

SHARE:

[Join Our Email List](#)

[View as Webpage](#)



Connecting
April 4, 2020

Click [here](#) for sound of the Teletype



COVID-19 claims first member of the AP family



This April 2, 2017 photo shows Anick Jesdanun in New York. (AP Photo/Mae Anderson)

Colleagues,

On this Saturday morning, the 4th day of April 2020, we bring you sad news:

COVID-19 has claimed the first member of our AP family.

Anick “Nick” Jesdanun, deputy technology editor in New York and a 29-year veteran of The Associated Press, died in New York City on Thursday of coronavirus-related complications, his family said. He was 51.

We bring you this special Saturday edition of Connecting to let you know of his death and to honor his memory by bringing you our colleague **Ted Anthony**’s heartfelt wire obituary of Nick, as well as comments from his family and Connecting colleagues.

AP President **Gary Pruitt**, in announcing Nick’s death to the AP staff on Friday, said AP “shares in his family’s grief” and added,

“As this pandemic sweeps across the globe, it is affecting all of us in profound and personal ways. I am in awe of, but not surprised by, how our AP family has supported each other throughout this crisis. Now, more than ever, we need to be there for each other. If you need additional support, please don’t hesitate to speak with your manager or your HR representative. I wish our colleagues who are sick a full and fast recovery. I thank you for your brave and excellent work.”

This edition comes to you as many of the worldwide AP staff are working from home for the safety of the entire workforce, in line with public health recommendations. Some offices remain open, and of course, reporters, photographers and video journalists need to be in the field to gather news. AP is taking precautions to keep them safe as well.

As noted in the most recent Connections, an AP internal newsletter, “departments across AP are working tirelessly to ensure our journalists in the field have the supplies they need to do their jobs safely. Colleagues from Procurement, Administrative Services, Technology, News and Global Security and Safety are working together to provide essential personal protective equipment to staffers around the world. Masks, wipes and other gear were shipped to staff in the Middle East, Latin America and the U.S. last week. The second phase of shipping 170 care packages including hand sanitizer, alcohol wipes and gloves is underway.”

AP executive editor **Sally Buzbee** shared that “I would just say about Nick what someone said today that I found so apt.

“Nick was a classic AP person: He was humble, he didn’t toot his own horn, he wasn’t loud or showy - but he had deep expertise on what he covered and that showed in the journalism he did, which was always accurate and smart and thoughtful. And he was generous: he contributed to so much good AP journalism that his own byline was never on: by mentoring and training

colleagues, and answering their questions, and being endlessly generous and patient with his time and expertise.

“A colleague from the Middle East just wrote and remembered how Nick had talked her through a tricky story about tech companies’ policy toward videos coming out of Syria, giving his expertise to an AP colleague from the other side of the globe. That was Nick.”

This special edition brings you the AP story by Ted and memories of Nick from his brother **Gary Jesdanun** and his cousin **Prinda Mulpramook** – and early reaction from some of your Connecting colleagues.

Gary said Nick’s family has appreciated the “outpouring of support for him. He was a quiet guy, so we didn’t have great insight into his other circles. Seeing everyone come together like this definitely gives us a lot of joy ... This whole sitch (situation) is kind of bonkers -- I can’t believe that 500 other families probably had to go through the same process yesterday, and that there are still so many more to go.”

If you would like to share a memory of Nick or the AP people who are working in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, please send it along for when we resume publication Monday morning.

Paul

Anick Jesdanun, longtime AP technology writer, dies at 51



By TED ANTHONY ([Email](#))

He ran marathons on every continent, including Antarctica — 83 of them in all, many followed by a visit to an obscure craft brewery. Last year, he watched 365 movies — most of them in theaters. And Anick Jesdanun made sure — always — that when millions of people read his coverage of the internet and its ripples, they got all the facts and the context they needed.

Jesdanun, 51, deputy technology editor for The Associated Press, died in New York City on Thursday of coronavirus-related complications, his family said.

