

## Thomas "Tom" H. Stevens

September 17, 1956 ~ January 23, 2021 (age 64)

### [Life Story, Services and Tribute Wall](#)

#### **Life Story**

Thomas H. "Tom" Stevens, 64, residing in Middlebury, Indiana, passed away unexpectedly at his home on Saturday evening, January 23. He was born on September 17, 1956 in Elkhart, Indiana,



the only son of the late Howard Thomas and Paula (Marchesseau) Stevens. Tom graduated from Elkhart Central High School in 1975. He married his best friend and true love, Elaine Marie Hull on December 31, 1983 in Santa Monica, California. They built a wonderful life together with their 3 children, 2 sons, James Lawrence Stevens,

Zachary Thomas Stevens and daughter Sarah Katheryn Stevens. Tom is also survived by his 3 sisters Marcia Stevens, Sherry Conely and Vicki Barrett.

Music was Tom's life. He started as a child playing in his neighborhood band, Congress, Inc., and then Freedom in his high school years. He often talked about his youth watching bands play behind his house in Elkhart's Pierre Moran Park. Later in life he became a proud member of the Elkhart Musicians Club, many of whose members he saw perform as he grew up. After high school he

joined Magi and recorded his first album with them. As a child in Indiana, infatuated with 60s garage and hard-edged rock and roll,



the regional heroes with their dual-guitar, kick-ass rock and roll style suited him. When Magi packed their gear and moved west to Los Angeles, they found their angle was not the LA style, which had replaced theirs with the vibrant punk energy of Black Flag and X. As other band members moved home, Stevens stayed in Hollywood,

absorbing the raw sounds and urban sensibilities of the L.A. musical landscape. It was during this period, in between working his shifts at the legendary Tower Records on the Sunset Strip, that Tom first began seriously writing songs.

Taking a cue from the thriving DIY punk scene around him, with the help of some friends at Tower, he took those songs and produced a six-song EP on Pulse Records, 1981's *Points of View*, which eventually sold out its original pressing and started his solo career. This was quickly side-tracked as a fateful series of events one day led him to join the Long Ryders in late 1983. With them, he recorded four critically acclaimed albums, *Native Sons*, *State of Our Union* and *Two Fisted Tales* in the 80s and *Psychedelic Country Soul* in 2019. All albums featured Stevens-penned songs. Together they traveled across the United States, Canada and Europe. They were featured in many international magazine covers and had a UK top 40 hit ("Looking For Lewis & Clark"), and enjoyed long runs on European

and U.S music charts. They also performed on several live TV music shows and MTV in the US. The Long Ryders are credited by many for creating what is now labeled Alt Country. They also made a Miller Beer commercial which brought them even more into the public eye.

Together with members of Green on Red and Dream Syndicate, the Long Ryders recorded what is known as the Paisley Underground



Supergroup album, *Danny and Dusty The Lost Weekend* which made the year-end top ten best albums list in the New York Times and a later top 100 list of all time albums in Rolling Stone Magazine. He also recorded with former Green on Red members, Chris Cacavas with his Junk Yard Love band, and Jack Waterson, *Whose Dog*

album. Waterson later produced Tom's 1990s *Last Night* solo album. In his final days living in the Los Angeles area, he played stand up bass for Gene Clark, formerly of The Byrds, who was then working with LA legend Carla Olson. These were some of Clark's last live L.A. performances.

In 1988, he returned to Indiana and became interested in the growing computer culture. He attended Ivy Tech Community College and earned his Associate's degree in computer science. After, he taught introductory computer classes at Ivy Tech and other locations. He worked as technical support for the nonprofit CILC

which brought distance learning into classrooms across America for many years. He also became interested in his genealogy and taught a class at the Elkhart County Library for those who needed help using the computer for genealogical research. He was a lifetime member of the Elkhart County Genealogical Society and was a contributing member of the US Gen Website Board until his death. He offered technical support to several Facebook groups, especially the I Grew Up In Elkhart group.

While living in Middlebury, Tom continued to write and record music. His final solo works, *Another Room*, *Home and Sooner*, along with his anthology *Points Revisited* were produced there. He was a contributing member of the online band *Donovan's Brain* organized by longtime friend Ron Sanchez. In 2004, the Long Ryders reformed for performances for the next 15 years. He was a music archivist and collected taped live shows since the time of his teen years. His archival abilities served well when The Long Ryders were asked to re-release their 80s albums annotated with live performances from the eras in which they were originally recorded. He also provided the material from his library for other live collections the Long Ryders released. In 2018, they recorded their first album in 32 years, *Psychedelic Country Soul* at Dr. Dre's studio in the San Fernando Valley of Southern California. Produced by the legendary Ed Stasium, who also produced their earlier *Two Fisted Tales* LP, the work featured vocals from Debbie and Vicky Peterson of the Bangles among others. He spent most of 2019 and early 2020, until the pandemic hit, on the road once more with the band in support of the album. Touring with his bandmate brothers and talking to those who knew and loved their music made that year pure joy.

He spent his final year in his peaceful community with his music surrounded by family and his cats.

For further details you can check his Wikipedia page at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom\\_Stevens\\_\(musician\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Stevens_(musician)) His music is on Bandcamp for download under both his name <https://thetomstevens.bandcamp.com/> and the Long Ryders <https://thelongryders.bandcamp.com/> and can be enjoyed on YouTube at both his site <https://www.youtube.com/user/tsinsomnia> and with the Long Ryders at <https://www.youtube.com/c/TheLongRydersOfficial/videos>

Tom's family will gather privately at Billings Funeral Home, and honoring his wishes, cremation was chosen. Memorials are kindly requested to the family. To share a memory of Tom or send a condolence to his family, please visit [www.billingsfuneralhome.com](http://www.billingsfuneralhome.com)

To send flowers to the family or plant a tree in memory of Thomas "Tom" H. Stevens, please visit our [floral store](#).

## Services

### PRIVATE FAMILY GATHERING

Billings Funeral Home  
812 Baldwin Street  
Elkhart, IN 46514

### CREMATION HAS BEEN CHOSEN

Billings Funeral Home  
812 Baldwin Street  
Elkhart, IN 46514

Donations,  
To the Family

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Above information gathered by [Bill George](#) Jan. 3, 2022. Bill continued Tom's work maintaining the [Elkhart County, Indiana Genweb](#) website.