



Daily News editor Chip Thompson remembered as generous community leader

RED BLUFF — Father, friend and longtime editor of the Red Bluff Daily News Chip Thompson died at 1:10 p.m. Saturday in the hospital after battling an unspecified illness at the age of 57.

Originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Thompson came to California to attend Sonoma State University where he earned his bachelor's degree in English.

Thompson went on to work for the Times News in Twin Falls, Idaho as a reporter and the South Idaho Press as its managing editor before taking the editor position at the Red Bluff Daily News where he had worked since 2008.

In his free time, Thompson was an avid cyclist and fisherman. He enjoyed movies, comedy and podcasts.

Throughout his life, Thompson made a point to build friendships with community members, many of whom have expressed the profound impact he has had on their lives.

Former Red Bluff Daily News Publisher Greg Stevens worked alongside Chip from 2008 until 2017. Stevens said during that time, the paper was experiencing rapid change such as redesigns, reorganization and an expansion of the paper's scope, all of which Thompson oversaw. Stevens said it was during that time that he and Thompson became friends.

"When I think of Chip, the descriptor that jumps out is 'generous,'" Stevens said. "Chip practiced generosity in every facet of his life. On the job, nurturing new college grads to journalism and the Daily News; and in the community, with his service through Red Bluff Kiwanis. But more than that, he was generous with his home and his possessions. Once he loaned me a car for several weeks while mine was repaired after an accident. He was generous with his time, and with his sense of humor. I still quote his observation that Orland was the birthplace of the conjunction."

"I will miss Chip Thompson," Stevens continued. "His steady example as a leader, his friendship, and that oh-so-clever sense of humor."

"Chip was truly a newspaperman's newspaperman. He made a very difficult job look much easier than it is," said Chico Enterprise-Record editor Mike Wolcott, who worked closely with Thompson for the past nine years. "He had a great sense of news and community and was always a joy to work with."

Thompson had extensive experience covering sports, which continued during his time as editor of the Daily News. Through this, he made connections with those involved in local education such as Red Bluff Joint High School Superintendent Todd Brose.

"Chip Thompson was very respected for his kindness, respect and loyalty to his community," Brose said. "He was a strong supporter of education in Tehama County, often visible at sporting events and graduations. We will miss his friendship, humor and leadership in our community. Red Bluff Joint Union High School District offers its deepest sympathy and condolences to the Thompson family."

Tehama-Red Bluff Chamber of Commerce CEO Dave Gowan interacted with Thompson weekly, if not more. Gowan first met Thompson in 2010 when he first began work. He recalled Thompson was always willing to help, whether promoting things through the newspaper or being very involved in the Kiwanis Club.

"He always had a smile," Gowan said. "He was always willing to help, and he always asked what was new, and so it was just great. I know that his heart to give back to the community was huge and is a huge blessing to everybody, and his legacy lives on here."

Red Bluff City Councilor Clay Parker sponsored Thompson into Kiwanis Club because he was really into public service. He remembered one of the best things about Thompson was his sense of humor and the puns he used.

“He would write our newsletter, and those things were always so boring,” Paker said. “When Chip started to write them, it was just great because of all the puns and stuff. His sense of humor was something else.”

Red Bluff Police Chief Kyle Sanders expressed a fondness for Thompson’s demeanor, attitude and fair-mindedness when it came to issues involving the Police Department or law enforcement in general.

“I valued the outstanding working relationship we’ve had for so many years, and I especially enjoyed knowing that should an issue arise, he would be approachable,” Sanders said. It’s a sad day for our community as he was deeply involved.”

Red Bluff City Manager Tom Westbrook said the city was very saddened to hear of Thompson’s passing.

Liz Merry, who wrote a weekly column for the Daily News, recalled Thompson’s ethics in journalism which he implemented daily when putting the paper together.

“Chip was friendly, supportive and fair,” Merry said. “Now that he has passed, many of my friends have reached out to tell me how he helped them or impacted their lives in a positive way. I went back and read some of his editorials and he was a fantastic writer – but always let others shine, too. He gave a voice to every opinion and that is an admirable legacy.”

Columnist Shanna Long echoed Merry’s sentiment.

“Chip Thompson is a small-town editor who is really the lifeblood of a small community,” Long said. “As columnists, we were lucky he allowed us to give our unfiltered opinions on things that mattered to us and to each of the sub-communities in this county. I will greatly miss his wisdom and commitment to this newspaper. It is a very sad day for community journalism.”

St. Peter’s Church member Cicely Prewett said Thompson was always so kind and generous to everyone who knew him. He was devout and serious about his spirituality. He was fun loving and liked to be with friends and experience new things.

“I think he had so much to offer and offered so much of himself to his community and his fellow church members, his church family,” she added.

Thompson is survived by his son, Ryan Long, and his daughter-in-law Julie Foley Long.

