



Gregory Louis Thornton

January 16, 1956 - July 21, 2023

An ardent lifelong fan of John Wayne movies, Neil Young and the Minnesota Vikings along with being a loving, compassionate and proud American, it's with heavy hearts we announce the passing of Gregory L. Thornton of La Center, Washington at the age of 67. He succumbed to chronic liver disease after battling pancreatic cancer.

Greg was born in Duluth, Minnesota and raised in the small city of Hibbing located in Saint Louis County. He graduated from Hibbing High School in 1974 and received his Bachelor of Business Administration degree with a minor in Finance from the University of Minnesota.

After college, Greg moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico, where he worked for Crist Machinery in the parts department and quickly became a sales rep selling equipment throughout New Mexico. Several years later, Greg decided to move to Anchorage, Alaska and subsequently Fairbanks, where he sold heavy equipment from Ketchikan to Barrow for about five years before returning to Albuquerque. Greg was working with his former brother-in-law Frank Butler, building houses, when he met his future wife Julie in 1988. From Albuquerque, Greg went with Julie on her assignments in Los Angeles, Minneapolis, FBI Headquarters and Portland, Oregon, where they lived in Calabasas, California, Eden Prairie, Minnesota, Manassas, Virginia and La Center, Washington, respectively. He spent most of his career employed as a heavy equipment salesman for various machinery equipment dealers; a heavy

equipment auction territory representative for Forke and Ritchie Auctioneers; established and owned Greg L. Thornton, A Valuation & Consulting Service as a CSA Certified Machinery & Equipment Appraiser for several years while also serving as a La Center Planning Commissioner, Planning Commissioner Chair, Councilmember and Mayor.

Greg loved selling and valuating "Big Iron." He loved being outdoors whether it was barbequing (specifically salmon and steaks), hunting, fishing, gardening or just mowing grass on his and Julie's 5 ½ acres in La Center; he likened it to just having more "windshield time" to mull over pressing issues throughout the years. In addition, he was known for making his property look like a park.

Greg also loved serving the residents of La Center as their Mayor for seven years as well as a Councilmember and a Planning Commissioner in previous years. He was proud of all of the professional staff he and the consultants help bring to the city as well as the much-needed changes to the antiquated administrative systems. Greg would tell family and friends that the hardest he ever worked was serving the City of La Center in his different government roles. He was very proud of bidding on and purchasing at auction the old TDS building under the City Council's approved budget amount as well as the moment he obtained grant money to aide in renovation of the new City Hall that enabled the consolidation of staff into one building and would be usable for the city council and staff for many years to come. Greg made a positive impact in so many ways. His joy was his family and the many special friendships he maintained throughout the years.

He was famous for saying, "Don't worry. Be happy" and lived by Winston Churchill's motto, "If you're going through hell, keep going." Greg was a man of God and his favorite verse from Psalm 23: 1-6, "The Lord is my Shepherd" comforted him through the hard battles he faced, especially during and up to his passing. It was important to Greg to renew his wedding vows with Julie after being married for 28 years so that their marriage could be blessed by the Catholic church. On July 16 of this year, Greg and Julie renewed their wedding vows at their home with Father David of the Saint Philip Catholic

Church in Woodland officiating, enabling Greg to receive the last sacrament which brought him peace and happiness.

Greg is survived by his loving partner of 35 years and wife of 28 years, Julia Dugger "Julie" Thornton; step-daughter Christy Knowles Hartline; siblings Jerry & his wife Petra Thornton, Carrie & her husband Mark Harris, and Mary & her husband Michael Enich; brother-in-law Floyd & his wife Chris Dugger, and brother-in-law Bryon & his wife Dawn Dugger; nephews Jeremy Thornton, Jason Thornton, Max Harris, Sterling Ulrich, Max Staples, Sean Dugger and Bryce Dugger; nieces Lindsay Kritz, Emily Enich, Brooke Anna Harris, Amber Dugger, Brittany Ianneo, Dawanna Salisbury, Falishia Bare, and their spouses. Greg was preceded in death by his parents, Gerald J. Thornton, Sr, and Marjorie B. "Bernie" (Ahachich) Thornton.

Greg's rosary will be held on Friday, 08/25/2023 at 10:30 am, to be followed by his service at 11:00 am at St. Mary's of Guadalupe in Ridgefield, Washington. A Celebration of Life will be held in his honor on Saturday, 08/26/2023 at 10:00 a.m. at the La Center City Hall. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation "In Memoriam" to: Pancreatic Cancer Action Network www.pancan.org

Tunnels to Towers <https://www.t2t.org>

The family would like to send a special "Thank You" to all the doctors and nurses involved in Greg's care during the past few years with a special thanks to the amazing nurses, nursing aides and the entire team with PeaceHealth SW Hospice and CLT at Home.

Fond memories and expressions of sympathy may be shared at www.evergreenmemorialgardens.com for the Thornton family.

Tribute Wall



“ *Rest in peace, Greg* ”

Loren Webb - August 26, 2023 at 12:00 AM

DH

“ I called Greg Thornton a friend and I believe he felt the same towards me. I first met Greg when I became a La Center Planning Commissioner in 2013. He was still on the City Council. When I started attending the city council meetings that is where we introduced ourselves and our friendship began.

During the years that followed, Greg asked me to help on various city projects on his behalf. He was easy to work with and I enjoyed collaborating with him. Greg was very much a people person, even though he did not like to make speeches.

When I became a City Councilman, it was Greg that took me under his wing to give me the details on how the city runs and my role in it. He was a very smart man and I really appreciated the time he took to answer my many questions. Greg was always connecting with county officials and the Cowlitz leadership to be sure lines of communication were always open. He was highly respected by our state representatives, Clark County officials and the Cowlitz. I appreciated that he took his job so seriously and always had the best interest of the city in mind in everything he did. It was never about him.

I applaud Greg for his time as mayor. He was faced with many tough issues (personnel in particular) and had to make some tough decisions for the betterment of the city. Because of all of Greg's efforts, I believe we have a very vibrant and healthy city and I believe as he did we have the best city employees in the county. He told me on many occasion how proud he was of our city staff.

I am missing my dear friend, but I know he is in a peaceful place with His Lord. My thoughts and prayers go out to his wife Julie and family.

Dennis & Judy Hill, La Center

Dennis Hill - August 21, 2023 at 12:00 AM

DS

“ *The world will never be the same. Uncle Greg had the biggest heart and that laugh...oh that laugh. He will be missed and forever loved. I am the one that is truly blessed to have known this teddy bear of a man. You will always hold a special spot in my life and especially my heart.*

Dawna Salisbury - August 20, 2023 at 12:00 AM

DA

“ *I grew up with Greg since we both could walk. He was in my wedding and was a great friend. this world lost a premium person. My thoughts and prayers go out to Jerry, Carrie and Mary.*

Dennis Anderson - August 15, 2023 at 12:00 AM

JD

“ *With Greg's passing we lost a good friend and La Center lost the best mayor it ever had.*

Jack And Rosemary Davis - July 28, 2023 at 12:00 AM

JC

“ *Please accept my sincere sympathy for your loss. My prayers are with your family and friends. It was a joy and honor to work with Greg at City Hall.*



Jenny Olive, former Asst City Clerk - July 27, 2023 at 12:00 AM

AT

“ *We are deeply sorry for your loss ~ Evergreen Memorial Gardens Cemetery, Funeral Chapel and Crematory*

A Memorial Tree was planted for Gregory Louis Thornton - July 26, 2023 at 12:00 AM