For more than two decades, Jesdanun helped generations of readers understand the emerging internet and its impact on the world. And while his work may have been about screens and computers and virtual networks, Jesdanun's large life was about the world and exploring all of the corners of it that he could, virtual and physical alike.

"Before people knew the internet was full of falsehoods, he was the guy who said, 'We'd better check that,'" said his colleague, AP technology writer Michael Liedtke.

Jesdanun, known as Nick, was the first AP reporter to be given the "internet writer" byline two decades ago, when the world was less than 10 years into using the network widely.

His early work focused on how the internet was changing everything: dating, reading, photography, democracy, access to health care. In 2000, he wrote about how internet-connected devices would be tracking our locations — something that was still years in the future.

By example, conversation and hands-on editing, Jesdanun, working from a desk renowned for its messiness, taught a generation of AP journalists how to cover technology in ways that were understandable and accessible but unparalleled in their depth.

"Nick was the steady bulwark of AP's tech team for two decades," said Frank Bajak, AP's first technology editor. "He had the deepest institutional memory of AP's tech coverage and patiently educated dozens of novice colleagues in all things digital."

As the internet grew and its pitfalls become more evident, Jesdanun wrote about everything from Facebook's privacy travails to government regulations. He also found time to cover things closer to his heart, one of which appeared under this headline in February: "How to binge on Oscar movies in cinemas for cheap."

"There's still no substitute for a movie theater," he wrote in a first-person story last year.

Quick with a smile, Jesdanun sometimes let his sillier side loose in AP's "Tech Tests." These often included video shorts in which he would run new gadgets through the paces (and occasionally give his nieces cameo roles). When the iPhone's face-recognition model came out in 2017, he filmed a mostly deadpan video of him trying to stump it with everything from a Santa beard to a fake nose and mustache.

While Jesdanun could seem reserved to those who didn't know him, his colleagues talked of an embrace of the world that he carried into his work and that ensured his technology journalism was grounded in what people cared about.

“His depth of knowledge was unmatched,” said his boss, current AP technology editor David Hamilton.

And tech writer Mae Anderson, whose office desk was by Jesdanun’s, remembered how they’d visit tech industry events and Jesdanun wouldn’t relent until his sources produced the information he was looking for.

“He always kept asking questions and pressing people to answer questions,” she said, “much past the point I ever would. And it made the subsequent stories much better.”

Jesdanun’s running, which he embraced “later in life,” was part of that commitment to engaging with his surroundings, said his cousin, Risa Harms.

“It was a life force for him, a way for him to see the world and to meet people,” she said. “He’s a doer. He’s not somebody who felt comfortable being a recreational tourist. He visited a place and wanted to have something to do there. So he did a marathon.”

She added: “I feel fairly confident that there was nothing on his bucket list. There was nothing he wanted to do that he didn’t have a chance to do.”



In this combo of Oct. 30, 2017, photos, Associated Press reporter Nick Jesdanun demonstrates Face ID, Apple's name for its facial-recognition technology, on an iPhone X in New York. Apple's system continually learns. Each time you use your face to unlock the phone, it automatically keeps tabs on small changes, such as growing a mustache or simply getting older. In the top photos, the iPhone X recognized Jesdanun. In the bottom images, the phone did not recognize him. (AP Photo/Mark Lennihan) (Courtesy AP Corporate Archives)

Jesdanun, a Pittsburgh native who grew up in New Jersey, was a 1991 graduate of Swarthmore College. He worked in AP bureaus in Philadelphia, Harrisburg and Washington before moving to New York. When he left Philadelphia for Harrisburg in 1993, he sublet his apartment to a colleague and left behind only a few pieces of furniture and, hanging from the ceiling, a glittering disco ball.

“Do what you want with the rest,” Jesdanun told his tenant, “but the disco ball stays.”

Barbara Ortutay, an AP tech writer and Jesdanun’s close friend, spent countless nights over the past 15 years hanging out with him at outdoor philharmonic concerts and movies around New York City. He was serious about photography and “was always documenting everything,” she said.

