

APPRECIATION

# Kathy Shaw, relentless tracker of clergy abuse, got the story out



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by [Bill Mitchell](#) | [Accountability](#) | [People](#)



Kathy Shaw at work on the Tracker blog (Hugh Walsh)

Before the credits roll at the conclusion of "Spotlight," a [list appears](#) showing 105 cities and towns in 41 states and another 101 places in 29 countries "where major abuse scandals have been uncovered."

It was a fitting close to the Academy Award-winning film that told the story behind the story of the Boston Globe's Pulitzer Prize-winning coverage of the clergy abuse scandal.

Kathy Shaw, the journalist who helped put those places on the map of this searing landscape in church history, [died Sunday](#) after a long illness.

For more than 15 years, Kathy played a remarkable behind-the-scenes role as the driving force of the Abuse Tracker blog.

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The [Tracker](#) started at the Poynter Institute for Media Studies in 2002, moved to NCR at the end of 2003 and was adopted in 2006 by Bishop Accountability.org, where [it operates today](#).

If journalism is the first draft of history, Kathy Shaw compiled the essential index of one of the church's most important and painful chapters.

I [started the Tracker](#) a couple of months after the Globe's first story in January 2002 and recruited Kathy as a volunteer collaborator a few months later. At the time, I was running Poynter.org, a resource for journalists wrestling with the transition from print and broadcast to digital.



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