



Peter Alan Thorburn

November 20, 1959 - August 4, 2022

Peter Thorburn’s life was cut short in the early morning hours of August 4th, 2022. After a courageous 2 year battle with esophageal cancer, he left us with a defiant smile or should I say “grin” that he patented long ago. Peter lived with the cancer, in his own words, with “no fear, no regrets”. We are unbelievably proud of Peter: to witness how through this journey of unfulfilled hopes and challenges, Peter never complained, never uttered “why me”... he just sucked it up, faced it all with dignity and took this final chapter “his way”.



Boys weekend June 9 - 12, 2022

15. Peter also had one final visit from his 91 year old mother, Irene Thorburn, who came all the way from Montreal, his sister from New York Joanne Thorburn (Towers), brother-in-law John Towers, nephews Edward Towers, Jonathan Thorburn, Dr. Anthony Thorburn, dearest childhood friend Mike Ingham and myself, his brother Robert Thorburn.

Peter was born in Montreal on Nov. 20th 1959 and lived in various suburbs of Montreal before settling in the West Island community of Beaconsfield in 1966. It is here that Peter met his lifelong friends who attended Beaconsfield high school, where he played soccer in summer and swam at the Beacon Hill pool and of course played hockey in the winter along with being a Cub and a Scout. Along the way there were numerous family holidays to Cape Cod, Hampton Beach and Wildwood NJ. Later on, Peter spent his summers working in western Canada on the rail roads. Peter attended and graduated from Bishops University in Lennoxville, Quebec and eventually became my business partner and owner of Thorburn Flex. Peter married Karin, had two daughters, Sidney and Samantha, and raised his family with Karin in Kitchener Ontario. In 2020, after 35 years of dedicated service Peter passed the torch to a new generation, his nephew Jonathan Thorburn. Peter said “I know the company is in good hands with Jonathan and its future looks bright”.



Peter the lifetime Habs fan, July 2022

est pastimes other than watching his daughter Samantha play soccer was listening to music; according to his daughter Sidney “my father’s taste in music is unmatched”; his parting gift to us was a custom playlist to remember him by. Even though he is not here with us, he taught us that with family by your side you know you will always have someone to lean on - and a great playlist to listen to while you do.

It is a real honour for me to write Peter’s obituary. I shared a room with my brother for 15 years; Peter was always a great brother to me, someone to admire and look up to, truly “the wind beneath my sails”. Peter could have been a great author or poet but he didn’t believe that it was possible for him to pursue that career path and so he made a conservative choice and became a businessman like his brother. This was not his true calling... Too often, we make practical decisions instead of doing what we love. The valuable lesson I would like to share on Peter’s behalf is that you can fail at what you do not want to do, so you might as well take a chance on doing something you love.

The family would like to thank Peter’s incredible medical team for their dedication: Dr. Hubay (Oncologist), Dr. Glick (Radiologist) and Dr. Chiasson (Gastro-Surgeon) who together gave Peter the best possible medical care we could ask for. We would have no reservations in recommending this outstanding team. A special thanks to Dr. Ay-Ling Wang, Peter’s GP who was quick to act and very proactive in getting Peter ready for his treatments. Special thanks to the WWLHIN, for Peter’s home care.

Departing us much too early, Peter leaves behind a legacy of devoted friendships and memories filled with laughter, fun and shared experiences. Also left to mourn Peter and not mentioned above, are his sister-in-law Vera Jarvis, brother-in-law Brian Jarvis, mother-in-law Isolde Emmelmann, nephew JD Towers, Jonathan’s wife Samantha, grand-niece Kaia Thorburn, nieces Megan, Courtney, Chelsea and my wife René. Peter’s deceased father Jack Thorburn who had such an influence on Peter’s character and life will be waiting with open arms to take him fishing and catch up on the latest from earth.

Finally, Peter’s family and closest friends who witnessed his courage, kindness and humility throughout his life feel so blessed to have known Peter and will miss him dearly. Those of us who live on will forever keep Peter in our hearts and memories. Everyone, wherever you are, spread the word and raise a toast to Peter and say “Here’s thinking of you Pete, Cheers!!!” Peter’s Celebration of Life will be held on Sunday, November 6, 2022 from 1-4 p.m. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Grand River Cancer Center: grhf.ca/products/donate-memory

Peter was able to realize some of his final wishes such as a sendoff “boys weekend” in June 2022, with his lifelong friends who stretch back more than 50 years and who were so important to him; they came from all over North America and even Australia to celebrate their friendship together one last time with their good friend Pete... As Mike Ingham (Peter’s dearest boyhood friend) said “Peter lived by a code defined by fierce loyalty to his friends, as well as his family, and a need to do what was right by both of them”.

Peter’s biggest final wish was to stay at home, to be with his loving family to the very end. Peter said ...”even if I can’t participate, I still can see and hear my family coming and going and that is the most important to me”. Peter was so lucky to have his amazing wife Karin of nearly 21 years who stood by his side and selflessly took on the role of primary care giver supported by their beloved daughters Sidney 18 and Samantha



Peter and Karin on their wedding day in Mexico, November 29, 2001

Peter was a lifetime Habs fan, armed with encyclopedic knowledge of Les Habitants and the up and coming players; planning the next Stanley Cup champion was always one of his favorite pastimes and topics of conversation. After the 2022 draft on July 8th 2022, I came to Kitchener to see my brother who by now was very frail and could only whisper; he was however still current as to the state of the Canadians and so happy that a fellow “Beaconhiller”, Kent Hughes, who grew up just down the street from us in Beacon Hill, took Peter’s dream job of being GM of his Montreal Canadians. As I left that night, I took a picture of my brother in bed with his Montreal Canadians blanket wrapped around him. This said it all ... “Go Habs Go !!!”.

What was forever most important to Peter was his family... I cannot remember Peter’s speech at his wedding except for the prefix...when he said the words Karin “My Wife” and paused and then said “It sounds so good to say those two words together”. Peter got married later than most in life, thus he took that moment to absorb the pleasure in saying “My Wife”.

Peter’s oldest daughter Sidney perhaps says it best when describing her father’s core value: my father always said to us “friends may come and go but family is forever”. When problems at school and teenage dramas would arise, he’d repeat this line and add “no matter how bleak life may seem, you will always have your family in your corner”. One of Peter’s great-



Samantha, Karin, Sidney and Peter; at Irene Thorburn’s 90th Birthday Party, August 9, 2021

Until we meet again
The Thorburn Family