

Friends and co-workers remember Thom Gregory, a longtime Gannett employee

Allie Clouse, Knoxville News Sentinel Published 3:55 p.m. ET March 11, 2020

Thomas "Thom" Gregory, 56, unexpectedly died of a heart attack early Sunday morning in Knoxville, where he lived with his wife, Lisa.

Gregory was a USA TODAY Network regional director and general manager of the Knoxville News Sentinel's printing operation. He worked for Gannett at various Tennessee news operations for nearly 30 years. Just a couple of days earlier, Gregory was hard at work as always, ensuring that whatever was printed was of the highest quality.

"It's hard to put Thom into words," Tony Clifton, his longtime friend, told Knox News. "He was a good, hardworking country boy."

Gregory and Clifton went to school together in Franklin, Kentucky, where most of Gregory's family lives. In high school, Gregory met Clifton and his future wife. Gregory's family owned a farm in the small community, but instead of taking over the family business, Gregory started working at a local print shop.

That's where his love for newspaper printing started.



Thomas "Thom" Gregory died on March 8, 2020. He was a dedicated Gannett employee for nearly 30 years. (Photo: Special to the News Sentinel)

He went to college at Western Kentucky University and earned a degree in mathematics with a minor in physics. He started working for Gannett in 1990.

"To him, it was all math," his wife, Lisa Gregory, said. "Laying out the paper was about numbers, so it came easy."

Gregory spent about 25 years of his career at The Tennessean in Nashville. In 2017, he moved with his wife to work in Jackson, Tennessee, at The Jackson Sun. He took over operations at the Knoxville News Sentinel in May 2019.

"Thom was definitely a 'get the job done' kind of executive — no matter what," said Jay Winkler, Gregory's co-worker. "He was very knowledgeable of all of the production processes. He was a pivotal leader locally and regionally."

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Longtime Gannett employee Thomas "Thom" Gregory died March 8, 2020. (Photo: Special to the News Sentinel)

Outside of the office, Gregory pursued his passions: photography, astronomy and reading. He enjoyed comic books and science fiction stories. He and his wife stopped counting the books they owned after passing 3,000.

"Most of the memories that I hold of Thom are his wacky sense of humor, especially if you knew him outside of work," Clifton said. "I wouldn't say he was rigid, but he was always in a business mindset. He was a hoot after his shift, though."

No matter where home was, Gregory put his family first. He took a job with Gannett for better benefits and pay after finding out that his wife was pregnant with their first child. As his daughter grew up, Gregory would read books with them, take photos at school events and was known to brag about them constantly.

"Because we got married so young, I like to say that he raised me well," Lisa Gregory said. "He raised us all well. He made sure that we could take care of ourselves and everyone else."

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Thomas "Thom" Gregory with his family. (Photo: Special to the News Sentinel)

He is survived by his wife of 34 years, Lisa Gregory; his two daughters, Jennifer and Amanda Gregory; three sisters, Mary Elizabeth Gregory, Vickie Lee Keen and Kimberly Chris Stradtner; and two brothers, John Wesley Gregory II and Mark Wayne Gregory.

Funeral services (<https://www.gilbertfhonline.com/obituary/Thomas-Alvin-Gregory>) will be held at 2 p.m. Thursday, March 12, at Gilbert Funeral Home in Franklin, Kentucky. Burial will follow at Greenlawn Cemetery. Visitation will be held Thursday from 6 a.m. until the service.

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