiles added as it left the church. "I don't want to be here to be saying farewell to a friend, a father and a husband. The heat of anger fills my heart. James's death has been evil.

"All of us here have the right to be angry. But we will grieve patiently."

She asked the mourners to rise and shout "NO" to the anger and pain caused by the attack. She described Thomas as a go-getter and fearless

businessman. "He was not afraid of any challenge."

Son-in-law Scott Lee-Jones said Thomas believed that everything could be fixed with cable ties. "But he also (believed in the) ties that bond family and friends. I miss his conversations that always left me encouraged."

The acting-chief director: Consular Services,



FINAL FAREWELL: Pallbearers carry the coffin of Capetonian James Thomas, one of the 67 people killed in the September 21 Westgate Mall terror attack in Nairobi. Thomas is survived by his wife, Colleen and daughters Sarah-Lee Jones and Julie. Photo: Reuters REUTERS

Mbulelo Bungane, represented the Department of International Relations and Co-operation. The UK Consulate's Chris Trott represented the UK Department of International Development which funded some of Thomas's work in Kenya.

Thomas is survived by his wife, Colleen, and daughters Sarah Lee-Jones, 28, and Julie, 19.

jason.felix@inl.co.za

<http://www.iol.co.za/capetimes/thousands-attend-funeral-of-james-thomas-1.1586368#.VCEgyBacxfg>