



## Clifford Craig Heindel MD

February 15, 1939 - December 29, 2017

North Hampton – Clifford “Craig” Heindel, MD, 78, most recently of North Hampton and formerly of New Castle, died unexpectedly, Friday, December 29, 2017 at Portsmouth Regional Hospital.

He was born in Chattanooga, TN February 15, 1939 the son of the late Judson C. and Mary W. (Craig) Heindel.

Dr. Heindel was raised in Chattanooga and graduated from the Baylor School before receiving his undergraduate and medical training from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

He served as a neurosurgeon at St. Mary Hospital and Central Maine Medical Center in Lewiston, ME from 1980-1997. After moving to the seacoast in 1997 he served at Wentworth-Douglas Hospital in Dover, Exeter Hospital, Parkland Medical Center in Derry and was affiliated at Portsmouth Regional Hospital with Coastal New Hampshire Neurosurgeons at the time of his death.

Dr. Heindel was an avid downhill skier, had a love for the water, sailing and kayaking, was a passionate cook and loved the family cabin in the Adirondacks built by his father in the depression.

He was a member of the Medical Ethics Board at Portsmouth Regional Hospital and in his earlier years served with the US Army Reserves.

He shared 24 years of marriage with his wife, Margaret “Margie” Heindel.

In addition to his wife, family members include six children, Christian Heindel of Athens, GA, Stephanie Heindel, MD of Corvallis, OR, Clifford Heindel, Jr., Justine Matthews both of Durham, NC, Annaliese and Gretchen Heindel both of North Hampton, and his grandson, Montgomery Matthews.

Visiting hours will be from 5-7 P.M. Wednesday January 3, 2018 at the Remick & Gendron Funeral Home-Crematory, 811 Lafayette Road, Hampton. Services will be held at 11 A.M. Thursday, January 4, 2018 in the funeral home. Friends are respectfully invited. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Krempels Center, 100 Campus Drive, Suite 24, Portsmouth, NH 03801, <http://www.krempelscenter.org>.

# Events

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**JAN**   **Visitation**            05:00PM - 07:00PM

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Remick & Gendron Funeral Home - Crematory  
811 Lafayette Road ·, Hampton, NH, US, 03842

**JAN**   **Service**                    11:00AM

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Remick & Gendron Funeral Home - Crematory  
811 Lafayette Road ·, Hampton, NH, US, 03842

# Comments

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“ Dr. Heindel operated on me in 1999. I thought he was brilliant and witty. He greatly improved the quality of my life. I recommended him today, to someone in need of a neurosurgeon. They sent me a link to this obituary. My deepest condolences. I can only speculate how many people's lives he touched. I'm sorry for your loss.

**Ruthie LaBrie** - December 02, 2020 at 03:02 AM

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“ I was saddened to here of Craig's passing. I knew him from the lake. My grandparents built a cabin next door in 1940. So we have been acquainted all of my life. It was only through lake information that I heard of his passing. I only knew him from cabin activities and of course things in and on the lake. It was always lively when both cabins were occupied at the same time. Condolences to all the family. -  
Marjorie McRoberts

**Marjorie McRoberts** - June 30, 2018 at 08:00 AM

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“ Dr. Heindel performed emergency brain surgery on me almost 12 years ago. He was kind and reassuring to my husband who was understandably confused and scared. His kindness will always be remembered. I'll be forever grateful for his surgical skills that saved my life.

**lisa harling** - March 14, 2018 at 09:49 AM

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“ Margie and family, so deeply sorry for your loss. Hold close to those special memories you have. Keeping you in my thoughts.

**Heidi Maddock** - February 20, 2018 at 01:34 PM

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“ Feb. 25th 1982 I met Dr. Heindel at St. Mary's Hospital. He operated on my 3 hour old daughter. She was born with spina bifida. He did a miracle that day and 3 weeks later, another. One day he came into the hospital and I asked if he'd hold Angela so I could take a picture. He said she was his smallest patient! She is 35 years old now. Dr. Heindel has always held a special place in my heart. He showed his human side as well as his surgical excellence, which was the backbone to my experience with doctors throughout these years with her. With much appreciation for him, Angela's Mom

**Pauline Simond Murphy** - January 12, 2018 at 11:20 AM



“ Thank you Dr. Heindel for your hand in saving my life the day I was born.

All my appreciation,

Pauline Simond Murphy's Daughter, Angela Simond.

**Angela** - January 12, 2018 at 08:14 PM

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“ A true southern gentleman-he will be greatly missed.

