



Marc Schogol

August 1, 1948 - May 27, 2007

Marc Schogol, 58, veteran Inquirer reporter and editor, dies
By Gayle Ronan Sims

INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

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Marc Schogol, who for three decades served as a master word craftsman and role model at The Inquirer, is gone. Mr. Schogol, who lived and worked with leukemia for 24 years, died at age 58 of the disease this morning at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital.

He and his wife, Elizabeth, lived in Drexel Hill, where they raised three children.

"Marc was one of the pioneers in creating the new Philadelphia Inquirer in the 1970s," said Eugene L. Roberts Jr., executive editor from 1972 to 1990. "He added his wonderful writing style to the paper without coaching or guidance. He was a gifted reporter. If we needed a front-page story under pressure, we called on him. Marc was special."

And he remained so throughout three decades at the paper. In a business

filled with large and often fragile egos, Mr. Schogol could be counted on to handle the most mundane assignments with the same enthusiasm and craft he brought to the biggest stories. He was a selfless colleague who enjoyed helping other reporters shape their work.

Mr. Schogol was the lead reporter on the story of Alex Scott of Wynnewood, who died at age 8 from pediatric cancer in 2004. The lemonade stands stemming from the one she established continue to raise millions of dollars nationally for cancer research.

"Alex's Lemonade Stand was much more than a story to Marc," said Alex's mother, Liz Scott. "His writing made hers into a national story. Marc was there for Alex and for us every step of the way. I was inspired by him. He was grateful for the time he had to live. He was so soft-spoken and had this thoughtful way of asking questions. Alex loved him."

Maxwell E.P. King, the newspaper's top editor from 1990 to 1998, said Mr. Schogol was "a star writer" with an "evocative touch."

"Marc was eloquent, and a genuine gentleman whom sources trusted to be careful with the material," King said. "He could pull it together better than anybody."

Mr. Schogol wrote stories of life and death: the Terri Schiavo case; local soldiers who died in Iraq and Afghanistan; obituaries for a flight officer on one of the planes that crashed into the World Trade Center and for Elvis Presley (which he wrote in two hours); Philadelphia's help for victims of Hurricane Katrina and the 1977 Johnstown, Pa., flash flood; teen drinking and fatal car crashes; and victims of diseases, power outages and strikes.

In 1983, Mr. Schogol, then an assistant sports editor, wrote a candid narrative

for Inquirer Magazine a year after being diagnosed with leukemia.

In "Till Death Do Us Part," published on Sept. 25, 1983, Mr. Schogol told of how he and his wife had learned what their wedding vows from 1975 really meant.

"Just a few hours before, I'd been home, getting ready for bed. Now I was in [Lankenau] hospital, with an IV tube in my arm and a nurse at my side trying to comfort me by telling me that I probably had a year to live," Mr. Schogol wrote.

Thus began a remarkable journey driven by Mr. Schogol's love for his family, his job and life.

After breaking the news to his wife, Mr. Schogol called James M. Naughton, then the managing editor. Naughton sent a platoon of newsroom colleagues to Mr. Schogol's hospital room. Many told of people who had lived long lives despite having leukemia.

"I'll never forget all the people who, on the worst day of my life, were there," Mr. Schogol wrote.

Doctors diagnosed chronic myelogenous leukemia. They told Mr. Schogol that it could be controlled by medication for years, but that there was no cure. They said the average life expectancy was two to three years.

He could return to work, they said, and if the disease went into remission, he would be taken off medication and tested monthly. That treatment would remain in place until he no longer responded to medication.

Two days later after entering the hospital, a month short of his 34th birthday, Mr. Schogol went home to his wife and children, Jeffrey, then 3, and Katharine, then 7 months.

Mr. Schogol was a Jew who did not practice his faith. Now, he strengthened his family's affiliation to the Presbyterian church, his wife's religion, writing that "they would be able to draw on the comfort that religion provides to those whose loved ones die. . . . I prayed that I be allowed to live long enough for my children to remember me."

When he first returned to the newsroom a few weeks later, Mr. Schogol was comforted by friends. "After a few days," he wrote, "the questions tapered off and, seeing that I was up and about and in no way impaired, people did begin to treat me exactly as they had in the past.

"But say this for a serious illness: It gives you - or at least it gave me - a new sense of perspective. In the rat race of life, I've become a very detached and often amused observer."

