

# Timothy Harrison, *Lighthouse Digest's* Editor and Publisher is Lost

Whiting, Maine – Timothy E. Harrison, a beloved lighthouse enthusiast and preservationist, editor and publisher of *Lighthouse Digest* magazine, passed away August 19, 2023 at the age of 75 in Bangor, Maine.

Tim was passionate about saving lighthouses and preserving their legacy. Ever since he was a small boy fishing off of the pier with his bamboo pole next to the Holland Harbor Lighthouse in Michigan, lighthouses have had a special place in Tim's heart.

In 1989, he and his wife, Kathleen Finnegan-Harrison, visited all the lighthouses of Maine. This led to them researching and writing a book together. In the back of that book was an ad to subscribe to the *Lighthouse Digest*. A year later, with only 43 paid subscribers, the first issue of *Lighthouse Digest* magazine was published in May 1992.

Working on the magazine drove Tim's creative ambition to promote lighthouse preservation and history in every conceivable way. Tim wrote and co-authored many books, started businesses, formed non-profits, lobbied for legislation, wrote grants, established museums, organized preservation groups, sponsored fundraisers, worked on restoration projects, gained stewardship of U.S. Lighthouse Service buildings, gave hundreds of presentations, hosted lighthouse keeper grave marker ceremonies, gathered a massive historical archive, developed an online history database, created the *Lighthouse Digest* Doomsday List of Endangered Lighthouses, sponsored and appeared in video and television productions, and served on museum boards.

Some of his more notable accomplishments included co-founding the World's Largest Lighthouse Gift Store-Lighthouse Depot in Wells, Maine in 1993. In 1994, Tim co-founded and served as president of the American Lighthouse Foundation (ALF) until 2007.

Under Tim's leadership, ALF became the first nonprofit in New England to obtain ownership of a Maine lighthouse, Little River Light, under the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act. Tim was particularly proud of relighting Little River Light only three weeks after 9/11, to be a

"Beacon of Freedom to the World."

In 2005, Timothy Harrison was awarded the United States Coast Guard's Meritorious Public Service Award for his tireless advocacy. He was also later bestowed the title of Honorary Chief Petty Officer, United States Coast Guard, in addition to receiving the F. Ross Holland Distinguished Service Award, granted by the American Lighthouse Council.

In 2011, Tim created the *Lighthouse Digest* grave marker program, placing U.S. Lighthouse Service memorial markers at the gravesites of lighthouse keepers across the nation. The program is robustly continued by many lighthouse organizations and keeper descendants today.



Tim believed in educating the public about lighthouses. To that end, he founded the Museum of Lighthouse History to showcase his extensive personal collection that later became a part of the current Maine Lighthouse Museum in Rockland. He appeared in films like *Lighthouses of Maine*, *A Journey Through Time* and worked on documentaries with PBS and the History Channel, such as the *Legendary Lighthouses* series and *Save Our History: American Lighthouses*. Beyond his work with *Lighthouse Digest*, Tim was a prolific author, writing another 14 lighthouse books.

At the time of his death, he was the president of the board of the West Quoddy Head Light Keepers Association in Lubec, Maine and on the board of the Maine Lighthouse Museum in Rockland, Maine. He had just finished creating a museum with exhibits focusing on the history of West Quoddy

Lighthouse and its keepers at the West Quoddy Lighthouse Visitor Center.

In recent years, he also created the non-profit Lighthouse History Research Institute to provide an archive for the extensive volume of lighthouse and keeper research documents, and historic photographs he had assembled over the last three decades. Tim was even preparing material for writing another book entitled *Lighthouse Murder, Mystery, and Mayhem!*

Timothy Harrison will be remembered for his boundless enthusiasm and dedication to lighthouses. His monumental efforts ensured that these iconic structures and their keepers received the recognition, honor and protection they deserve. His passion for lighthouses will continue to shine on and inspire preservation efforts for generations to come.

As deep as Tim's passion for lighthouses was, he had an even deeper passion for God and his family. Known for his heartfelt meal blessings, Tim graced all who heard them. He was grateful to share these many years with his wife Kathy, in which they shared a passion for entrepreneurship, history, lighthouses, faith, and adventure. Quick to help, he brought Christ's light to those in need.

Tim is survived by Kathleen Finnegan-Harrison, his wife of 34 years; son, T.J. Harrison; sister, Tresa (Richard) Northuis and brothers, Terry (Ronda), Thomas, and Todd (Jan); his Maine family Joan MacKeen, John and Janine Drouin, and Debra Baldwin; brothers-in-law, Kerry (Jill Slupe) and Fr. Kevin Finnegan; grandsons, Tyler and Jayden, and numerous nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his parents, Elmer and Dorothy (VanOmen) Harrison.

A memorial service will be held in Cutler, Maine on Saturday, September 2, 2023 at the Cutler United Methodist Church at 10:30am with visitation 1 hour before. Another memorial service will be held on November 20th at 11:00am at the Unity Reformed Church in Norton Shores, Michigan, his home state of Michigan. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Lighthouse History Research Institute, P.O. Box 250, East Machias, ME 04630.

[www.LighthouseHistoryResearch.org](http://www.LighthouseHistoryResearch.org)