

About Thomas – Updated 05/29/17

Thomas was born on June 18th, 1965, at University Hospital on the campus of the Ohio State University. He attended pre-school and was in regular education until the second half of the third grade, when he was moved to special ed. He stayed there until the sixth grade.

At the end of the seventh grade, Thomas was diagnosed with [autism](#) and placed in a psychiatric facility, as was the custom at the time. He entered in the Summer of 1980 and left the Autumn of 1983.

Following this, he moved to Urbana, Illinois, for a time to attend [Parkland College](#), where he studied computer science. While he was there, Thomas also received his GED and graduated high school a year early.

Returning home, Thomas worked for the Medicare division of Nationwide Insurance for three years, from 1986 to 1989. His duties were to process Medicare claims for the states of Ohio and West Virginia. He then attended [Columbus State](#) Community College for time, studying Mental Health and Journalism.

In 1992, Thomas was asked to run for office on the national board of directors of the [Autism Society of America](#), at that time the largest autism organization in the world. He reluctantly agreed and eventually served two non-consecutive terms (a total of five years) on the board, 1992-1994 and 1997-2000.

During this time he also traveled extensively throughout the USA and Canada, speaking at conferences and doing private consulting for families and school systems in regards to children with autism. Thomas was one of the four original advocates along with Sean Barron, Donna Williams, and Temple Grandin. The four of them, working both together and separately, increased awareness and understanding of the autistic disorder around the globe.

Thomas was also involved in the martial arts during this time. He trained in Tae-Kwon-Do (he made it over half way to a black belt before illness forced him to quit).

Thomas has written and published two books. The first, [Soon Will Come the Light](#), is biographical in nature and covers a lot of behavior and neuro-sensory information on the topic of autism. This book was released in 1994. It took the national ASA award for literary excellence that year and remains in print all these years later.

The second book, [Light on the Horizon](#) (now out of print) is more of a "how-to" kind of book in dealing with various aspects of the autistic disorder.

In early 1997, Thomas was presented with a Kentucky [Colonel's Commission and Title of Honor](#) Award for his work in the advocacy field. Shortly after, he was additionally diagnosed with severe [fibromyalgia](#), causing him to step down from his travels and end his martial arts training. Also in 1997, Thomas started [building a web site](#) that has since grown to include far more than just his [published autism articles](#), has he had originally planned.

In late 1999, Thomas moved from [Columbus](#) to the much smaller town of [Bedford, VA](#). Here, in the Blue Ridge Mountains (he lived just a few miles from the base of the [Peaks of Otter](#) mountain range).

In October of 2001, just after 9/11, Thomas had the opportunity to appear as a guest on the [Oprah Winfrey Show](#). Oprah's producer flew out to Bedford with a cameraman and filmed and interviewed Thomas for over five hours. In the [segment that aired](#), Oprah did promote *Soon Will Come the Light* and Thomas soon found that everything that has been said of Oprah and book sales is absolutely true.

Shortly after Oprah, Thomas was invited to speak on the Mall (where MLK gave his "I Have a Dream" speech) where he spoke to thousands of people at an autism awareness rally. Following that, he attended a Senate hearing on autism and vaccines which accomplished nothing.

Thomas has had an interesting life. As stated, Thomas has traveled extensively. He has spoken at numerous local, state, regional, national, and even international conferences. He has addressed the Senate and Congress regarding disability issues, funding and awareness. He has done private consulting around the USA and Canada that has improved the lives of many, many children and adults diagnosed with the autistic disorder, at home, in schools, and in residential facilities. He has attended many IEP meetings as a consultant. He has appeared not only on Oprah, but also on NPR and on several local television newscasts and newspapers around the States.

Today, Thomas has returned home to Ohio where he lives in a cave. He lives with his sister, her husband, and a purebred Pomeranian who, like Thomas, has been previously abused and abandoned. The fibromyalgia was a misdiagnosis and Thomas is now spending quite a bit of time in a custom built titanium wheelchair while trying to get healthy again. He is still writing (sometimes [things other than autism](#)) and you will still see him at the occasional autism conference.

(See Also: [Fifty Things About Thomas](#))