



Thomas Gdaniec

June 28, 1963 - March 7, 2026

Thomas G. Gdaniec, age 63, of Madison, completed his earthly journey and returned to his truest form on March 7, 2026, rejoining his beloved parents and those, including his infant son, who passed before him.

Thomas was born in Greenfield, Wisconsin, on June 28, 1963, to Virginia M. (Stefaniak) and George J. Gdaniec. He is survived by his daughter Samantha and all eleven of his siblings; Charilyn, Denise, Rhonda, Lynette, Becky, Nancy, George, Mike, John, Jim, and Tony.

Thomas was really something—that's what you would probably say.

It's hard to know where to begin, but to really understand Thomas, it helps to start at the beginning.

After the loss of his father in his teenage years, Thomas took a job as a groundskeeper at a local cemetery — experiences that went on to shape his early life in many ways. Among the many classic Cadillacs and limousines Thomas owned in his younger years were a couple of hearses, which he casually drove. His unconventional vehicle choice even landed him in the local newspaper, after he was cited for attempting to stop his rolling hearse with his foot after his brakes went out on his way to work — an incident that became just one more story in a life full of them.

To many, Thomas was the life of the party—the “candyman” with a uniquely dry sense of humor, a voice full of character, and a playful, silly nature that could bring a smile to even the crudest faces. He was never afraid to be behind a microphone or in front of a crowd. His easygoing, approachable presence and charm were apparent the moment you met him. That same warmth extended into his role as a father, where his love was steady and deeply felt. He showed that love through his presence—never missing a weekend, always showing up. For years, he made the 45-minute drive each Friday to pick his daughter up, and again each Sunday to bring her home, a quiet and unwavering act of devotion.

Throughout his life, Thomas worked a range of jobs—from millwork and exterior home repair, to years proudly supervising second shift at a brush manufacturing company, where he developed strong rapport with his employees, in part due to his fantastic sense of humor. He later held various manufacturing positions, spent a few years at an Amazon warehouse, and eventually worked at Home Depot. He was a people person—connection with others came naturally to him, and it is what gave meaning to his presence and his work.

Beneath Thomas’s lighthearted outward spirit was a man of great emotional depth and sensitivity. Thomas felt life deeply, even if that side of him was not always visible to others. His inner world held a quiet complexity, shaped by both love and hardship.

Thomas faced ongoing struggles with alcohol, mental health, and periods of unstable housing—realities he carried with a quiet resilience. Through it all, he remained kind, gentle, and deeply human — the man behind blue eyes.

He embraced life as it came and was always on the move. In his later years,

he spent much of his time riding his bike throughout Madison, often finding himself an entire town away or across the city by the end of the day. Though he spent most of his life in the Milwaukee area, Madison became a place of curious exploration for him. He found his way onto the campus of the University of Wisconsin–Madison, spending time near State Street and at the Union Terrace—finding moments of belonging in its libraries, where he would obtain a weekly day pass and spend time in spaces he never formally had the chance to be part of.

Thomas will always be remembered for his wild sense of humor, the spirit he carried, and the love he gave as a father — walking his own path through it all.

Tribute Wall

MP

“ *That is an amazing obituary. Thank you to the author.
Be at peace uncle Tom! ❤️*



michelle pedretti - April 10 at 08:16 PM

DI

“ *My condolences to the whole family. His laugh and smiles were
contagious ~ May He rest in peace 🕊️*

diane - April 10 at 04:26 PM