

# 'Meet the Press' host, broadcast journalist Russert dies at 58

Drew Smith  
Reporter



Russert

Shock and sorrow hit the world of politics and journalism when Tom Brokaw broke into NBC programming on June 13 to announce the death of Tim Russert. The longtime moderator of "Meet the Press" and NBC Washington bureau chief collapsed and died of a heart attack while at work.

"This is a loss for the entire nation," NBC News president Steve Capus said in a statement. "Everyone at NBC News is in shock and absolutely devastated." Russert went out on top. His Sunday morning program held a commanding lead in the ratings. He was still asking the tough questions and providing some of the most watched election night analysis. He was widely known for being a good-natured person and a great dad.

He started his career working on political campaigns. He then made the transition into television at NBC News.

"We don't have a big tradition in this country of people being in politics then in journalism, or going from journalism back into politics," Tom Brokaw said on a special memorial edition of "Meet the Press". "But Tim really dropped that firewall because he did it with such integrity."

RD Sahl, a veteran TV journalist and current principal anchor at New England Cable News, shared his thoughts on why Russert connected with viewers so well.

"He was smart and viewers knew it. He asked the questions a good reporter should ask, but he also asked the questions viewers had," Sahl said.

"That said, there are plenty of smart people in journalism, but Russert had something more. His magic was that he connected with viewers at the gut and heart level. It was the combination that made his work so good, and that made him a guest in millions of households each Sunday."

Boston political reporter Alison King had the opportunity to work directly with Russert as a co-moderator during a presidential primary debate in September of 2007.

"I was very excited to work with Tim Russert on that debate since he had, for years, been an all time favorite political reporter of mine," King said. "I was also surprised to find out that despite his obvious celebrity status, there was no star aura surrounding him, which is pretty rare at that level."

King remembers pitching an idea for a question about whom the candidates wanted to win the World Series, the Red Sox or the Yankees.

"In front of a New England

audience, I thought it would get a good laugh and lighten the mood," she said.

Russert's producer told her Tim already had a similar baseball question he planned to ask. King backed off and told Tim to ask his.

"Hours before the debate, Tim came up to me and said, 'I want you to do that baseball question, Alison, we'll save it for the end,'" King recalled. "He knew it would get a laugh and that the clip would get re-played over and over on the cable news shows, and it did. I felt like it was his way of sharing some of the spotlight from that evening with me, a classy move on his part."

Like so many others, King was stunned to hear of his sudden death. "I'll really miss watching him on Sunday mornings," she said. "As my not-very-political younger brother said to me, 'He was the one political guy on TV I could trust.'"

Russert received 48 honorary degrees over the course of his career and was the recipient of several awards including the Edward R. Murrow Award for Overall Excellence in Television Journalism. Time magazine named him one of its 100 most influential people for 2008.

NBC announced former "Nightly News" anchor Tom Brokaw will sit in the moderator chair at "Meet the Press" until the November election. Then they will find a new host, which will likely be a difficult task. The person who will make that decision is Steve Capus. According to him, "Tim was truly irreplaceable."

## Supreme Court's opinions expand rights of criminal defendants

Alyse Knorr  
Reporter

WASHINGTON - The Supreme Court on Monday issued two opinions protecting the rights of defendants in criminal court cases.

The court ruled 7-2 in *Greenlaw v. United States* that a U.S. court of appeals may not order an increase in a defendant's sentence on its own initiative.

The plaintiff, Michael Greenlaw, of Minneapolis, appealed to the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to shorten a 10-year prison sentence for a drug and firearms conviction. The court responded by correcting an error in his original sentence and lengthening his jail time by 15 years.

Under a longstanding precedent, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg wrote in the majority opinion, an appellate court may not change a judgment to benefit the side that did not appeal.

Ginsburg emphasized the court's reactive role as an impartial arbiter, stating, "Appellate courts may not reach out to correct a sentencing error when the Government has not invited such error correction by appealing or cross-appealing."

