

## **George Peter Richardson**

**January 6, 1935 – January 6, 2025**

Peter died surrounded by family and the attentive care of the staff at Saint Michael's Hospital in Toronto in the early morning of his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, on January 6, bringing his life full circle.

Peter was the second of five boys born to George Grainger Richardson and Margaret Louise Everett. In 1959 he married Nancy Jean Cameron who he met while she was studying nursing at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. Together they raised four children, built a cottage, travelled to the Middle East on many occasions, hosted parties, and spent as much time as possible with their children and eight grandchildren, their greatest pride and joy.

Peter attended Upper Canada College, then went on to complete a degree in Architecture at the University of Toronto (1952-57). He worked as an architect with John B. Parkin Associates (1957-59) before going back to university to study religion at Knox College (1959-62), then at the University of Cambridge, England, where he completed a PhD in Theology (1962-65). After serving as assistant to the minister at Knox Presbyterian Church in Toronto (1965-69), he began his long career as a professor, researcher, scholar, and prolific author. He first taught at Loyola College in Montreal (1969-74), then at the University of Toronto (Scarborough College 1974-77, University College 1977-2000). He served as Principal of University College for twelve years (1977-89). He was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, and an Honorary Member of the Ontario Association of Architects.

His academic work increasingly brought together his interest in architecture and religion. With great enthusiasm he engaged in archeological research in the Near and Middle East, serving as site architect on excavations at Khirbet Qana and Yodefat/Jotapata. In addition to a large number of academic articles and conference papers, he authored over a dozen books (including Herod, King of the Jews and Friend of the Romans, Building Jewish in the Roman East, City and Sanctuary, Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome, Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity, Canadian Churches) making a significant and distinguished contribution to New Testament scholarship. All the while, he still found time for both personal and professional volunteer activities and community engagements.

But Peter's greatest joys, and arguably his greatest fulfillment, was his family. In the early 1970s he and Nancy designed and built a cottage on Stoney Lake, using the wood from an old barn given to them by Nancy's father, a farmer near Barrie. This cottage became a place for gathering, playing with children and grandchildren, tinkering with antique boats, watching birds, transplanting pine trees, eating coffee cake with extended family, and much more.

Peter was known for his warm laugh, gentle spirit, and kindness to all. He had a strong sense of personal integrity, and always acted with humility, never one to seek recognition but always bestowing it on others. He was a guiding light for what was right and true and fine.

He will be deeply missed by his wife Nancy; his children Mary, Susan (Eric Rogers), Jonathan (Tracey Ford), Ruth (Andrew Duffy); his grandchildren Simon, Lucas, Jesse, Joshua, Tyler, Rebekah, Léa, Samuel; his great-grandchildren Wesley, Lily, George, Noé, Joëlle; his brothers John (Pam), Douglas (Marianna), Jay (Birute), and Kathy, wife of his late brother David; and his extended family, friends, and colleagues.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday 1 March, at 10:30am, Knox College Chapel, 59 St. George Street, Toronto, with a reception to follow at University College.

Donations can be made to the University College Architectural Heritage Fund (<https://www.uc.utoronto.ca/uc-architecture>).