

How Gary Smalley's Mantle Was Passed Along Right Before His Death

Gary Smalley, best-selling author of more than 60 books and Smalley Relationship Center founder and president, died Sunday, March 6. He was 75.

Along with an expression for the support the family received and notice that the memorial service is being planned, the announcement on Smalley's Facebook page read: "It is with heavy hearts that we announce Dr Gary Smalley, at age 75, graduated to heaven last night. The family gathered and surrounded him, his loving wife Norma kissed his forehead gently and sang to him. This beautiful transition came to an end as these words were spoke over him 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you.' Numbers 6:24-25."

A relationship expert and dynamic speaker, Smalley made many appearances on national programs, including *Fox & Friends*, *The Oprah Winfrey Show* and NBC's *Today* show.

Focus on the Family President Jim Daly posted a lengthy tribute on his Daly Focus Blog.

"My friend Gary Thomas Smalley died last night," Daly wrote in a post March 7. "He was surrounded by his family, including his son and my Focus colleague, Greg, who had just returned hours earlier from a speaking engagement about marriage.

"How fitting, I thought, that on the very day Gary was to receive his eternal reward, his son was picking up where his father had left off, loving and ministering to Christian couples by helping to enrich their marital relationships."

Daly lauded Smalley's counseling skills.

"Gary was also a trusted counselor in whom people confided their deepest longings, hurts, hopes and dreams," Daly wrote. "The practical advice and coaching he gave helped countless husbands and wives stave off divorce. How many children grew up with both their mom and their dad because God used Gary to repair and restore their marriages? More than you would imagine."

Smalley's books have sold more than 5 million copies, and the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association honored him with Gold Medallion awards for *Two Sides of Love* (Focus on the Family); *The Blessings* (Thomas Nelson); and *The Treasure Tree* (Word).

Smalley worked with a variety of publishers in his writing career.

"Gary Smalley was a man of character with a tender heart to help people—and his books have changed marriages, relationships and lives all around the world." said Alex Field, vice president and publisher at WaterBrook Multnomah, which published under the Multnomah imprint Leaving the Light On and Home Remedies.

Tyndale House Publishers published nonfiction titles, including *The DNA of Relationships*, and a fiction series written with Karen Kingsbury, "Redemption." *Reunion*, from that series, won a Retailers Choice Award from *Christian Retailing*.

"Gary Smalley was an incredibly good counselor and author, and he was an all-around good guy," said Tyndale House CEO and Board Chairman Mark Taylor. "Tyndale House is pleased to have published a number of his books, which touched the lives of hundreds of thousands of readers. His influence will live on for many years through his books and through the lives he touched personally through his many counseling sessions."

The Smalleys were married 52 years and had three children, Greg, Kari and Michael.