"In a criminal prosecution, moreover," Ginsburg added, "the defendant would appeal at his peril, with nothing to alert him that, on his own appeal, his sentence would be increased until the appeals court so decreed. In this very case, Greenlaw might have made different strategic decisions had he known soon after filing his notice of appeal that he risked a 15-year increase in an already lengthy sentence."

Justices Samuel A. Alito and John Paul Stevens dissented, holding that the decision to correct errors and impose harsher punishments should be left to the discretion of the court.

"We have long held that a sentencing court confronted with new circumstances may impose a stiffer sentence on remand than the defendant received prior to a successful appeal," Alito wrote.

In *Rothgery v. Gillespie County, Texas*, the court ruled 8-1 that a defendant's Sixth Amendment right to legal counsel applies at the defendant's first appearance before a judicial officer, when he is told of the charges against him, regardless of whether a prosecutor is aware of the arrest or involved in the case.

"We have recognized that certain pretrial events may so prejudice the outcome of the defendant's prosecution that, as a practical matter, the defendant must be presented at those events in order to enjoy genuinely effective assistance at trial," Alito wrote in a concurring opinion.

Walter Rothgery was arrested on information that turned out to be false. He argued that had he had a lawyer earlier in the process he could have avoided being indicted and spending three weeks in jail before the charges were dismissed.

Justice Clarence Thomas wrote a dissenting opinion, arguing for a stricter definition of "criminal prosecution" as specified in the Sixth Amendment. Under that definition, defendants would not have a right to a lawyer until they face formal charges, such as an indictment.

The court set Wednesday as an additional day to issue opinions. It has seven cases left to decide in this term.

## Elon MBA billboard hits RDU

2007 BUSINESSWEEK RANKING - PART-TIME MBA

TOP-RANKED IN NC

#2 IN THE SOUTH #12 IN THE NATION

ELON MBA



FULL-TIME EXPERIENCE IN A PART-TIME SETTING

PHOTO COURTESY ELON MBA

On June 4, an Elon MBA sign went up in Raleigh-Durham International Airport where it will remain on display for a year. It is the first time Elon has marketed the program in the airport. Its placement targets residents of the triangle and the triad, where most of Elon's MBA students reside, and students and prospective students who travel through RDU.

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but offer the same selections. The bottleneck area of the room where drinks were offered will open into the old Freshens/new Pan Geos.

More cash registers and more grab-and-go options will be added to Octagon. The air-screen where parfaits and sandwiches are held will be larger and have more shelving.

Adding more patio furniture outside Octagon is also a possibility.

With 99.9 percent certainty, Jeff Gazda, resident district manager of ARAMARK, said Octagon will reopen on Aug. 20, in time for the fall semester.

Gazda said the overcrowding of Octagon has been noticed for a while, and that he hopes to renovate the area

was placed on a list of probable dining service changes to be made in near future. This summer, it was Octagon's turn to get noticed.

ARAMARK's move to the Colonnades and catering's move to Harden helped alleviate some of Moseley's overcrowding in the dining arena, but it wasn't enough to please Octagon customers.

"We all have the feeling that there are some customers that don't get served because it's too busy," Gazda said.

Vickie Somers, director of auxiliary services, said they believe they've come up with a successful plan to change the traffic pattern.

"I think this is going to be a very positive change for the students," Somers said.

Any dining service decisions that are made are a direct result of student feedback, Gazda and Somers said. They always speak with SGA leaders and members, and other student representatives.

Making decisions on when to change what is based on growth and changing demographics. Gazda said they like giving students something new each year. This idea is important to continue because when new students come to Elon, the things that are new to returning students will not appear so to freshmen.

As of now, the fate of The Zone is "to be decided." But Harden will stay as it is - students have shown that they liked the revamping that went on this year, particularly with the bakery, grill and expanded salad bar.