

*In Memory of*

# Dale Patrick Lezon

May 24, 1954 - February 3, 2017

## Obituary



Dale Patrick Lezon, a veteran reporter for the Houston Chronicle whose love of writing began long before he set foot in a newsroom, died unexpectedly of an undiagnosed heart condition last week. He was 62.

Dale worked at the Chronicle for more than 16 years and covered natural and man-made disasters before becoming one of the paper's main crime reporters. He came to Houston from New Mexico, where he had spent five years with the Albuquerque Journal, gaining awards and recognition for his extensive front-page reporting on a massive wildfire that roared through New Mexico in 2000.

Dale was heavily involved in the Chronicle's coverage of Hurricane Katrina and the Space Shuttle Columbia accident. In recent years, he specialized in police coverage

and helped lead the paper's effort to provide breaking news on [chron.com](http://chron.com) and [houstonchronicle.com](http://houstonchronicle.com).

"We are all deeply saddened by Dale's sudden passing," said Nancy Barnes, executive vice president and editor of the Chronicle. "He was a talented journalist, especially on big breaking news, and was a major contributor to some of Houston's most significant stories over the last two decades. More recently, he worked on the digital team, and was a constant contributor to our daily news report. And, perhaps most importantly, he was a kind and thoughtful colleague to us all."

Dale's journalism career did not begin in earnest until he reached 40. Although he did some freelance sportswriting for the Orange County Register after finishing college, he made his living teaching English literature and composition for several colleges.

In his nonteaching hours, Dale wrote a considerable amount of poetry, fiction, and plays.

"If left to his own devices, he would have wanted to write poetry or fiction all the time," said longtime friend Robin Smith of Santa Fe, N.M., where Dale lived for most of the 1990s. "But he didn't talk much about being published or chase that in a commercial way. His subjects were very dark, but that is not the way he was as a person. I think he enjoyed emulating some of these dark, existential writers."

Dale continued to write plays, poetry and short stories throughout the rest of his life, and enjoyed spending afternoons hunched over his computer or scribbling in writing pads.

As he reached 40, Dale wearied of pursuing part-time teaching positions and other jobs, Smith said. He was hired by the Albuquerque Journal to cover general assignment breaking news and county government. He moved to Houston in 2000.

Dale had an affinity for writing about disasters and crime incidents because he felt enormous empathy toward the victims, said another close friend, Rhea Davis of Houston. His low-key demeanor was at odds with the popular notion of the hard-bitten reporter but in keeping with his personality, Davis said.

"He had the biggest heart and the kindest spirit. He really cared about people, especially the underdog. He always wanted to help people in the most devastating of circumstances," Davis said.

In his free time, Dale loved spending time with his beloved dog Otter. They often wandered around the Heights for hours searching for squirrels and enjoying the sun and fresh air. He had recently started volunteering at the Heights Interfaith Ministries Food Bank twice a week and was grateful for the opportunity to serve his community.

Dale was born May 24, 1954, in San Diego, California to William and Gloria Lezon. His father retired from the U.S. Navy and the family moved to Houston. He graduated from Spring Branch High School in 1972. He is survived by a brother, Stephen, of Houston; sister, Daria Pezman of Lafayette, California; and four nephews and nieces.