Dr Stephen and Pam Lutz

**Stephen Lutz** - January 06, 2018 at 03:47 PM

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“ Dear Margie, Gretchen and Annaliese, , please accept our heartfelt condolences at this sad time. I do remember going to your house once and he was making some sort of Rumanian authentic dish for all of us and it was extremely tasty- he was indeed a fabulous cook! Our hearts go out to you for your loss. Sincerely, Abby and Jeffrey Cooper

**abby and Jeff cooper** - January 06, 2018 at 12:36 PM

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“ So sorry to hear about Craig, my father's cousin. My grandparents had a cabin next to Craig's parents in the Adirondacks and sometimes our visits would overlap. He seemed to be a great dad and so I feel especially sorry for his kids. We'll think of him the next time we go the cabin.  
Mary Beth Fine

**Mary Beth Fine** - January 05, 2018 at 11:45 AM



“ Always a dry sense of humor in the office. Craig chose to see his patients in a combination exam room and office. It always reminded me of the way Norman Rockwell depicted the country physician. Craig had a lot of empathy for his patients and was respected by staff and patients alike. I really enjoyed the self published cook book he gifted to the office staff one year. We laughed over one recipe that called for "left over lobster". Never heard of that before. I haven't seen Craig in a long time, but I know how much he will be missed, especially by his dear family. My heart goes out to all of you.

Carla Banow

Carla Banow - January 04, 2018 at 04:59 PM

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“ I was always happy to see Dr. Heindel's eyes smile their mischievous smile in the OR. I have not known him long, but his quick wit and intelligence will be missed. I'm so sorry for your loss. And ours.

Amanda McGuire - January 03, 2018 at 07:08 PM

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“ Always a gentleman, a pleasure and honor to work with... as many have attested to. His presence in the OR will always be missed by those that worked with him. We are sorry for your loss.

Jim Moser - January 03, 2018 at 03:31 PM

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“ 54 files added to the album LifeTributes



Remick & Gendron Funeral Home - January 03, 2018 at 08:32 AM

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“ I Loved working with Dr.Heindel in the operating room as we shared many surgical crani operations together. Dr. Heindel was an excellent neuro surgeon and a southern gentleman. He taught us all so much with his kind teaching moments, smile, music and life. He truly embraced life and loved his special gift god gave him. He will truly be missed. We Loved You so much. all our tears of sorrow cannot express our loss of such a great man. My deepest sympathy to the family. All our Love and prayers be with you. LOVE , Lynn Rowbotham

Lynn Rowbotham - January 02, 2018 at 05:33 PM



“ My deepest sympathies to Margie, Annalise and Gretchen, and all of Craig's family. He was a swet, true gentleman who had a delightful sense of humor. His hidden stash of peanuts made sure none of us lost an ounce!! Blessings to his family - Craig's passing has left a hole in the medical community as well as the hearts all of us who had the pleasure of working with him. I can still hear his "Good mornin', Debbie". Love, Debbie Linaberry

Debbie Linaberry - January 04, 2018 at 07:44 PM



“ My condolences to Dr. Heindel's family. It was with sadness that I read this morning that we lost him. I hadn't seen him in years but he helped me through some major health issues. Without him and his patience to work with me, I would be in a wheelchair today. I learned to walk again after I broke my neck in 3 places and we thought that in my early 40's I would have to go to a nursing home for the rest of my life. He said no surgery but we will do the halo and it will be a long process. I was in the hospital tied to the bed for 3 months then donned the body cast for a couple more. Everyday he would come in, sit with me and we would talk about all kinds of stuff. He had known me as Sister Rachel, the Executive Director of St. Mary's when he first came to Lewiston. He kept encouraging me to be patient and he practiced his patience with me.

When he was called to consult for a tethered spinal cord, needless to say, he laughed and said it wasn't too often that one needed a major operation from a neurosurgeon. Needless to say, I didn't want anyone else taking care of me and he got me through that too. He had my complete trust even though he was always late for his appointments. We used to laugh about that too.

We are losing a great and interesting man and I will forever be thankful that he was there when I needed the kind of help he gave me and 30 years later, I thank God every day that he gave Dr. Heindel his great talent for healing because I am still walking and active.

Once again, sincere sympathies for your and our great loss. Rachel Desgrosseilliers

Rachel Desgrosseilliers - January 02, 2018 at 05:08 PM



“ Craig and I met after a concert I performed at Rye Congregational Church. He asked if I taught guitar lessons and that he and his daughter, Gretchen who was 13 years old at the time, were looking for a guitar teacher. I said I only teach a few private students and if they could begin on Thursday at 6pm that would be great. This marked the beginning of an enduring friendship. Every Thursday evening barring inclement weather, family vacations, hospital duties or my concert schedule we met for lessons at my studio in Barrington, NH. Craig and Gretchen would bring a pizza and salad, we would have a quick bite together sharing stories, food recipes and catching up on the week's events and then the music making ensued. Craig loved Broadway musicals, blues musician Josh White, traditional folk songs, Pink Floyd, Hank Williams, Spanish guitar classics like Dedicatoria and Malaguena and much more. Gretchen loved her “pop” songs and would insist on learning “Christmas” songs starting in October every year especially, Michael Buble’.

When people would ask what I was doing on Thursday evening, I would always say, I am teaching my “father/daughter” guitar lessons. As a father of three sons, I recognized how important that time between Craig and Gretchen would be. It was a consistent and meaningful ritual for all of us. I think between Gretchen and Craig, we must have played and transcribed over 150 songs in the past 5 plus years. At our last lesson only two weeks ago, Craig was working on a finger-style version of the song, “Memories” and was learning how to use my Christmas gift to him, a newly designed rolling capo that would help with the key change in the song.

