Meg Theno, senior photo editor at the Chicago Tribune, didn’t intend to become a news photographer. When she began photographing rural beauty salons and dying river towns during her undergraduate years at Southern Illinois University in the 1970s, her goal was to become a documentary photographer — to make rich black & white archival documents that would hang in exhibitions or publish in monographs. Reality set in quickly after graduation, though, when she found herself photographing silo unloaders and manure spreaders in central Wisconsin to make a living. It was an unusual portfolio she carried when she applied a year later to be a part-time news photographer for the Aurora (Ill.) Beacon-News.

Theno joined the Chicago Tribune in 2002 and became senior photo editor in 2005. She has edited photography for the metro, foreign/national, features, Sunday and web desks on award-winning projects such as child brides, prisoner exonerations, the worldwide cost of oil and the Iraq War. She has also been the principal online photo editor for special projects on the 2004 and 2008 Democratic and Republican National Conventions, homicides in Chicago, Hurricane Katrina, the Winter and Summer Olympics, the Obama presidency, the legacy of Agent Orange, the trial of former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich and, most recently, attempted child abductions in Chicago.

Theno has led the newsroom’s multimedia group since 2007 and won the Tribune’s Digital Journalism Award in 2008 for her work as a digital coordinator and liaison between the Tribune’s web site and the photo department. She edits news photography and multimedia for chicagotribune.com and the Tribune’s breaking news center and oversees production of video produced by the Chicago Tribune newsroom. She is also involved in the Tribune’s community initiative to engage readers in local news through workshops, seminars and special events.

Before joining the Tribune, Theno was the photo editor at the (Madison) Wisconsin State Journal where she coordinated the transition from film to digital photography and led a staff that won numerous state and national awards. Before moving to editing, Theno worked as a photojournalist for the State Journal, The Capital Times (also in Madison) and other publications. In between editorial assignments, Theno taught photojournalism at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and freelanced as a commercial photographer. Theno has a master’s degree in journalism from Northern Illinois University, was twice president of the Wisconsin News Photographers Association and served as a member of the Wisconsin Freedom of Information Council.