Mr. Schogol's disease went into and out of remission. The couple had another daughter, Caroline.

He remained one of the most prolific staff writers. From November 1981, when The Inquirer's electronic database of published stories begins, until September 2006, when he became too ill to write, Mr. Schogol wrote more than 6,000 stories.

He was hospitalized in January and underwent two bone-marrow transplants. He retired from the newspaper a few weeks ago.

"Marc was a master at taking information from dozens of reporters in the field

and weaving it into a lucid, comprehensive story," said William K. Marimow, who returned to The Inquirer as editor late last year and worked with Mr. Schogol as a fellow reporter earlier in his career. "After being diagnosed with leukemia, Marc was even more dedicated to writing about people in similar situations."

Mr. Schogol never took himself too seriously. He is remembered for his gentle eyes and shock of unruly hair - and for padding around the newsroom in stocking feet.

He confessed to being the bearded middle-age man at the mall who took money for answering consumer surveys while his wife shopped.

Born in New York City, Mr. Schogol earned a bachelor's degree in history, summa cum laude, from Queens College of City University of New York in 1969 after graduating from high school at age 16. He joined the Army National Guard in 1970.

His first journalism job was as a copy boy for the Associated Press. He took a job as a reporter in 1970 at the Elizabeth (N.J.) Journal, and in 1971, he was hired as a reporter by Newsday on Long Island. There he met Gene Foreman, who soon thereafter became managing editor of The Inquirer and hired him in 1974.

Said Foreman: "He was fast, good, and could be counted on to deliver news accounts that were thorough, fair and impeccably accurate. Marc was the exemplary backbone of The Inquirer's reporting staff for more than three decades."

One month after he was hired, Mr. Schogol wrote a Page One story about the Flyers' win over the New York Rangers that advanced the team to the finals

and the Stanley Cup in 1974.

"At exactly 7 p.m. Sunday, 17,007 people at the Spectrum went temporarily insane," it began. "The standing-room-only crowd issued forth a cheer that grew into a sustained roar."

Mr. Schogol was on the team that won a Pulitzer Prize in 1980 for coverage of the Three Mile Island nuclear accident, and was the recipient of dozens of writing awards.

In 1974, Mr. Schogol also caught the eye of Inquirer reporter Elizabeth Duff. "I saw this new guy in blue jeans, a work shirt and long hair," she said. "I thought he must be a copy boy. I introduced myself and he said, 'I'm a reporter.' I was drawn to him because of his kindness and talent."

"The best way to describe it is by what Naughton said: 'By Marc Schogol served as a guarantee that what followed would be clear, honest, ethical, empathetic and deliciously readable,'" his wife said in an e-mail today.

She said Marc was her best friend: "I cannot imagine life without him. I am grateful for a faith that believes in everlasting life. He will always be with me and the kids."

And she recalled the day their son was born: "When the doctor handed Marc his son, he had a look in his eyes I will never forget. His face was contorted in the depth of intense joy that took his breath away."

There were not many good days for Mr. Schogol after January - except April 2. "Marc had undergone radiation, chemo, and a failed bone-marrow transplant," his wife said. "He had been delirious with a high fever. Yet when

Katharine's fiancée called to ask Marc for his daughter's hand in marriage, he was so eloquent and happy. He smiled and then went back down."

In addition to his wife, Elizabeth Duff Schogol; son, Jeffrey; and daughters, Katharine and Carolyn; Mr. Schogol is also survived by his parents Carol and Leonard Schogol; a brother, Peter; and a sister, Robin.

Friends may visit from 7-9p.m. Thursday at Chadwick & McKinney Funeral Home, 30 E. Athens Ave., Ardmore. A funeral service will be held at 11 a.m. Friday at Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church, 625 Montgomery Ave. Burial is private.

Donation may be made to Alex's Lemonade Stand, www.alexlemonade.org or 333 E. Lancaster Ave. No. 414, Wynnewood, Pa. 19096.

Previous Events

Service

JUN 1. 11:00 AM (ET)

Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church
625 Montgomery Avenue
Bryn Mawr, PA

Tribute Wall



“ Dear Elizabeth,

I'll be forever grateful to you for introducing me to Marc back in the 80s. Ever since, I have read everything under his byline in the Inquirer, and I always thought of you when I did. And now I think of both of you, full of gratitude for having known the two of you.##imported-begin##Bob Dunn##imported-end##

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