We shared many stories together about Africa, Tennessee, Chapel Hill, Dartmouth, the Adirondacks, Maine and New Hampshire where he lived, worked, studied and taught and where I had the pleasure of performing concerts in those same locations through the years. Craig attended many of my concerts and it was always a delight to see his smiling face in the audience. It meant a lot to me.

Craig loved his family and spoke praises of his children often. We were good friends and I appreciated my time with him deeply.

I know this is a long tribute to a wonderful man who saved many lives through his work. My Thursday evenings will never be the same without Craig, but my life will forever be enriched by knowing and spending time with him. He would want everyone to live a “Spectacular” life.

My love and condolences to Margie, Gretchen, Annaliese and his entire family, friends and colleagues.

Randy Armstrong



“ Dr. Heindel was the faithful chair of our Wentworth-Douglass Hospital Bioethics Committee. There I appreciated his fair and insightful leadership. But Craig was the man I got to know during our trips to bioethics events at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Hosp. Ever open to new ideas, eager to talk about what we'd learned, happy to share his (and his daughter's) growing ability on the guitar and happy with family and the new home. He relished recounting the history of that Adirondacks' cabin. We talked politics and semi-retirement. And didn't he love that sports car! On departing Lebanon, there'd be the "call to Marge." His death is shocking news. A competent neurosurgeon and a kind man, he will be missed by many--not least of all by me. My sincere condolences to the family.

**Julien Olivier** - January 02, 2018 at 10:36 AM

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“ We were very saddened to learn that Craig had died. I worked with him at both hospitals in Lewiston, and I always enjoyed my encounters with him (he operated on my back as well). There was always a calm and professional demeanor, and his surgical judgement was great. His was always a calm, professional and thoughtful demeanor, and we have regretted his leaving Lewiston. Please accept our deepest sympathies.

Roger Austin and Betty Kennedy

**Roger Austin** - January 02, 2018 at 10:30 AM

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“ I was privileged to have the opportunity to work closely with Dr. Heindel during his years at the Central Maine Medical Center. He was an outstanding and thoughtful neurosurgeon who contributed greatly to surgical care at both CMMC and St. Mary's Hospital in Lewiston. He gave much of himself from his early days teaching in the Peace Corps in Tanzania and throughout his career in medicine. I always enjoyed his calm academic approach to dealing with major surgical emergencies while never losing his quiet sense of humor. He was a hardworking physician and exemplified the characteristics of the ideal doctor. Oksana and I extend our sincere condolences to Margie.

John Bennett

**John Bennett** - January 02, 2018 at 10:05 AM

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“ Dear Mrs. Heindel and family. My husband and I met Dr. Heindel in 1985 when my husband broke his neck in 5 places due to a motorcycle accident. We thank God every June 12 that Dr. Heindel was the Neurologist on call that day at St Mary's Hospital . My husband owes his life to him and we are so grateful for his skills as a doctor and surgeon.  
Please accepted our deepest condolences. He was a wonderful doctor and I'm sure there are many other patients who feel the same.

Tim and Judy Cyr



**Judy Cyr** - January 01, 2018 at 05:29 PM

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“ Dear Margie and family I am truly sorry to hear of the loss of dr. Heindel he was an amazing doctor and a loving husband and father to all he will be sorely missed I truly enjoyed my time knowing your family and knowing him as a doctor at Portsmouth Hospital and working with him he was amazing that he saved my friend's life years ago his diagnosis was right on and he was very instrumental in getting her connected with the proper doctors at Mass General Hospital for that I am thankful sincerely  
candy Forster

**Candice Forster** - January 01, 2018 at 01:35 PM

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“ I had the pleasure of working with this warm hearted, genuine man for the past 12 years. When asked how he was doing, he always replied 'spectacular' and that was always the truth. To Dr. Heindel, life was too short to be anything but spectacular. He was a man of wisdom and always had a story to tell, of which you always learned something from what he was saying. He truly cared deeply about colleagues and his CNHN work family. There is no doubt has touched everyone lucky enough to have him as part of their life. We will miss you tremendously, Dr. Heindel.

**Kimberley Hamel** - January 01, 2018 at 11:50 AM

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“ I was blessed to work closely with Craig during his time at CMMC. He also cared for my family members and continued to always be available for consultation by phone or appointment after moving to New Hampshire. He leaves a wonderful legacy of truly caring about people and making each one feel as though they had his undivided attention. My condolences to Marge and the entire Heindel Family. May God bless you with strength, comfort and a peace that only He can give.

Joyce Belanger

**JOYCE BELANGER** - January 01, 2018 at 11:19 AM

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“ Dr. Heindel when asked how are you? Would always respond "SPECTACULAR" and he was. He enjoyed life, he loved his job, he was kind to everyone who was blessed to spend time with him. He truly cared about all of his fellow doctors and staff. I am thankful to have spent 12 years as part of his CNHN family and have many memories and stories to cherish. Take the time to be "Spectacular" in his honor, he would want no less.

**Christine Annicelli** - January 01, 2018 at 10:07 AM