

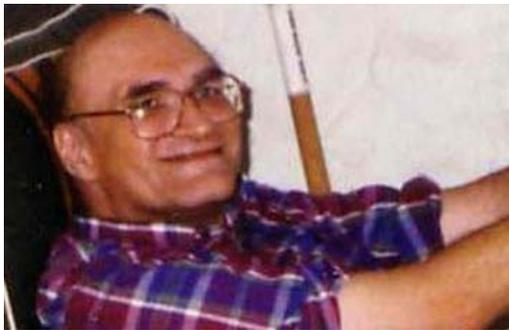
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Lives Lived

Peter Clegg



Tax preparer, passionate political debater, brother, friend. Born Dec. 5, 1944, in London, England. Died Jan. 23 in Brockville, Ont., of cancer, aged 64.

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From Thursday's Globe and Mail

Peter Clegg, nicknamed Big Pete by friends, was an intelligent, opinionated and affable man. Single all his life, reading and debating ideas represented his primary occupation.

To finance his habit, he successfully played the stock market, particularly in mining and tobacco stocks. He also worked for some time as a night-shift security guard in Toronto and for the past 20 years prepared people's tax returns at H&R Block in Brockville, Ont.

Peter grew up in Sudbury and then Brockville with his younger brother, Robin, after his family immigrated to Canada from England. He graduated from high school in Brockville at 16.

Peter might not have taken the direction he had in life if he had stuck to working in a bank. He was an assistant accountant in a Timmins, Ont., branch before deciding to make a second stab at postsecondary school. The first time around he didn't last beyond a year at the Ontario Agricultural College because of boredom.

Arriving at York University's liberal arts Glendon College in Toronto in the early 1970s should have jolted someone like Peter, a rather conservative-minded person. But Big Pete took it in stride as he plowed like a rototiller through political and historical texts for various courses and matched wits

in countless debates with his buddies – primarily left-wing student radicals who were busy challenging the political and economic system. He even shared a house for a period with this seemingly unlikely group of friends, but over beer, smokes and hockey it turned out to be congenial and a lot of fun.

The routine of attending classes and writing essays was simply not Peter's thing. After two years of enrolment in university, he dropped out and started to hang out on campus over coffee to immerse himself in the intellectual environment.

Peter kept reading and thinking through the years. He readily admitted having difficulty keeping on top of the political and business developments in the world, even with the amount of time he devoted to mental activity. Friends noted that the carpet in his Toronto apartment was covered wall-to-wall with aging copies of The Economist that he hadn't caught up and read.

Eventually, Peter came back to Brockville to look after his aging mother before she passed way. His fear of doctors, resulting from the misdiagnosis of his father – who died of kidney disease – meant Peter would hide what ailed him. But just before Christmas last year, Peter was finally forced by Robin and a family friend to go to the hospital, where he was immediately whisked into the intensive-care unit. Unfortunately, it was too late to stop the spreading cancer and he passed away a month later.

Paul Weinberg is Peter's friend and former roommate.

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