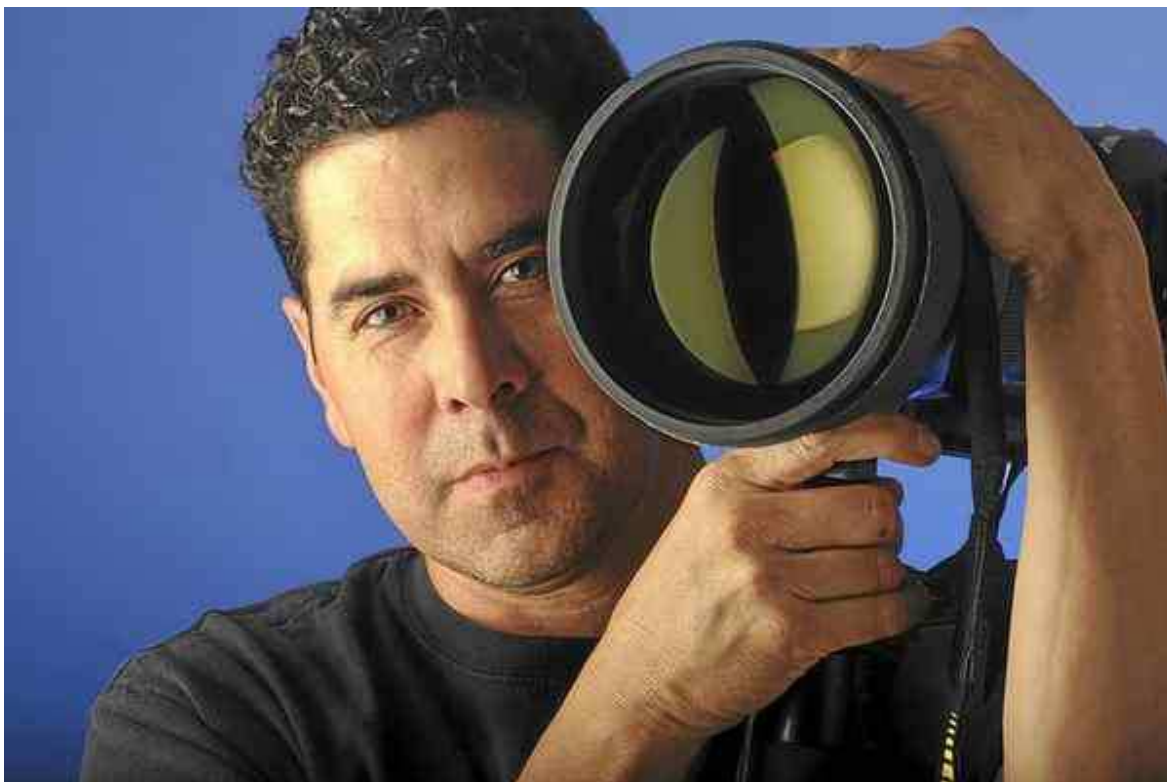


Gabriel Acosta Biography



Gabriel Luis Acosta, a dedicated family man, devout Christian and award-winning photojournalist, died Saturday, September 14, 2014 at his Riverside home. He was 46. He was a beloved husband, father, son, son-in-law, brother-in-law, grandson, brother, nephew, cousin, uncle, co-worker and friend to many. But his life revolved around serving God and caring for his wife Laura and two children, Zachary, 14, and Gabriella, 11.

He was a role model for his children and, along with Laura, taught them about Jesus and how to lead a good life. Gabe could be seen walking the field when Zack played flag football or Little League, shooting photos with big lenses and high-powered cameras. He did the same during Ella's ballet classes, recitals and gymnastics classes. He was a presence at their school events and plays, shooting photos, chatting with parents and talking to the principal. He dedicated his life to providing for Laura and the kids, from adding onto and renovating his Wood Streets home to family vacations such as camping and a trek to Europe.

He was an active member of The Grove Community Church in Riverside where for more than five years he and Laura led Bible study groups for other couples. He volunteered in The Grove's jail ministry, in which he visited and preached to those behind bars. He recently earned a special driver's license so he could drive a van of youths on a missionary trip to San Francisco with Zack and his youth group. Over the years, Gabe's missionary work took him to Brazil,

Thailand with Laura and Mexico with the entire family. Gabe gave everything in life 100 percent, as he was taught by his family and as he knew God wanted him to do.

At work, he went the extra mile to get the best photographs. At home, he was no different. A few weeks ago, a sudden storm hit Gabe's neighborhood, sending tree branches into a neighbor's driveway. The next day, he and Zack went out with saws to clear the debris. Quiet and humble, Gabe never sought recognition for doing the right thing.

The first of five children, Gabe was a lifelong Riverside resident. He attended St. Catherine's School and graduated in 1985 from Notre Dame High School. He graduated from Cal State San Bernardino in 1990 with a bachelor's degree in Art. Since childhood, Gabe was a talented artist who drew his own comics and enjoyed art and painting classes. This love of art led him to take up photography. He was hired as a part-time photo lab technician at The Sun newspaper in San Bernardino County in 1991 with the goal of becoming a full-time photographer. He reached that goal a few years later and went on to earn numerous awards from the Inland chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists and the California Newspaper Photographers Association.

In a career spanning more than two decades at The Sun, Gabe covered the biggest stories in the county such as wildfires and crime. But he also excelled at food section photos, portraits and feature photography. In addition to shooting for The Sun, he was a photographer for the company's Riverside magazine and ran his own freelance photography company, GLA Photo. Gabe had a passion for journalism and brought professionalism and integrity to every assignment. For years he worked with youths interested in photojournalism through the California Chicano News Media Association's Inland Chapter, helping organize journalism workshops, instructing students in photography and helping stage scholarship banquets. Gabe had a big smile, friendly demeanor and ability to strike up a conversation with strangers. He often wore a T-shirt, baseball cap and jeans or shorts. He was a lifelong fan of the Los Angeles Dodgers. Those who knew Gabe know well of his hobbies. He especially enjoyed art and music, in his own words, "from Mozart to Metallica." He loved classic rock, from The Who to the Eagles to Led Zeppelin, collected old album covers and had a special place in his heart for disco tunes from the 1970s.

He liked history, reading books and watching documentaries and films set against historic backgrounds. More recently, he enjoyed TV shows and video games about zombies. He also enjoyed painting and gardening.