

Ohio Tornado Kills Proud Father of Valedictorian

(June 7) — He was a proud father of three who always watched his kids' games and was doing well with his own small company. Just hours before his daughter Katie was to speak at her graduation Sunday as the high school valedictorian, Ted Kranz was killed by a tornado that ripped through northwest Ohio.

Kranz was one of seven people killed by the storm in Lake Township, south of Toledo, over the weekend. The tornado, Ohio's strongest in eight years, also caused about \$100 million in damages and ruined or severely damaged 100 houses, including Lake High School, Wood County emergency management director Brad Gilbert said today.

Kranz, 46, had been in the basement with his family Saturday but left to turn on a generator in the garage to keep a sump pump working, his brother, Tim Kranz, said on NBC's "Today" show. He apparently was killed by debris outside the house.

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"He left to go to the garage to hook up the generator and make sure there was going to be no water in the basement," Kranz said. "He also wanted to get one of the family dogs that was not down with them."

The act — to protect his family — was characteristic of his brother, Tim Kranz said.

"Ted was a very loving father and family man, a very passionate businessman," Tim Kranz said. "This was very typical of Ted to do that."

Ted Kranz was seen in a family photo wearing a wide smile and a University of Michigan cap — the school where Katie is headed to study pharmacology, Tim Kranz said on "Today."

"He was just ecstatic about that," Tim Kranz said.

Now, with her father gone and Lake High School ruined by the twister, graduation is to be held Tuesday at a Toledo community college.

"I think she can just take comfort from the years of parenting and fathering that he could give all of the kids," Kranz said. "Now I think she'll try her best to pursue her career and do as good as she can."

Ted Kranz started his own small business, Digi-Tise, about five years ago, leaving a job as a computer programmer, his brother told the Toledo Blade.

"Even with the tough economy, he was just turning the corner and things were just starting to take off," Tim Kranz told the paper.

Kranz, one of seven siblings, played tennis and basketball until college, when his diabetes got worse, Tim Kranz told the Blade. But he was devoted to his children's athletics, and never missed their events, he said.

Jim Witt, the Lake Township schools superintendent, told the Blade: "They don't make families any better than the Kranzes."

"The parents are terrific, the kids are terrific, it's a loss to our school family and to our community because Ted was an absolutely outstanding man who was devoted to his family, supported our community, supported our schools," he told the paper. "He'll be missed."

The tornado, part of a batch of strong storms that hit the Midwest, also destroyed the police administration building in Lake Township. The twister had a preliminary rating of 3 on a 0-5 scale, with a 5 being the most severe. Storms that rate a Category 3 can have wind speeds of 136 to 165 mph.

According to the Blade, among the seven fatalities in Ohio were a 4-year-old boy and

his mother, a 21-year-old woman trying to take cover at a police station, and a woman in her 50s struck by debris while driving.

Meanwhile, power crews were working to restore electricity to about 1,000 blacked-out customers, and residents tried to salvage belongings from the rubble.

At the site of the Kranz home, all that was left was the water- and debris-filled foundation. One girl plucked a teddy bear and jewelry box from the muddy water.

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