“He loved Chinese pork buns and always bought some for the rest of us in the office,” Ortutay said Friday. “One of our last texts was about pork buns, and I thought he’d turned a corner because he said he wanted one.”

Jesdanun is survived by his parents, Adisak and Orabhin Jesdanun; a brother, Gary Jesdanun; and several nieces, nephews and cousins. The AP, the only employer Jesdanun ever worked for, is planning a virtual memorial service at some point to give colleagues and friends the opportunity — in an undesired but perhaps appropriate forum — to remember its first internet writer.

“Nick was a kind and gentle colleague who was deeply admired by everyone he worked with,” said AP deputy managing editor Sarah Nordgren, who oversees technology news. “He loved the AP and his work, and it showed every day.”

Click [here](#) for link to this story.

Nick’s brother recalls their childhood days



Nick's brother Gary shared this family photo showing, from left, Nick, their mother Orabhin, Gary and their father Adisak. Gary said, "Nick and I took our parents out last year for a three-week trip across Japan as a belated celebration of our parents' 50th wedding anniversary. Of course, Nick had to squeeze in a marathon while he was there. Which he did in Nagano."

Gary Jesdanun ([Email](#)) – *sharing his Facebook post*- I wish there was a better way to announce this, but I'm sad to report that my brother Anick Jesdanun passed away yesterday due to coronavirus-related complications. He had looked like he was on the mend, but then his condition took a drastic turn for the worse and he unfortunately didn't make it.

Nick was a wonderful brother to me, a wonderful son to Adisak Jesdanun and Orabhin Jesdanun, and a wonderful cousin/nephew/uncle to so many others.

Hey Nick, do you remember our early childhood days when you would obsessively work on your "HAHA" comedy magazine, and then I would pull up a chair and work on my very own "Goofball" magazine next to you? (It was very similar to your magazine, except that it had more fart jokes.)

Do you remember when, years later, I trained for 6 months in secret for the Philadelphia Marathon so that I could surprise you in Philly on the day of the race? (You may remember that part where you found out in advance about the surprise, but then didn't say anything to me about it just so that you could troll me later with your own counter-surprise.)

Do you remember how I spent the last year watching the Top 50 highest-rated documentaries on Rotten Tomatoes in honor of your 50th birthday? (Actually, I guess I never told you that I did that, did I? I would have, but you didn't want anyone to give you any special attention for your birthday.)

Anyway, I hope it was clear that I did those things because you were my role model and that I wanted to be more like you. I'm so glad we had the opportunity over the past few years to see each other a little more often, to take a few more trips, and to build up some more memories together.

Nick, wherever you are right now, I'm sure they're glad to have a marathon-running, Olympics-loving, triple-camera-wielding, multiple-cell-phone-carrying, taxi-eschewing, penguin-collecting, MoviePass-maximizing, Star-Wars-loving-but-Jar-Jar-Stinksing, Booksmart-rewatching, Blame-Canada-at-karaoke-singing, microbrew-drinking connoisseur like yourself.

I, like many others, will forever love you and miss you. You definitely left us too early, but at least you left us with some epic memories.

To everyone who knew him (or wish they had), I invite you to raise a pint of microbrew, to run a mile, or to watch a marathon of 100 indie films in his honor!

Please let your friends and families know - this is very REAL!



Nick and Prinda

Prinda Mulpramook ([Email](#)) – *sharing her Facebook post* - Yesterday evening, my cousin Anick Jesdanun passed away in a Manhattan hospital from complications due to COVID19. To call him my cousin doesn't do our relationship justice. We are part of a group of 7 first-generation-American "kids" raised more as siblings, rather than cousins. He was my brother.

I wanted to honor Nick by sharing his COVID19 story as a way to spread the word and help save lives.

Nick was the picture of health. He had no underlying health problems and would not be considered high risk by any means. This past November he ran his 83rd full marathon. In fact, he had run so many New York City Marathons (15!) he was now guaranteed entry for life.

