

*Horton's*

# *Michigan Notebook*

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## **No regrets...a few Thanksgiving thoughts**

**By Steve Horton**

In August 2017, Charles Krauthammer—a columnist with the *Washington Post* and regular contributor on Fox News—underwent surgery to remove a cancerous tumor in his abdomen. Initially, the operation was thought to be a success, but complications kept him in the hospital. Despite “many setbacks” and “overcoming every obstacle along the way,” he felt he was on the road to recovery.

Age 67, he likely planned to resume his writing and television appearances.

But the cancer returned. It was “aggressive and spreading rapidly,” and Krauthammer was told he only had a few weeks left to live.

Faced with this grim prognosis, he penned a final column that was published in the *Washington Post* this past June 8th. It was entitled “Saying farewell to my readers, my life.”

In the column, he gave the above chronology of his past 10 months and, after telling readers he would soon die, added that “This is the final verdict. My fight is over.”

So, what more to say? Having written thousands of words over his career—not to mention the spoken ones—he summed it up with a few, well-chosen thoughts.



“Lastly, I thank my colleagues, my readers, and my viewers, who have made my career possible and given consequence to my life's work. I believe that the pursuit of truth and right ideas through honest debate and rigorous argument is a noble undertaking. I am grateful to have played a small role in the conversations that have helped guide this extraordinary nation's destiny.

“I leave this life with no regrets. It was a wonderful life -- full and complete with the great loves and great endeavors that make it worth living. I am sad to leave, but I leave with the knowledge that I lived the life that I intended.”

Charles Krauthammer died on June 20—less than three weeks after offering this farewell.

**I CAME ACROSS THE COLUMN THIS PAST WEEK** while perusing the internet. I was aware he had passed away and read about

it in a news article, but (until a few days ago) had not seen this article.

I'd read his newspaper columns on occasion over the years, and watched him on TV. I found him to be measured and thoughtful in his comments. Not a shouter or table thumper. I did not always agree with his views, but felt them worthy of consideration.

For those who are unfamiliar with him, he morphed from working in the Carter Administration and being Walter Mondale's speech writer to becoming an articulate commentator of conservative views and policies—hence his involvement on Fox News. His *Washington Post* column was syndicated and appeared in over 400 newspapers, so he had thousands of readers who followed him.

On a personal note, he was paralyzed from the waist down, having suffered a spinal injury while in college.

I was moved by that ending... "No regrets. It was a wonderful life."

On Thanksgiving, this holiday that brings the traditions of the past to our present-day hustle and bustle; that allows us to pause, reflect, remember, and give thanks, the sentiment seems an appropriate one.

Few of us get the chance to say "farewell" to a national audience. Many of us—young, middle-aged, or old—will not know the time or place of our final verdict. But there are countless others, a few we may know and others across the nation, who are well aware that this will be their last Thanksgiving; their final opportunity to share the holiday with loved ones.

A bittersweet moment for them and for those gathered with them.

For those of us of a certain age—meaning we've enjoyed quite a few turkey dinners—there are the many memories spanning the years of all who once shared the meal and holiday with us—parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, cousins,

classmates, and friends. And, tragically, children and grandchildren. For the loss of those who died at too young of an age, there are regrets.

On this Thanksgiving morning as I look back at my past, and as I take measure of current circumstances and wonder what lies ahead, I can echo Krauthammer's words.

I've got no complaints. Like others, I've my had ups and downs, wins and losses, bumps and bruises, moments of satisfaction, regrets and successes, loves and sorrows. That's life.

Looking back, along with taking measure of current circumstances, I've been blessed with family and friends, with a career I enjoy, and with the opportunity to write newspaper columns that a few people (on occasion) appear to read. Whether they agree with my viewpoints or not, at least I've been able to join the conversation.

I'm thankful as well that once more I'm able "to gather together with family to count the Lord's blessings" on this special holiday.

My best wishes and warmest regards to all of you.