

About Thomas – Updated 08/25/24

Thomas was born in the mid sixties 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 an institution, the custom at the time. He entered in the Summer of 1980 and left in 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 advocacy organization in the world. He served two non-consecutive terms (a'la Grover Cleveland) on the board, 1992-1994 and 1997-2000. He currently serves on the board of directors of the [Autism Society of Ohio](#), a state chapter of the Autism Society of America. When he joined the ASO board, he was asked to sign a document stating he had read the [ASA Options Policy](#), some of which he had helped to draft over 20 years prior.

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 is one of the four original advocates along with [Sean Barron](#), [Donna Williams](#), and [Temple Grandin](#). The four of them, working both together and separately, were not only a big part of originally creating autism awareness, they also increased that awareness and the understanding of the autistic disorder around the globe.

During his time on the board, Thomas was involved in the martial arts. He trained in Tae-Kwon-Do under Grand Master Joon Pyo Choi with the intent of being the first with autism to get a black belt. 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 a national 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 autism.

In early 1997, Thomas was presented with a Title of Honor 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. (Twenty years later this was found to be a misdiagnoses. Thomas was rediagnosed in 2017 with a progressive neurological disorder that has severely weakened his muscles.)

Also in 1997, Thomas started building a [web site](#) that has since grown to include [far more](#) than just his [published autism articles](#), as he had originally planned. In late 1999, Thomas

moved from Columbus to the much smaller town of [Bedford, VA](#). He lived at the base of the beautiful [Peaks of Otter](#) mountain range and spent a lot of time up in the Blue Ridge.

In October of 2001, just after 9/11, Thomas had the opportunity to appear as a guest on the *Oprah Winfrey Show*. Oprah promoted *Soon Will Come the Light* and Thomas soon found that everything that has been said of Oprah and book sales is true.

Shortly before Oprah, Thomas was invited to speak on the [Mall](#) in Washington where he spoke to thousands of people at an autism awareness rally. Following this, he attended a Senate hearing on autism and vaccines. He did not testify.

Thomas has had an interesting life. He has been in and out of a wheelchair, doing just over five years in a sporty red [Tilite TRA](#) until the coronavirus pandemic when he worked to improve his health. Today he is somewhat back on his feet. As stated, Thomas has traveled extensively. He has spoken at numerous local, state, regional, national, and international conferences. He has addressed the members of 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 children and adults diagnosed with the autistic disorder at homes, in schools, residential facilities, and institutions. He has attended several IEP meetings as a consultant. He has appeared not only on Oprah, but also on NPR and on several television newscasts and in newspapers across the United States and Canada.

Today, Thomas has returned home to [Hilliard, OH](#) where he lives in somewhat of a cave with his sister, her husband. He is still writing (sometimes things [other than autism](#)) and you will still see him at the occasional autism conference.

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