Although he had been feeling sick and tested positive for the virus, he did not require hospitalization. He did everything he was supposed to do - resting in his apartment in complete isolation. By the end of last week his condition had started improving. On Saturday, he went to the doctor to get his vitals checked. His lungs were clear, and all vitals were in good range.

This week started off well, still feeling like he was slowly recovering. But Wednesday was a sudden setback, and he spent most of the day in bed. By 4:30am yesterday he was in the ER with some breathing issues. 13 hours later we lost him.

As I'm sure you can imagine, my family has been going through a range of emotions. What I am feeling most now is anger. Anger at all the people I see STILL not taking this virus seriously. All the people who think they are invincible, because they are young or healthy or arrogant. What I wanted to do today was share a story of SOMEONE YOU KNOW PERSONALLY losing a family member to this virus. And it wasn't a grandparent or even a parent. It wasn't someone with underlying conditions. It was a brother who could literally run circles around you and me and not break a sweat. Nick had the strongest heart of any of us in the family, yet this coronavirus was able to take him away from us.

Please let your friends and families know - this is very REAL!! And we all need to be taking the necessary precautions - not only to keep ourselves safe, but to keep EVERYONE safe. Love to all, especially Nick, who I already miss terribly. May he rest in peace

Memories from his former AP colleagues

Beth Harpaz ([Email](#)) - Paying tribute to a fallen colleague, AP reporter Nick Jesdanun, who'd run dozens of marathons, seemed to be recovering from COVID ... now gone. He was incredibly smart, covered biz and tech, but he was also a world traveler who wrote wonderful stories for me when I was AP Travel editor. He loved pop culture too -- Star Wars and Disney and movies --

and he was a wonderful colleague. You could always count on Nick to respond to an email, to get the quote you needed for a story, to come up with the right photo. The tribute from his cousin is just heartbreaking, and I echo its final message: It is astounding to me that there are still people out there who question the seriousness of this. AND yet I see these morons commenting on friends' threads. I despair for my country. Time to go watch the video of that Churchill speech that I was holding until the darkest hour.

-0-

Mark Mittelstadt ([Email](#)) I am deeply saddened by news of Nick Jesdanun's death from the coronavirus.

I did not work directly with Nick but we had a fair amount of contact on various efforts during my years at AP headquarters. He impressed me as extraordinarily talented, energetic, a kind soul who always was willing to help.

This was a young man who appeared to be the picture of health with no underlying conditions; his cousin said on Facebook he had run 83 marathons. The most troubling part of her account was that he got sick, appeared to be well on his way to recovery, then relapsed and died a short time later.

It is a hard reminder of the deadliness of COVID-19. And the fact that none of us are invincible.

-0-



Diana Heidgerd ([Email](#)) - Nick Jesdanun was the merry photo bomber in this selfie taken June 20, 2019, during the AP 25-Year Club dinner at Associated Press headquarters in New York City.

Nick popped up in the back, in this selfie also with Stephanie Nano (center) from the science desk in New York and Marcia Dunn (right), our aerospace writer based in Florida who was celebrating her 40th anniversary with AP.

Nick made us all smile!

Weeks later I emailed the photo to Nick, who cheerfully replied something along the lines of “Any time!”

-0-

Mike Regan ([Email](#)) – *who left AP in 2007 for Bloomberg* - I moved from the AP Digital team to the Business News desk in 2003 but wasn't assigned a specific beat. Having worked on the web side of AP, and a dotcom news startup before that, I did feel somewhat qualified to write stories about Internet businesses and trends and was super hungry to get features on the business and national digests. Nick was the official Internet writer at the time. Now, beat writers in any newsroom I've worked in can be famously territorial. They are not always friendly and helpful to other reporters showing up as tourists on their beat. Nick, on the other hand, could not have been nicer or more helpful. Rather than shoot down story ideas or claim them for his own, he would loan me some of his own expertise and help me develop and improve the stories. Often, he would also give them a masterful edit as well. It was a joy and privilege to work with him. Add my voice to the chorus of people who are remembering Nick not only as an incredibly talented journalist, but also one of the nicest people we've ever met.

